PRAY: Open with a brief prayer inviting God to prepare hearts to receive what He has to say through His Word and this Bible study.

Lord, please help us to set aside the many distractions of life just now, and listen carefully to what You are saying though this Bible study. Give us spiritual eyes to see how the choices we make impact the direction and trajectory of our lives.


With a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to address those philosophers of ancient Greece who had gathered on famous Mars Hill to hear him, the Apostle Paul chose to engage with them about the weightiest of matters: the claims of God upon their individual lives. He appealed to their penchant for reason and logic, even quoting their own writers. But he was equally clear that we are all accountable for what we know, and also for the choices we make.

1. What was it that distressed Paul so greatly as he walked about the city of Athens?

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2. Would Paul find anything in our present day culture that might cause him the same concern?

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3. How did he excuse their earlier worship of the “UNKNOWN GOD”? 

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In verses 24 through 29, Paul points to all of creation as God’s handiwork, and then tells his audience that God is not to be found in the work of man’s hands.

4. While perhaps none of us would say that we look for God in things “built by human hands” (vs. 24), what are some of the modern day people, places, or things from which we seek to derive meaning and purpose for our lives?

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In his address, Paul framed the resurrection of Jesus Christ as being at the center of God’s plan for human history, and he implored his listeners to embrace God’s promise of sins forgiven based on true repentance, likely reasoning with them from the Scriptures, just as he did on an earlier occasion in verse 2 of Chapter 17, “explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead.”

The entire Gospel message is encapsulated in John 3:16-18:
“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

5. Verses 32 through 34 identify three distinct responses made by those who heard Paul speak on Mars Hill that day. What were those three responses?

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A number of those in the crowd on Mars Hill that day were neither believers nor unbelievers. They delayed making a decision by stating, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” They heard Paul’s argument, but they delayed any decision about the claims of Christ.

The renowned Cambridge philosopher C.S. Lewis, was also skeptical about the claims of Christ for many years. However, once he had conducted a rigorous examination of the Scriptures, he became a Christ follower, and he went on to write the following in his book Mere Christianity: “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him (Christ): I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely
a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

REFLECT & RESPOND:
How might this Scripture passage apply to our own individual lives?

1. What has been your own response to the Gospel message and the claims of Jesus Christ upon your life?

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2. How has your response impacted or changed the course of your life?

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3. What did Jesus mean by his use of the word believes in verse 15, when he said “everyone who believes may have eternal life in him”?

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If, like some who heard Paul speak, you still remain undecided, you may be of the same mind as the man Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night to inquire more fully of him. Re-read his brief story in John 3: 1-21, and how Jesus responded to his honest questions.

3. What did Jesus mean by his use of the word believes in verse 15, when he said “everyone who believes may have eternal life in him”?

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Additional Resource: Additional Bible Studies for men available on www.mensgroup.org