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## YOU ASKED FOR IT:

- A sermon series to address your questions
- An introduction in learning how to find answers
- An invitation to being changed and maturing in your faith

## WEEK 8: HOW DO I WITNESS TO PEOPLE FROM OTHER RELIGIONS?

### Witness (n):

1. an attestation of a fact or event: **testimony**
2. one that gives evidence
3. one asked to be present at a transaction so as to be able to testify to its having taken place
4. one who has personal knowledge of something
5. something serving as evidence or proof: **sign** - public affirmation by word or example

## A HOW TO FROM THE TEXT:

**Acts 17:16-34 (ESV)** - 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. 17So 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. 18Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babblers wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. 19And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean." 21Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

22So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. 26And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, 28for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring."

29Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. 30The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31because he has fixed a day on which will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

32Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." 33So Paul went out from their midst. 34But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

## A WITNESS IS:

- Provoked to engage (v.16)
  - Engaged in the world (v.17)
  - Not easily offended (v.18)
  - Preaches Jesus and the Resurrection (v.18)
  - Invited to share (v.19)
  - Understands the human condition (v.21-22)
    - Some people spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new
    - People are “in every way religious” – whether they acknowledge it or not
  - Perceptive to and versed in the beliefs of others (v.23)
  - Understands that all people are searching for truth and believe they know it (v.23)
  - **Able to connect the desire for truth with the truth itself, through practical and relatable means. (v.23-31)**
  - **Knows the truth (v.23-31)**
    - I proclaim to you...
    - Their “truth” with *the* truth
- Examples:**
- Man-made temples, human hands, needs anything – their truth
  - You **can** find him, he is **near** not far
  - Quoted Poets (v.28) – music, arts, culture, sports...
    - **What you believe in and are searching for, I have found**
- Understands some will mock, yet some will not (v.32)
  - Understands it takes time and some will join, but most will not (v.32-33)

## A WITNESS IS NOT:

- Inappropriately provocative
- Disengaged from the world
- Easily offended
- Preaches a different gospel than Jesus
- Demanding and offensive in sharing
- Ignorant and indignant of the human condition and of the beliefs of others
- Unable to relate and connect truth to others reality
- Does not know the truth – compromises on it
- Believes all will love and listen and agree the first time

## QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever witnessed to another? How'd it go?
2. What stood out to you from this example?
3. In what ways are you effective in witnessing? Where can you improve?
4. What is one practical next step you can take in growing in your witness to others?