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Read this week's scripture and answer the questions below. As you read, consider how these verses fit into what you are seeing or experiencing today. Prepare to share with your small group anything that jumped out at you, confused you, encouraged you, challenged or convicted you. Then take some time to read and meditate on the psalm of the week.

1. Before reading, pray for understanding; ask that understanding would lead to faithful action. Read all of chapter 17:16-34.
2. Meditate on verse 16. Paul's spirit is provoked within him when he perceives the idols around him? What provokes your spirit, draws your attention to the world's need for God's truth and grace? What idols do you see lifted up in our culture? Let these thoughts lead you to prayer. Where is God calling you to enter into the conversation?
3. Look at verse 17. Paul splits his time between the synagogue and the marketplace. For Paul, it's all ministry. Have we accepted a divided life, with ministry in one place and the rest of life in another? God calls us to one unified life, a life of worship and stewardship. Let these thoughts lead you to prayer today.
4. Spend time with verses 18-21. Paul encounters Epicureans (pleasure seekers) and Stoics (devoted to morals and duty). In Paul, these two groups hear "strange things" and "something new." How do these two descriptions challenge you? How do they point to Jesus? Let these thoughts lead us to pray for a witness that challenges the normal, and the old, that is the gospel.
5. Look carefully at verses 22-23. Paul stands. Paul has observed his surroundings carefully. Paul dignifies his listeners as religious people, truth seekers. He takes them seriously, then he declares the truth, he declares Christ. What stands out to you in this moment? Let these observations lead you to prayer.
6. Consider verses 24-27. See what Paul does here: he offers challenge and encouragement. He challenges the notion that God is contained within temples or monuments. Yet he encourages the Athenians by affirming that the true God is, "not far from each of us." Consider the way the gospel both challenges and affirms. Let these thoughts lead you to pray for the wisdom and the courage to live out the whole gospel.
7. Read verses 28-34. Here again Paul mixes affirmation with high challenge, a call to repentance. Some respond. Some do not. Let us pray today for those who have not yet heard the gospel, the good news of Jesus, and for those who have heard but have not believed.