
Application Guide: Acts 17

1. Warm-up (5-10 min)

Choose one:

- a. Think of a conflict you were involved in—particularly one in which you gave in and let someone else win. Why did you choose to give in?

- b. Think of a conflict you were involved in—particularly one in which you fought hard until you won. Why didn't you give up?

2. Engaging the Chapter (15-20 min)

Background: This passage is all about circumcision—do you even know what that is? Yikes! Not sure exactly why God chose tPaul and his companions have been traveling around for some time now. The Holy Spirit is now allowing them to preach, teach and perform miracles of various kinds. Everywhere they go, they are making converts before leaving or being run out of town. In Philippi they were thrown in jail for casting a demon out of a fortune-telling slave girl. In Thessalonica they were run off for preaching about Jesus, and then some of the Thessalonians went as far as running them out of nearby Berea as well.

After so much running away from angry people, Paul found himself in Athens. In Athens there was a god for everyone. There were temples everywhere, and they were tolerant of whatever god you wanted to worship. They would even listen to you talk about your god.

What is it like where you live? Do people get upset if you don't believe exactly like they do or are they tolerant of all other views? Which type of people do you think would be easier to live with? How did Jesus treat people with views different than his?

Paul seemed to know some things about Greek culture—he even quoted a Greek poet while in Athens. Some religious leaders think Christians should engage secular culture (movies, music, tv, concerts, secular events, etc.) so that they know what other people are watching and thinking about, and then they can find ways to reach them like Paul did. Do you agree with this philosophy? Do you think this idea can be taken too far?

3. Applying the Chapter to Your Life (5-10 min)

Choose one or both:

- a. How do you know when to stand your ground and when to run away? How could you learn to stand stronger for your convictions and beliefs? What do you think you will do when the world falls apart and trials increase just before Jesus' return? What are some ways you can strengthen your relationship with Jesus so He can help you stand strong?

- b. Make a list of the top five ways you currently engage secular culture. How are these ways positive and helpful?

- c. Do you think any of these things are hurting your relationship with Jesus? Do you think there are there any that you should give up? Are some of them helping your relationship? How/why?

4. Prayer Time (3-5 min)

- a. Spend some time in prayer, asking Jesus to help you identify potential areas of spiritual conflict in your life.
- b. Ask Jesus for wisdom, to know when to stand strong in your faith and when it's better to avoid conflict.
- c. Ask Jesus to help you know what secular activities to weed out of your life.