

Series: *God of this City* – Week Five

When In “Athens”, Be Like Paul

Acts 17:16-34

Introduction: Paul’s confrontation with the Athenians provides a model for how to minister to intelligent people in intellectual places. Back then, Athens was the intellectual capitol of the world. Our “Athens” is any *thinking* place. It might be a school setting, a corporate setting, or a friendship setting. When in Athens do 4 things.

1. FEEL – When we minister in secular settings, our spirit will often get provoked. Deal with it! Acts 17:16

- A. Paul has journeyed to Athens and needs to kill some time as he waits for his friends. He became angry at the idolatry. 17:15-16a
- B. Many Christians experience similar things as they encounter secular culture.

2. RESIST – When we minister in secular culture, we need to resist any sort of anti-intellectualism. Acts 17:17-18

- A. There is a misunderstanding among Christians today that our culture is anti-intellectual.
- B. Notice that Paul identifies four different groups, each with an intellectual orientation. 17:17-18
- C. Notice what Paul does with these people: he reasons. 17:17

3. COMMUNICATE – When we minister in secular culture, we need to communicate with skill. Acts 17:19-32

- A. We need to expect opposition: people are going to ridicule our position. 17:19-20
- B. Rather than fighting, we need to begin with common ground. 17:21-23
- C. We need to communicate in a pattern they can understand. 17:24-32

4. ENTRUST – When we minister in secular culture, we need to leave the results up to God. Acts 17:32-34

- A. Paul had no control over the outcome: Some sneer (32). Some are open (33). Some believe (34).
- B. The temptation for us: Try to take control and force the outcome.
- C. The challenge: Observe what God seems to be doing, and act accordingly. A very “random” group of people join Paul, some upper echelon people, some women, and “others”. 17:34

