

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*How to Witness to Very Religious People*  
Acts 17:16-34

**Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.**

## **Leaders' Responsibilities:**

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## **Prior to this Coming Session:**

### **Gathering Time Leader:**

The Bible studies in this Unit may tend to run long in time. Feel free to cut activities, limit extended lists, or do whatever you think wise to "watch" your time. Otherwise, the person in charge of the Worship Time will not have sufficient time to properly call the church to commitment to God's guidance through this passage of His Word.

Bring pens and paper for each person to write a list. (Stiff folders are best to hold the paper. Include crayons and paper for the preschoolers.

©2001-2010, Eternal Interactive, LLC, All Rights Reserved. [www.homechurchonline.com](http://www.homechurchonline.com)

2

*How to Witness to Very Religious People* – 03-09-11-en

Unless otherwise noted, scripture taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. All rights reserved throughout the world. Used by permission of International Bible Society.

Copy the scripture, Luke 18:18-30, found on the final page of this session, for each participant at the Gathering Time. For preschoolers, look for an online, downloadable Bible colouring book that has a picture of Jesus with the “rich, young ruler” or another such as Jesus and Nicodemus. For instance, see [www.KidExplorers.com](http://www.KidExplorers.com) . Or, simply ask the older preschoolers to draw a picture of Jesus talking to someone about God.

### **Bible Study Leader:**

Bring a large piece of paper, newsprint, or a whiteboard with appropriate markers for the resource you choose.

### **Worship Time Leader:**

### **Music Sources:**

“Open Our Eyes” **Maranatha! Praise** Chorus Book, (1983), p. 91

“Oh How He Loves You and Me” **Maranatha Praise** Chorus Book, (1983) p. 90

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***How to Witness to Very Religious People*****Focal Text**

Acts 17:16-34

**Background Text**

Acts 17

**Main Idea**

Paul built bridges to the Athenian philosophers' beliefs and culture to proclaim the gospel positively to them.

**Question to Explore**

In what ways do people today need bridges built to their beliefs and culture so they will hear, understand, and respond to the gospel.

**Teaching Aim**

To lead participants to describe how they can share the gospel with the very religious people of our day.

**Gathering together:**

An old song written by the songwriter Philip P. Bliss speaks to the theme of our study today. It is a sad song because it tells of those people who were called to believe, but chose not to do so.

**Almost Persuaded**

“Almost Persuaded,” now to believe;  
 “Almost Persuaded,” Christ to receive;  
 Seems now some soul to say,  
 “Go, Spirit, go Thy way,  
 Some more convenient day  
 on Thee I’ll Call”

## **First thoughts:**

**Leader:** Hand out pencils and paper to everyone. Also give them copies of Luke 18:18-30 which you made beforehand from the final page of this session.

Ask them to read the passage and write down some examples that show the Rich Young Ruler was a religious man. Allow a few minutes to share some of those examples.

Then ask: Why did he go away unsaved?

## **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Close by saying, "It is hard to witness to very religious people. Today we will learn some effective things we can do when we witness to them."

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *How to Witness to Very Religious People*

#### **Focal Text**

Acts 17:16-34

#### **Background Text**

Acts 17

#### **Main Idea**

Paul built bridges to the Athenian philosophers’ beliefs and culture to proclaim the gospel positively to them.

#### **Question to Explore**

In what ways do people today need bridges built to their beliefs and culture so they will hear, understand, and respond to the gospel.

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead participants to describe how they can share the gospel with the very religious people of our day.

### **Introduction to your personal study:**

A Christian, asked to speak to a civic group made up of non-Christians, nominal church members, and some faithful Christians, stood up and said, “Today I want to tell you about my best friend. He talked at length about qualities of this person that inspired him. He talked of the love, care, and sacrifice of this friend. As he neared the end of his speech, he said, “I want to tell you the name of my friend. His name is Jesus Christ. He then summarized his personal relationship to Jesus. This Christians established good rapport with his audience. He had their attention and then he proceeded to his message. If he had mentioned Jesus at the beginning he would not have had their rapt attention. This is a good example of sharing with the non-religious group.

## Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

Paul’s experience in the Areopagus, the famous meeting place or forum in Athens, has remained through 2,000 years as one of the great studies of the proclamation of the Gospel. His style or approach to that particular setting and situation has been both praised and criticized. Some think that he argued for the Gospel and defended it when he would have received a better response by simply sharing his testimony as he often did (even before the king). Others point to this event as proof that we must always adapt to each situation and opportunity in order to gain the advantage that it may afford our message. “Arm chair” debaters will not resolve the question. But studying the actual event is priceless in allowing us to see the Gospel in action in a critically important centre of culture and politics.

## Focusing on the Meaning:

### Witnessing While Waiting (Acts 17:16-18)

**Acts 17:16** Paul was waiting for the arrival of Silas and Timothy from Berea. Paul had been sent by the Christians at Berea to Athens to escape a possible riot. Jews from Thessalonica had followed Paul from Philippi to Berea to oppose Paul’s preaching about Jesus. Paul is in Athens alone. He is without his fellow workers. Athens was a cultural city. Philosophy, poetry, politics, and religion were subjects of discussion among the intellectuals. It had art. Great numbers of statues were in the city. One writer suggests that there were more than 30,000 public statues. Paul knew that these were not mere statues, but served as idols for worshipping. One scholar said it was easier to find a god in Athens than it was to find a man. Paul was greatly distressed. This means he was deeply troubled, upset, revolted, exasperated, provoked and that his spirit was stirred up. Paul had seen the risen Lord and it disturbed him to see men worshipping these gods.

**Acts 17:17** This concern of Paul’s led him to discuss and reason with both Jews and God-fearing Gentiles in the synagogue. He did not limit himself to the religious places but also met in the marketplace with whoever was there. The environment that magnified idolatry stirred Paul to speak out about Christ. He did not limit his preaching to the Jewish places of worship but went out on the street and spoke to those who might listen.

**Acts 17:18** Two groups of philosophers argued with Paul. These professional philosophers were always ready to confer or dispute. They enjoyed arguments. It was if they were saying, “You choose a subject and we’ll choose a side.” Both groups were ready for dispute and debate. Epicureans did not believe in a creator, but had a system

for multitudes of gods who took no part in the affairs of men. Here man's sensual nature fought against the gospel. Stoics declared that an act is good or evil in itself. The highest good was virtue: practical wisdom, self-restraint, and justice. God was seen as nature. Man's self-righteousness and pride of intellect opposed the gospel. These philosophers questioned Paul and asked what he was advocating. They asked because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

### **Responding to an Invitation to Witness (Acts 17:19-22)**

**Acts 17:19** Paul was taken, but not violently, before the court of Areopagus. He was taken not as an accused criminal, but to be examined concerning his new teaching. It was not a formal trial, but was held to ascertain what Paul's beliefs were. Here questions were put to Paul in a refined and polished manner. The Areopagus was both a place where Paul made his address and an informal gathering of philosophers.

**Acts 17:20** The philosophers wanted to hear more about these strange new ideas and asked Paul to tell what they meant. The different ideas that Paul was preaching were of interest to them, not necessarily because they were spiritually hungry, but because they liked to hear about all kinds of beliefs and ideas.

**Acts 17:21** This arrangement gave Paul an opportunity speak for the entertainment of those who were present. The men there passed their time by telling and hearing new things. This was their entertainment. It brings to mind the men who would gather near the small town square on Saturday afternoon and discuss all manner of subjects. Or it may be similar to university students gathered in a group to hear one another passionately defend an idea or point of view.

**Acts 17:22** There was a crowd of philosophers and observers present. Paul stood and preached. It was not as one defending himself in court, but as an advocate for Christ. He did not speak as a person on trial but as one seeking to proclaim Jesus. Paul in saying that he observed that they were very religious spoke in a general way. "Religious" could have been used in a pious or reverent sense or in a bad sense of superstitious. Paul uses this as his opening to get their attention.

### **Identifying the Unknown God (Acts 17:23-29)**

**Acts 17:23** Paul described his experience of seeing an altar with the inscription "To an unknown God." Paul stated that this unknown God they worshipped would be proclaimed to them. He told them what he was going to say. He was going to tell them about this God. Paul explained that the crowd already worshipped this God and that he was going to explain who this unknown God was.

**Acts 17:24** Paul stated that the unknown God they worshipped was the God who created the world and everything in it. This god was unlike the 30,000 gods of the Athenians. He was the one god who made the world. Paul tells them that this God of



creation is not confined to temples built by men. He contrasts the God who created the world to gods who were limited by the space they occupied.

**Acts 17:25** Paul makes another contrast. The creator God is independent of those he created. He needs nothing from them. There is nothing that man can give that God needs. This God was distinctive from their false gods. He did not need the offerings of people to be happy.

**Acts 17:26** The creator God created the entire human race from one ancestor. He established the time and place for all nations. He had a plan for all people. He was concerned about their welfare. God was the one who determined the time and the place that a nation should flourish. Paul says that the unity of the human race comes from one beginning with God as the creator. God also revealed himself as the God in control of history without any denial of human choice.

**Acts 17:27** God made these provisions so that man would look for him. It was designed that man would respond to God's blessings on them. The term "seek him" carries the connotation of a blind man feeling for him. God was within reach of all men. He was available.

**Acts 17:28** Paul tells the Athenians that our total existence depends on God. It is due to him that we live, breathe, exist. He says that the creature is dependent upon the creator, not only for our existence but also for our preservation. Paul then uses a poet's words to reinforce his argument. Paul says in essence, "It is so plain that even your poetry recognizes this unknown God."

**Acts 17:29** Paul then shows the crowd that, as the ones created by the creator of the world, was it not stupid to think that life comes from the inanimate. Gold, silver, and stone objects shaped by the created one's own skill and thought cannot be the ones that bring life and breath. These artificially made idols cannot be the source of life.

### **Sharing About the Coming Judgment (Acts 17:30-31)**

**Acts 17:30** In the past God looked over such worship of lifeless idols. "Overlooked" means to let it pass as if unnoticed - to not acknowledge noticing a thing yet at the same time having knowledge of it. God previously allowed the non-Jews to follow their own way without sending them special messengers as he did to the Jews or by punishing them as they deserved for this kind of conduct. This changed because God had fully revealed Himself in Jesus Christ.

**Acts 17:31** Paul began his address by stating that this unknown god the Athenians worshipped was the creator and sustainer of life. He moves on to say that this god will judge the world and commanded repentance. The proof of all of this is that Jesus died and was raised from the dead. The resurrection was the guarantee that all that Paul said was true.

## **Announcing the Resurrection (Acts 17:32-33)**

**Acts 17:32** Paul had the attention of the crowd. They responded particularly to his speaking of the resurrection. Some sneered but others wanted to hear more of this.

Greeks believed in the immortality of the soul but they had no idea of a resurrection of the physical body. Some of the listeners mocked Paul. Others of the crowd were not convinced but were more polite and favored adjournment.

**Acts 17:33** The meeting was over. No one else asked questions. There was no more ridicule. There was no effort to arrest Paul. Paul never returned to Athens after this trip.

## **Results of Witnessing (Acts 17:34)**

**Acts 17:34** Paul's efforts in Athens were not a failure. Some who had listened to Paul became believers. One of the judges, Dionysius, of the Areopagus committed himself as a follower of Jesus. One historian says that he later became bishop of the church at Athens and later died a martyr. Damaris, a woman, also professed faith in Christ along with several others.

## **Your Goal as the Leader of this Study:**

Very religious people have great difficulty in changing their beliefs. As well, they may use many of the same "religious" words that we do—but have a strong mental definition or image of those terms that differs sharply from ours. Learning how to approach and witness to such people will challenge all born-again believers in Jesus. Your teaching of this passage should help Christians to be bold in their witness, yet sensitive to the best and most sensitive way to witness to very religious people.

## **For Personal Reflection:**

1. **What have I learned from this study?**
2. **What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**
3. **What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***How to Witness to Very Religious People***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc. Children who stay with their parents in the Youth/Adult study should have the material on worship as suggested in **The Children's Corner** at the beginning of this **Unit** of studies. (Ask your leader who downloads the studies for those suggestions).

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

Acts 17:16-34

#### **Background Text**

Acts 17

#### **Main Idea**

Paul built bridges to the Athenian philosophers' beliefs and culture to proclaim the gospel positively to them.

#### **Question to Explore**

In what ways do people today need bridges built to their beliefs and culture so they will hear, understand, and respond to the gospel.

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead participants to describe how they can share the gospel with the very religious people of our day.

#### **Connect with Life:**

Tell: A man waiting in a restaurant line looked at the necklace on the neck of the man immediately behind him. Attached was a gold colored cross. The Christian said, "That's a beautiful cross. Tell me about it." The one wearing the cross began to explain

about where it was obtained, why he wore it, and what it meant to him. Then the Christian was able to briefly share his testimony of what Jesus had done for him by dying on the cross.

Continue: Sometime when a person indicates he goes to a certain church and/or performs some acts of mercy, many Christians do not know how to proceed in testifying about a real relationship to Jesus Christ. Today we look at how to witness to very religious people.

Explain to the congregation: We are going to look at an experience of Paul in Athens. As we read Acts 17:16-18, look for what Paul was doing.

Request a youth or adult to read the scripture.

### **Guide the Study:**

Present these questions and let pupils find answers in the passage:

What was Paul doing in Athens?

What were the conditions that Paul observed and what was his reaction?

When was the last time we were distressed over the spiritual condition of people?

Where did Paul witness while he waited for Silas and Timothy?

Explain the Epicurean and Stoic philosophies using the scripture commentary.

Seek opinions to this question: What was their response to Paul's preaching? (They wanted to hear about the strange new ideas about which Paul was speaking.)

Comment: Let's see what happened.

Have someone read Acts 17:19-22

Lecture **briefly** on the happenings in this passage using your ***Teacher Preparation Guide*** on these verses.

Explain the setting for Paul's meeting with these philosophers including that this was an informal gathering for them to hear more of Paul's message. (Please watch your time!!! Long lectures are not as an effective teaching tool as is discussion.)

Invite an opinion: In verse 22, how did Paul begin?

Look for ideas to this: What kind of beginning was this? Was it a confrontational type of beginning?

Indicate: This was a non-threatening beginning. He complimented them on their being so religious. He did not slap them in the face and say “You are all wrong.” He began where they were in their thinking and left the door open to go further.

Continue: Let’s look at how Paul developed his conversation with the philosophers.

Request someone to read Acts 17:23-29.

Now search for an answer from a member: How did Paul further identify with the group? (He told them about seeing the altar with the inscription “To an unknown God.”)

Call for an opinion: How did Paul move from speaking about the unknown God altar to the Gospel? (He told how this unknown God was the creator of the world).

Urge the group to discuss this question: What other characteristics of the unknown God does Paul mention? Allow time for those in attendance to scan the scripture to find these qualities. (Not confined to temples, not dependent of those he created, created entire human race from one ancestor, in control of human history, made man dependent on him).

Invite an answer to this question: In v. 27 what does it say about why God established man’s dependence on him? (So man would seek him).

Ask: Where did God say he was in relation to man? (He was near).

Continue: In verse 28 Paul further identifies with the Athenians by quoting from their poetry.

Solicit a response to this: How does Paul attempt to change their thinking about God in v. 29? (They should not see idols as the source of life but depend upon the creator God.)

Share: In vv. 30-31 Paul speaks of what the powerful creator God will do.

Ask a member to read Acts 17:30-31.

Urge responses to these questions:

What did God do in the past? (He overlooked such ignorance).

What does he call for now? (Repentance).

What is he going to do? (Judge the world).

Who will do this? (The man he has appointed).

What proof is there that this man is to judge? (God has raised him from the dead).

Say: Let's look at the response of the philosophers.

Invite someone to read Acts 17:32-34.

Now ask: What different responses did they give? (Some sneered, some wanted to hear more, some mocked, some believed—Dionysius and Damaris and others).

### **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Seek opinions to this thought: What are some of the steps Paul used to witness to a religious people? Write answers on a piece of newsprint or chalkboard as members respond. (He witnessed in all circumstances; he established contact with them rather than antagonizing them; he used a familiar beginning; he logically went from where they were in their thinking to the truth of the gospel; he confronted them gently in his conclusion.)

Now call for an answer to: Which of these can we use in our sharing with non-Christians?

Suggest: Suppose you are talking to a person who says, "I don't think Jesus was the Saviour of the world. I think he was a good teacher." Agree with them that he was a good teacher. Then share what he says about himself. He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Help the person understand that if Jesus is only a good teacher he does not live up to his own description about himself. His claims are radical, "No one comes to the Father except through me." This approach helps us to have the opportunity to share with a person. If we had responded to their assertion that Jesus was only a good teacher with a combative argument we would not have the chance to share. Use the responses of the individual to be able to further witness.

Call for a person in the group to pray that each of you would have boldness in witnessing to someone this week and that God would provide the opportunity.

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***How to Witness to Very Religious People*** **Acts 17:16-34**

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

#### **Sharing—Openly, Honestly and Lovingly**

Today's Scripture passage describes a happening that took place in the early days of the spreading of the Christian faith. This event was one of many events in the first few years after Christ's death, burial, resurrection and ascension. Yet it sounds like a discussion that might occur in a high school literature classroom or a university religious studies class. People have always enjoyed taking about philosophical and religious ideas and people are always interested in some new point of view. Paul acknowledged this reality, but pointed his listeners to the fact that Christ was calling for repentance and commitment.

How do you feel when a group around you discusses ideas that are interesting and thought provoking, but not consistent with Biblical truth? What are ways you have found to make a contribution without putting people down or alienating people from the very truth you want to communicate?

Perhaps it is a help to know that Paul did explain to the thoughtful people at the Areopagus that God made the world and that men should seek Him. He also talked about God's call to repentance through Christ. But even Paul didn't convince everybody. Some of his listeners began to sneer (Acts 17:32) while others said they would hear him again another time.

Probably Paul didn't like being sneered at anymore than we do. But it must have been worth it that "some men joined him and believed, among whom also was Dionysius the Aeropagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them" (v. 34).

Being faithful even in tough situations will bring its reward. We may not “convince” anyone that we are right, but when we share openly, honestly and lovingly, seeds will be planted which may bring results which last for eternity.



**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***How to Witness to Very Religious People***  
**Acts 17:16-34****Beginning the Service:**

Begin by singing together songs of praise for God's love for us and His gift of salvation. You may wish to select others than those suggested here:

**"Open Our Eyes"** *Maranatha! Praise Chorus Book*, (1983), p. 91

**"Oh How He Loves You and Me"** *Maranatha Praise Chorus Book*, (1983) p. 90

**Offering:**

Ask one of the children in your group to pass a basket to collect the offering. As she/he has finished, join hands and say together the Lord's prayer from Matthew 6:9-13.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done.  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen

**Praying for the World:**

A Bible society in Canada is interested in publishing a Chinese-Spanish Bible, which could be made available to more than one million Chinese scattered throughout Latin America, the Caribbean Islands and Spain. Ask God to hasten the publication of this bilingual Bible.

**Sharing Guide:**

**This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond**

to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

## ***What to Say to a Skeptic***

### **Acts 17:22-34**

#### **Introduction:**

A skeptic is a person who doubts and may be critical. Man has always dreamed about going to the moon and maybe even Mars. Many people were very skeptical of such an idea. They thought it could not be done. When the first man stepped on the moon, some still believed it was a trick done in a television or movie studio. Others believed what they saw. Some people will not accept the truth and do not wish to be confused by the facts.

Paul stood to speak before many skeptics at the Areopagus. He used "The unknown god" to open the discussion. He presented the Gospel faithfully to those who listened. Perhaps as we meet skeptics in our everyday lives, we can learn something from Paul's presentation that will help us present the Gospel effectively.

#### **1. Tell the skeptic who God is.**

The skeptic must know that God is the Creator. He is our Creator. Paul explained that God is the one who made the world and all things in it (v.24). He is the one who gives life (v.25). He creates all men and gives them places to live in His world (v.26). We even "live and move and have our being (v.28)" in him. Genesis 1:25-26 points out that we are made in his image. Look up at the stars. Who made them? God did. He is the God of all creation.

#### **2. Tell the skeptic what God did in Christ.**

Jesus Christ is God in flesh. He was crucified and buried. On the third day God raised Jesus from the dead (v.34) and made him the Lord of the entire universe. That includes us! Not everyone believed Paul, and not everyone will believe you. Our responsibility is to tell them. The Holy Spirit will convince them of the truth. Jesus said, "When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth (John 16:13)." Even though some went away sneering, some followed Paul and became believers (v. 34). How many could we lead to God if we shared the truth with them?

#### **3. Tell the skeptic what God will ultimately do.**

God will judge every person. Paul said, "For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice...." (v.31). God will always be fair. He cannot be fooled. The rich

man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 illustrates that God is fair. The world thought God blessed the rich man and cursed Lazarus. God reads the heart, not the outward appearance. When they died, Lazarus went to heaven while the rich man went to hell. God can be trusted to judge fairly. Have you called on the name of the Lord? Have your friends?

#### **4. Tell the skeptic what we must do.**

A person can be saved through faith when he repents and believes in the risen Lord Jesus Christ. It is God's will that everyone repents (v.30). To repent means that we agree with God that our sin has separated us from him. Jesus died to pay our penalty so God could bless us with eternal and abundant life. To receive that wonderful life we must believe that Jesus is our risen Saviour. Paul writes, "...for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13)." Have you called on the name of the Lord? Have your friends?

#### **Call to Commitment:**

Our text says Dionysius, Damaris, and others were saved. What would have happened to them if Paul had not been brave enough to tell the Gospel to a crowd of people who were skeptical? I wonder how many people are waiting for us to share the Gospel with them. What will happen to them if we don't?

#### **Concluding the Service:**

Sing again the song "Open Our Eyes". Read through the words. Have a few moments to reflect on these words before singing through the song for a final time.

Pray that as we have eyes to see and ears to hear the message of Jesus that we may share that message with someone else this week.

For each participant during the Gathering Time

## **Luke 18:18-30**

### **The Rich Ruler**

***<sup>18</sup>A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"***

***<sup>19</sup>"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. <sup>20</sup>You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honour your father and mother.' "***

***<sup>21</sup>"All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said.***

***<sup>22</sup>When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."***

***<sup>23</sup>When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth. <sup>24</sup>Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup>Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."***

***<sup>26</sup>Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?"***

***<sup>27</sup>Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."***

***<sup>28</sup>Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!"***

***<sup>29</sup>"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God <sup>30</sup>will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."***