



Reading through the New Testament—Week 22

June 4-10

Reading Plan available on
YouVersion Bible App
(QR Code).



Becoming more like Jesus—growing in His Word

At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Matthew 11:25

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. Acts 17:22

Have you ever noticed that children have a way of noticing the world around them and asking the curious questions? (Sometimes to the embarrassment of their parents!) Through the words of Jesus and Paul, we get a glimpse of the power of observation and hearing, and their Kingdom impact. These two skills come naturally to some but they can also be strengthened. Here are a few ways to strengthen your observation and listening skills from mindtools.com:

Observation: Training your brain to observe allows you to learn and remember more about the people, places, events, and situations around you – to pick up on details that you might otherwise miss.

Decrease Distractions - leave your phone in your pocket

Keep a Journal - once a week make notes about what you observed throughout the day

Listening: Listening is one of the most important skills you can have. How well you listen has a major impact quality of your relationships with other people.

Show That You're Listening - Use your own body language and gestures to show that you are engaged.

Defer Judgment - Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message

THIS WEEKEND'S SERMON OUTLINE

The Known God Acts 17

Paul in Athens

Starting point: Acts 17:16

Connection: Acts 17:22

Narrative: Acts 17:28





Invitation: Acts 17:32-34

Blessing the World

This week as you reflect on Paul's travels in Acts 17 - 21, think about where you are being called to be a "witness." (See Acts 1:8) Spend 30 minutes sitting in that place - observing and listening. (See page 1) Pray that God would use that experience to open conversations for you to be a witness.

New Testament in a Year—June 4-10

Acts

Chapter 17  18  19  20  21 

Additional Reflections from this week's reading
Reading Acts 17-21 this week will take us through several of Paul's adventures. What sticks out (kairos) to you as you read about Paul's travels?

17) Athens (see sermon notes)

18) Corinth

Antioch

(Apollo begins preaching)

19) Ephesus

20) Macedonia and Greece

Miletus

21) Jerusalem

Belonging in Community

Connect Groups are a group of Christians who meet together regularly where we intentionally share in our faith walk. Connection is created through commitment and presence in fellowship, discussion, and prayer. Begin your time together by following up on anything that was shared during your last time together. Take some time to share any reflections of aha's you had from your reading.

(continued)

This week we continue to read about the missionary journey of Paul. In each instance we can see how Paul curates his message to the people he is amongst. As we read these accounts we are encouraged to do the same in our personal contexts. To observe the spiritual life of the culture around us and with the guidance and wisdom of the spirit, to find connections to our life in Jesus.

Take some time as a group to think through these questions. Your challenge is to keep each other accountable to remaining humble and in a mindset of healthy curiosity and learning.

- What worldviews or philosophies of others do you find yourself encountering on a regular basis? What is different or challenging about them?
- Are there groups of people groups that feel so different from you that it is hard to engage in conversation with them? What are the parts that feel foreign or different to you?

As you share about these things note that it is appropriate to identify the differences amongst people groups. The important boundary to keep is to avoid taking on the attitude that you are right and "they" are not. Focus on observations and questions. Learning about the differences amongst us is one of the best ways to make connections.

- Do any of these "provoke your spirit" and bring you to a place where you want to share your faith? What openings exist for you to find connections?

Notice that Paul never mentions the name of Jesus in his interactions with the people in Athens. (Acts 17:16-34)

- Is it possible to have an effective Gospel message that uses the words and philosophies of other people groups?
- What would this look like in the examples you talked about today?

As you close, take time to pray for opportunities to share the Gospel with those around you, especially those who you may have a hard time relating to.