

## **Reacting to Worldliness - Acts 17:16-23 9-7-14PM**

Paul had an incredible opportunity in Acts 17 to speak before the greatest secular minds of the time. He had this opportunity because, when he was provoked by the idols of Athens, he did not react with anger or shame or simply ignore it, he acted in the appropriate way we need to act.

We all have worldly friends. In recent lessons we looked at I Corinthians 5:9-13 and examined the authority we have to have them. Paul said that they would be immoral by their nature; immoral persons are called here and in the next chapter idolaters and infidels, drunkards and swindlers, adulterers, homosexuals & fornicators. We cannot be surprised if they act according to their character.

How ALL Godless Friends Act:

- They curse on our Facebook page
- They offer to take us out carousing
- They reveal belief in false doctrines
- They defend unrighteous ideals
- They demonstrate immoral conduct

Now let's consider Paul's example. He walked among many idols and pagan practices in Athens. The Bible says he was provoked to a response. What we need to consider is how did he present himself?

**What We DON'T Need To Do:** Explode – to act with clear anger or offense towards those in sin. Paul was almost certainly offended by the Athenian conduct. However, when he addressed them he called them “religious”. We learn something important in that; it is not appropriate to express Christ losing our temper. An example of this is in Mark 3:1-5. There Jesus was provoked to anger, but did not react.

**What We DON'T Need To Do:** Panic – fear what others (i.e. our brethren) will think of us for having sinful friends. It seems that when he went to Mars Hill, Paul did not worry about brethren. We must presume that he presumed they would understand. Jesus ate with sinners in his life (ex. Matthew 9:9-13). He presumed that those who were righteous would understand, and He was not concerned with the understanding of the hard hearted.

**What We DON'T Need To Do:** Ignore it – pretend it did not happen. When he walked among the idols, Paul then preached Christ boldly. When they wanted to hear more, Paul accepted the offer to speak. NEVER put your head in the sand because of embarrassment or shame. Instead, use the opportunity to speak. Jesus did in John 4:7-18. Consider in particular when the woman at the well acknowledged her situation of a husband; Jesus did not walk away, but taught her the truth.

**What We NEED To Do:** Disown it – make it clear we disagree. Paul told them (kindly) it was wrong, and there was no confusion in his belief. Much similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 22:23-33. Be clear that what was done was not right.

**What We NEED To Do:** Use it – make a teaching moment. Paul used the Unknown God as a stage to preach Christ. Not just here, but throughout the book of Acts Paul used many opportunities to teach, just as did Jesus (example Mark 11:15-17)

**What Will Happen:** #1: Nothing; #2: You could lose a “friend”; #3: You could save a soul