

DIGGING DEEPER

OUR CITY

MAY 21

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own or get together with your group, spiritual running partners, or family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been in a situation that you didn't want to be in? Maybe you were forced to move schools, jobs, cities. How did you respond to your new situation?
2. What stood out to you from the message?
3. The church is called to be a bridge from the city to God. Have you given much thought to this? How much do you consider your own role in reaching the city with the message of Jesus?
4. How do you view the people of your city? Which negative attitude do you lean toward as you think about the people of your city?
 - When we **Ignore** the people of our city, we rob ourselves of God's heart for them.
 - When we **Reject** the people of our city, we forget God's acceptance of them. Any repeated phrases?
 - When we **Despise** the people of our city, we block out God's desire for them.
 - When we **Hate** the people of our city, we become enemies of the God who loves them.
5. Read **Acts 17:16-34** The Apostle Paul visits Athens and builds common ground with the philosophers and the people gathering. He doesn't bang a drum of morality to these people who have no frame of reference for the Hebrew God/Jesus Christ. He builds a bridge of common ground.
 - Where do you see Paul operating in these ways as he interacts with the people of Athens? -
 - Paul is open to see what God sees
 - He brings the Good News where he has influence
 - He builds a bridge of common ground
 - He gives people the hope and life of Jesus
6. What is your current sphere of influence? How do you view the people in your sphere of influence? What steps are you taking to build a bridge from them to God?

KEY SCRIPTURE

Acts 17:16-34 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean." (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.) continued...

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” At that, Paul left the Council. Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

PRAYER

- **BLESS** is an acronym that describes a way to make a difference in the lives of those close to you. **Begin** with praying for them, **Listen** to them, **Engage** with them, **Serve** them, and **Share** your story with them when the opportunity arises or the time is right.
- Do step one of BLESS. Pray for those in your spheres of influence. Lift them up by name, asking God to work in their hearts and show you the opportunities to listen, engage, serve and share.

TAKE A NEXT STEP

- Read through the book of Acts and follow along with the Acts devotionals on the Gateway youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@gatewaychurchofaustralia>
- Look for ways to BLESS your family, neighbors, co-workers and friends.

FOR THE PARENTS

Hey, families! Here’s a look at what we’re covering with your kids so you can help them continue to grow at home during the week.

THIS WEEK

This week, kids learn about the time Jesus went up to Heaven.

- **THE BIBLE:** Jesus Goes Up to Heaven: Acts 1:1-11
- **THE BIG IDEA:** Anyone can do great things for God.

ASK THIS

Because sometimes you and your kid need a conversation-starter that isn’t, “So . . . how was church?”

- **What are some things that you feel powerless to do on your own?**
- **How can the Holy Spirit help you to not feel powerless?**

REMEMBER THIS

This month, your kids are memorizing the Bible verse

2 Timothy 1:7 (NIV), in case you want to work on them together.

Preschool: “For the Spirit...gives us power, love and self-discipline.” 2 Timothy 1:7

Elementary: “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” 2 Timothy 1:7

NEXT WEEK

Next week, kids learn about the Holy Spirit coming to the Early Church at Pentecost.