

Bible study for the week starting February 5, 2023

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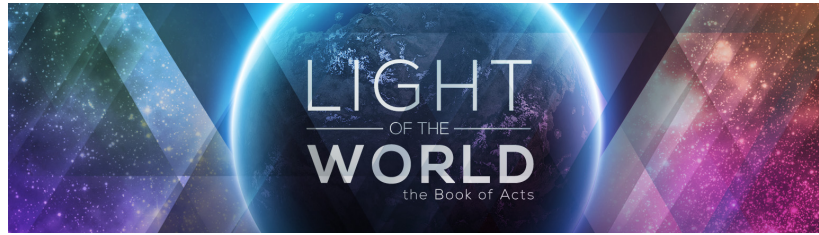
The Portals of Prayer devotion for January 31 says: “Everyone has a religion. If you find meaning in life from nature of Buddhism or the Bible or academics or whatever, then that’s your religion. That’s your god.” What can you learn about someone’s god from how they spend their time? How they spend their money? Where they find their meaning?

READ/STUDY/DISCUSS

1. The “material principal” of our denomination is that “the Bible is the only source and norm of what we believe and how we pattern our life, and the “formal principal” is that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus. These vary across denominations (or non-denominations) and world religions. Why does it matter what your source material is, and what your central teaching is? (see also **2 Tim. 3:15** and **Acts 15:11**) (see tinyurl.com/4fcrvw7k for examples)
2. Read **Acts 17:16-34**. The Athenians might be closer to our culture than the Bereans at the end of Acts 16. How do you see Paul engaging their culture in a way that makes sense? How would you have done it?
3. Paul doesn’t spend his time disassembling the idolatry and false philosophies; he points to Jesus as the fulfillment of these truths they’re seeking. How can we engage our culture like that; what might that look like?
4. Read **Romans 1:16-32**. Paul builds a case (witness) not based on their trust in Scripture, but rather their knowledge of God as revealed in creation (natural knowledge). What resonates with you in this?
5. Read **Matthew 4:12-17**. As Jesus began His ministry, He preached repentance and the imminence of the kingdom of God, but also to not just the Jews but the Gentiles. In other words, Paul didn’t invent being “all things to all people;” it might have started with Jesus.

PRAY

6. Pray that God would give you the eyes of Jesus and the perception of Jesus to engage our community with the Gospel.



Zoom In; Zoom Out

Acts 17:16-34

February 5, 2023 – Pastor Eric Van Scharrel

The Bible is the ONLY source and norm of what we believe and how we are to pattern our life. (see 2 Tim. 3:15, Acts 15:11)

Your approach in preaching the Gospel will VARY from one person to the next. Evangelism isn't a FORMULA.

"His spirit was PROVOKED within him as he saw that the city was full of idols." -Acts 17:16

"...What therefore you worship as UNKNOWN, this I proclaim to you." -Acts 17:22-23

When Paul is talking to people who respect the Bible as the Word of God, he builds a case on SCRIPTURE. When he is talking to everyone else, he builds a case starting with CREATION. (Acts 17:24-28, Romans 1:16-32).

Paul zoomed out to show that Jesus is the EMBODIMENT of every truth you have been trying to gather.

Jesus becomes not the ENEMY of these partial, zoomed-in truths; He becomes the FULFILLMENT.

What if we pay attention to the CULTURE and CONVERSATIONS around us, so we can meet others on COMMON ground and work from there?

Take a WALK around.

For next week, read Acts 18:1-17