



Lost

September 11, 2022

Acts 17:22-31

Connect:

- Tell of a time when you were physically lost. How did it feel? How were you ‘found’?
- Dig deeper to consider a time when you might say you were spiritually or emotionally lost. How did that feel? How did you find your way out?

Engage

- Read *Acts 17:22-31*. Share about a word or phrase that catches your initial attention. Do you notice a word about ‘*finding God*’? Discuss.
- Depending on the version or scholar questioned, some say Paul is sarcastically oppositional in this passage. Others suggest Paul is more open to meeting the Athenians where they are (*see The Message Bible translation*), as in the “*Be all things to all people that you might win some*” mentality. Discuss those differences.
- How do you approach dialogue with those of differing viewpoints? Has ‘*arguing someone into belief*’ ever worked for you? Why/why not? Is there a more effective approach?
- What does it mean to ‘*live and move and have our being*’ in God?
- Can you identify within your soul that place that acknowledges “*You are here*”? Is that essential to knowing how to move your faith journey forward? Discuss.
- Carey Nieuwhof and David Kinnamon in partnership with the Barna Research Group are analyzing the effectiveness of the Church across North America and note, among others, that one of the shifts in effective churches in this new post-pandemic world is a focused energy. People are burning out trying to keep up all the activities, worship experiences and programs they’ve always done with fewer people to lead them as well. “*The church at its best,*” they report, “*has always equipped people to live out their faith in the world. But you have to be in the world to influence the world. Churches that focus their energies on a few things the church can uniquely do best will emerge as the most effective churches moving forward. Simplified churches will complement people’s witness, not compete with people’s witness.*” How do we re-center our energy so we find a unified spirit, doing really well what we do instead of spreading us out so thin that we lose the focused and centralized energy to grow forward?

Next Steps:

- Be honest with your self-soul-assessment. Claim where you are. Commit to at least one new way you will be about finding your way forward in faith.
- Pray for our church about how we might re-center our energies to unify the faithful, avoid burnout, invite those missing to join us, and be excellent in all we do.

Pray:

- Share joys and concerns about your lives with your group. Lift those in prayer.
- Pray courage for yourself and our church to share the grace-gospel extravagantly.
- “*Lord, help me find my way deeper into the serving effort of your Realm. Amen.*”