

Fingerprints of God Discussion Questions:

1. How do you think your commitment to study the Bible daily might impact your family? Your community?
2. If you have traveled, what do you usually do when you arrive in a new city?
 - a. Do you explore the city alone or with a group?
3. If someone made a statue of you, what pose would be most appropriate? What inscription?
4. What philosophies and pagan cultures or religions are you aware of today?
 - a. Have you personally interacted with someone from a different philosophy or pagan religion? Describe.
5. Paul traveled and entered Athens, known for its enlightened thinking, immense culture and majestic idols. What was Paul's reaction to the city (17:16)?
 - a. How did Luke summarize the city (17:21)?
6. In addition to the synagogue, where did Paul reason daily with those who would listen (17:17)?
7. What branches of philosophy did Paul encounter (17:18)?
 - a. What did they think of Paul?
8. The philosophers took Paul to the Areopagus (Mars Hill), which was an area where legislative and judicial councils met. What question did they ask Paul (17:19)?
9. What differences do you see in the reactions of the philosophers and those of the Jews, which we've seen on Paul's journey so far?
10. How did Paul connect with the crowd (17:22)?
 - a. Why was this important?
11. What inscription found on an altar did Paul use to begin his sermon (17:23)?
12. How is Paul's sermon unlike the one to Jews in 11:16-41?
 - a. Is not using Scripture here a strength or a weakness?
 - b. Why?
13. Paul presented a great picture of God to the crowd. He proclaimed him Creator, Provider, Sustainer, Ruler, Judge and Father (17:24-31). How did those listening respond to these descriptions (17:32)?
 - a. Take time to thank God for how he fulfills these roles in your life.
14. How did Paul indicate his knowledge of Greek poetry (17:28-29)?
 - a. Why did Paul use this reference of Greek poetry to explain God?
15. Why did God create and provide everything for us (17:26-27)?
 - a. What is an appropriate response from us to God?
16. What does God command men to do (17:30)?
17. Did anyone repent and believe after hearing Paul's sermon (17:34)?
 - a. How does the response in Athens compare with Berea (17:12)?
 - b. With Thessalonica (17:4)?
18. What can Paul's example in Athens teach us about reaching people today for Christ?
 - a. How should we treat people with different cultures and beliefs?
 - b. Could you share the Gospel with someone without quoting the Bible in a culturally relevant way?
19. Athens was known for its great art, literature, freedom to engage any philosophy, and its forward-thinking culture. What cultures today might resemble that of Athens during Paul's day?

20. An idol is a God-substitute—any person or thing that occupies the rightful place of God in our lives.
 - a. What idols are people serving today?
 - b. Do you have any idols that need to be destroyed?
21. People today want their point of view heard. Some try to gain a hearing through web sites and blogs, picketers, media publications and other such means. How might you gain a hearing with someone you don't know to reach them with the message of Jesus?
22. Which part of Paul's message might you use to speak to someone who doesn't know about Jesus?
23. In verse 24, Paul tells us that God "does not live in temples built by hands." How do you explain why we call our church "God's House" or why we say God is with us at church? Review verse 27 for a hint.
24. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because so many wouldn't repent. Paul was greatly distressed about the state of Athens. How do you see your city?
 - a. Should you be greatly distressed? If so, what can you do to change the situation for good?
25. How does the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead give assurance that one day he will judge the world in righteousness?

Next Steps:

- Rather than seeing things as man sees them, I will try to see things as God sees them.
- An idol is a God-substitute—any person or thing that occupies the rightful place of God. I need to turn over my idol of _____ to God.
- I will pray that our church can take the timeless truths of the Gospel to our culture in meaningful, relevant ways.