

Main Street Church - Life Group Guide

Series: **God's Plan A :: Part 15** – (Acts 17)

Understanding God's Will

August 7, 2016



Connect

If you could visit any Ancient City (Athens, Rome, Jerusalem...) which would you choose & why?

Sunday Message Feedback

1. * What impacted you from Sunday's message by Pastor Shawn?

: What challenged or encouraged you, and why?

: What can you apply to your faith & life this week? How?

2. Read [Acts 17:1-10](#) *What stands out to you from this passage? (key words, phrases, teaching...)

Notes: Paul wrote two letters to the Christians in Thessalonica (1 & 2 Thessalonians), and Acts 17 is the record of his first visit to the city.

**3. *Consider what happens to Paul in this chapter and answer our KEY question,
"What do you do when you do the right things and say the right things
but get the wrong results?"**

We discover that following Jesus does not always end up the way we hope things will end up.

Examples: *Do you connect with any of the following examples, or something similar?*

I ran my business with integrity and I still went bankrupt

– how can that be God?

I lived a pure life and was faithful to my spouse and they still cheated on me

– I did it your way God but it didn't work out.

I raised my kids on the values and truths of God's Word and they have rebelled and walked away

– not fair God.

***So what do you do when this happens?**

a. Give Up b. Blame God c. Become Bitter or Check Out d. Seek Counsel e. Persevere & Pray f. Other...

***Do you tend to run from God or run to God?**

a. If you run from God, what do you tend to run to?

4. What do you think of the statements Pastor Shawn made:

"When all hell breaks loose hold on to the fact that hell doesn't win in the end."

"Don't be surprised if the right thing brings the wrong result – temporarily."

*How can [1 Peter 4:12-13](#) apply and encourage us? (Bonus: [Romans 8:18-29](#))

5. Read [Acts 17:10-12](#) (Paul in Berea) *What stands out to you from this passage?

Notes: These Bereans were eager & biblical. They wanted to know the truth for themselves.

Discuss how the following statements apply to your life:

- a. **"Don't believe everything you hear...even in church. Trust & Verify..."**
- b. **"Be like a Berean and open your Bible for yourself" – read it, study it, apply it for your life!**
- c. **"You can't use God as a consultant. God is not a consultant – He is God!"**

6. Read Acts 17:16-33 (Paul in Athens) *What stands out to you from this passage?

Notes: Athens was basically the idol worship capital of the known world. Our modern/western world isn't much different – the 'idols' have different names and forms, but the reasons and results are similar.

The Stoics & Epicurians were a lot like people today – *they considered themselves very spiritual, they loved the 'new', 'novel' & 'trendy'..., and tolerance was more important to them than truth.*

THE STOICS: believed that in order to deal with the issues of life you simply removed yourself from the emotions of life. Whatever happens to you is your destiny so deal with it. Their view of god was that god was in everything and that whatever happened to you was supposed to happen to you – so don't get so wound up about it. Kind of like SPOCK from Star Trek...

THE EPICURIANS: They were all about pleasure. Their mantra was "if it feels good do it!" Their view of god was that they dwelt in the space between the worlds and that they really don't care about this world so just do what you want and live it up.

***Would you** (or the people in your life) **relate more to the Stoics or the Epicurians?** Why?

Ancient & Modern 'gods/idols' always connect or relate to one or more the following core pursuits:
Sex (pleasure, people), Money (possessions, prosperity, wealth), Power (pride, success, fame, control)

***Which 'god/idol' has influenced your life & worldview the most** (past &/or presently)?

***How has Jesus & His Gospel (Good News) changed your worldview so far?**
(beliefs, values, ethics, priorities, identity...)

ACTion Steps:

*If you are a follower of Jesus you are not responsible for results. You are simply responsible to obey. Obedience is the part we play in following Jesus. God is responsible for the results.

So what do you do when you do the right things but get the wrong results?

You keep trusting. You keep following. You keep praying. You keep obeying.

Why? Because God is in control and His timing is not our timing

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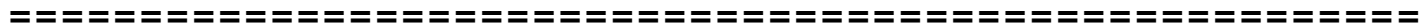
Prayer *Allow 3min for each aspect of Prayer (9min Total)

Praise: *Speak out words of praise & thanks for Who God Is & What He has Done...*

Repent : *Confess & Repent of any attitudes & actions...and receive His forgiveness*

Ask : *Ask specifically for your Needs and the Needs of Others*

Yield : *Surrender, Listen, Trust & Obey/Act*



BONUS Resources

*** Christian Apologetic Resources** – Helping equip Believers to engage the world.
(These are the main websites. Please check out their YouTube Channels & Facebook Feeds as well)

[Ravi Zacharias International Ministries \(RZIM\)](#)

[Apologetics Canada](#)

[Cold Case Christianity \(with J. Warner Wallace\)](#)

[Reasonable Faith \(with William Lane Craig\)](#)

[GotQuestions.org](#)

***RECAP: Acts 17**

In Acts 17 continues the story of Paul’s second missionary journey, focussing on the reactions he received. First he went to Thessalonica (v. 1). There he continued his custom of visiting the local synagogue to explain that Jesus was the Christ (v. 2). He did this by reasoning with them through the Jewish Scriptures (v. 2-3). Some of the local Jews became jealous that people were joining Paul and Silas, so they started a mob (v. 5). Unable to find Paul and Silas, the mob accosted their host, Jason (v. 6-7). That night, the Thessalonian believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea (v. 10). Again, we see Paul teaching about Jesus in the synagogue (v. 10). The Bereans eagerly accepted the message of Christ and sought truth in the Scriptures (v. 11). However, the Jews from Thessalonica went to Berea and agitated crowds there too (v. 13). The Berean believers sent Paul away immediately, but Timothy and Silas remained (v. 14). Paul fled to Athens where He preached to the local Jews and Gentiles about Jesus (v. 16-17). The people of Athens could be compared to modern day intellectuals. They spent their time studying and discussing the latest ideas (v. 21). Paul boldly shared with them the truth about God. He declared that God was the answer to their searching and questions (v. 22-23). God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is above all religious expression (v. 24-25). He gave mankind life and ordained specific details about each person’s life (v. 25-26). We are God’s children (v. 28). He is calling all mankind to repent, cast away their idols, and turn to Him (v. 29-31). The Athenians responded as can be expected from a highly intellectual crowd. Some heard Paul’s speech and accepted it as truth; some immediately rejected it; others wavered (v. 32-34). It is likely that among those who wavered there were some who were genuinely seeking truth and others who were looking for excuses not to believe. Paul, like most evangelists, experienced a wide variety of responses ranging from eager acceptance to persecution.