

1. Read Acts 17:16-21. Describe the social and religious climate of Athens as shown in these verses. How was Athens different from other “worlds” we have studied, such as the world of the Pharisees or the world of the Samaritans? How was Athens similar to our world today, at least in large cities?
2. What was the first thing Paul noticed about Athens? What did he do about it? Is what he did an example for us to follow? Why or why not?
3. Read Acts 17:22-23. Paul was upset, maybe even revolted, by the blatant idol worship he observed in Athens (v. 16). Given the fact that Paul detested idols, what did he say in his opening remarks to the Areopagus (the high court of Athens) that indicated not his disapproval, but his desire to be *in* the world of the Athenians?
4. Read Acts 17:24-28. In this middle part of Paul’s speech, what further points did he make to show his desire to be *in* the world of the Athenians? What does v. 28 say about Paul himself as an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20)? How would you respond to Christians who say that to be really faithful to Christ, all you need is the Bible?
5. Read Acts 17:29-31 and compare these verses with Rom. 1:18-23. What was Paul’s message to the Romans about idol worship? Why didn’t he say this to the Athenians? Was it really quite accurate to tell them that in the past “God overlooked” ignorance about idols?
6. Read Acts 17:32-34. Was Paul’s outreach to the Athenians successful? How did his efforts to identify himself with the “world” of the Athenians, as discussed above, contribute to the outcome of his preaching in Athens?