

# Acts 29

*The Enlightenment (AD1648-1789)*

## Introduction

We are on mission for Jesus. We don't just send people with the gospel to another culture. We all are sent to our own culture with the gospel. The gospel of Jesus calls us to be *for* our city— including its culture and people.

## Discussion Questions

- Paul looked at the city through God's eyes (Acts 17:16). Because he saw what God saw, he couldn't help but respond as God responds. What do you see when you look at our city? What are the things that provoke your spirit? Why are they so distressing to you?
- The city of Athens was the intellectual capital of the Graeco-Roman world. As Paul brought the gospel into a rational based culture, he did not hesitate to reason with them (17:17-23). Do you understand the rational objections of your non-Christian friends? What are the intellectual challenges we face today? Can you respectfully reason with others about the gospel and Jesus?
- Paul demonstrates that he has learned some things about his hearers. He understands their culture, their religion, their philosophers, & their poets (17:22-28). He also knows the limitations. He knows the questions they're still asking and the desires that remain unmet. What are the cultural questions people are asking? What are the desires people are pursuing? What are the solutions people are trying? What are the limitations of their solutions?

## Think About It

Some churches are *of* the culture. They so embrace the culture that they lose their distinctiveness. Some churches are *against* the culture. They so oppose the culture that they lose their relevance. And some churches are *above* the culture. They so super-spiritualize life that they lose their point of contact. On the other hand, a church *for* the culture engages the culture in order to transform it by the power of the gospel, for the glory of Jesus, and for the good of the city.

## What Will You Do?

Study your own culture's literature, philosophy, music, and politics. Reflect on the real-life conversations and critical reasoning you face. Learn to explain how faith in a Christian God is a soundly rational belief, held by thoughtful people of intellectual integrity with a deep compassion for those who truly want to know the truth.

## Renewing Your Mind

*Jesus increased in wisdom. (Luke 2:52)*

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (Matt. 22:37)*

*Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. (Acts 17:16-17)*

*Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. (1 Cor. 3:18-19)*

*For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Cor. 1:22-25)*

*The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38:1-2)*

*With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding. (Job 12:13)*

## Prayer Requests

