



Reaching Intellectuals for Christ

By Shannon Ford on March 15, 2022

TODAY'S READING: Acts 17

If the thought of sharing the gospel with intellectuals intimidates you, then Paul's sermon to the philosophers of Athens in Acts 17:16-34 should both encourage and instruct you. Paul was in Athens, not by his plans, but because he had to flee persecution in Berea. He was waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him.

The glory days of Athens had been four centuries earlier. At one time in history, Athens was the city of the world. It was unsurpassed in philosophy, mathematics, science, art and literature. During Paul's visit, Athens was still a major city full of intellectuals who did not know Jesus Christ. Notice from Paul's sermon, his approach for reaching intellectuals. First, we should *begin on common ground* (17:16-23). Paul began by stating that they were very religious in all respects. One way to begin a conversation about the Lord is to ask a person, "Do you have any spiritual beliefs?" Or, if a person is spouting off intellectual ideas about God, you can say, "I see that you've done some thinking about spiritual issues. Have you given any thought to who Jesus is?"

Second, we must *show them God's supremacy and their sin* (17:24-30). Intellectuals need to learn a basic fact that God is God, and they are not God! Finally, we should *call intellectuals to repent and place their faith in Christ*. The only way an intellectual can be saved is the only way anyone can be saved, by repenting of his/her pride and other sins, and by trusting in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and surrendering their life to Christ.

I have discovered that intellectuals have a lot of questions, but they do not have any good answers. Many intellectuals concern themselves with lofty questions, but never face their own sin and need for a Savior. When sharing with a lost person, we must follow Paul's approach of establishing a common ground, showing them the supremacy of God and their own sinfulness, and calling them to repentance and faith in the risen Lord Jesus. This conversation must be shared with love and respect. Some will sneer and some will put us off until later. But some will believe and be saved.

PRAYER: Lord, help me start a spiritual conversation with a lost family member or friend this week. Help me share the gospel in a way that they may begin to grasp and understand. Help me be bold enough to remind them that God is available to anyone who seeks Him. In Jesus' name, amen.

TOMORROW'S READING: Acts 18

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