

## 1<sup>st</sup> Order and 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Questions

### 1<sup>st</sup> Order Questions

- What gives meaning to life? What brings true peace?
- How will I handle life's biggest challenges?
  - Death, broken dreams & relationships, fears, regrets, anger, depression, ...

**A big mistake:**  
**Answering 1<sup>st</sup> Order Questions**  
**with 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Answers**

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Questions

- Will I pass this class or get promoted? Do I like my job?
- Can I pay my bills? Will my car start?
- Do I have real friends?

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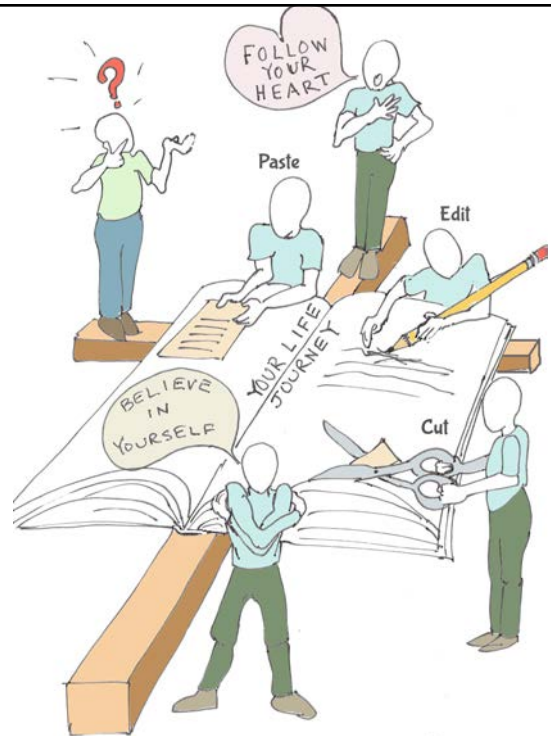
### **How do people handle life's biggest challenges?**

- Difference between the 'right answer' and the 'real answer'

## Greater by Far

### Acts 17:16-34

Chinese: page 1797  
 Spanish: page 1412  
 English-Green: page 757  
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### *Background for this Passage*

- The Apostle Paul: Missionary in the Roman Empire
- Telling people the Good News of Jesus Christ
    - Usually speaking to Jews, as well as Gentiles who had adopted Jewish beliefs
    - Sermons showed Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises of Judaism
  - Repeatedly attacked by some of the Jews
  - Ended up in Athens as a place of safety
    - Left traveling companions in Macedonia
  - Now encountering a thoroughly Greek setting

*Acts 17:16-34*

16-21: Paul challenged Athenians about idolatry

22-23: • Seemingly: Unplanned ministry

24-31: • “Be ready in season and out of season...”

32-34: • Provoked by extensive idolatry

- “It is easier to find a god than a man in Athens”
- A great distance from true worship of God
- Passion for God’s glory and people’s experience of it
- Ministry in 2 contexts: synagogue & marketplace
- He challenged the philosophers about idols
- Athens: place of endless debate
- “Invited” to the Areopagus

**provoked = deeply troubled**

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*Acts 17:16-34*

16-21: Paul challenged Athenians about idolatry

22-23: Paul in Areopagus: the answer for their quest

24-31: • Started his bridge in their world

32-34: • So many idols!

- “Unknown God” became his basis for conversation
- Opened the door for a hearing
  - Paul’s spirit was provoked, yet His interaction was gracious and not antagonistic or judgmental

*Acts 17:16-34*

16-21: Paul challenged Athenians about idolatry

22-23: Paul in Areopagus: the answer for their quest

24-31: God is source of all, not a product of human artistry

32-34: • Biblical ideas in “cultural clothing”

- cultural sensitivity without weakening the truth
- The **source** of humanity can't be less than humanity
- The **controller** of human history is greater than it
  - Purpose: that all would seek God
  - God is not far away from anyone
- The **concluder** of human history will judge it
  - All people everywhere commanded to turn to God
- Jesus Christ is the Savior and Judge over all

*Acts 17:16-34*

16-21: Paul challenged Athenians about idolatry

22-23: Paul in Areopagus: the answer for their quest

24-31: God is source of all, not a product of human artistry

32-34: Responses: mocking, “interest”, or genuine belief

- No evidence of starting a church there
- Yet some prominent people became Christians

## The Big Idea

God is the beginning, middle, and end  
of all human and natural history

**Creator of world  
and peoples**

**Gives life\*, appoints times  
& places for all peoples**

**Set a day  
for judgment**

Therefore...

God is to be worshiped and feared  
before and under and after everything else

## *What competes with our worship of God*

- What are our answers to 1<sup>st</sup> Order Questions?
  - What gives meaning to life? What brings true peace?
  - How will I handle life's biggest challenges?
- Athens
  - Gods, idols, temples
  - Philosophies: pleasures, ideas
- Worship involves recognizing my lowliness  
as I look up into the unfathomable greatness of God
  - A risk of growing as a Christian:  
standing with God, looking down in judgment on people

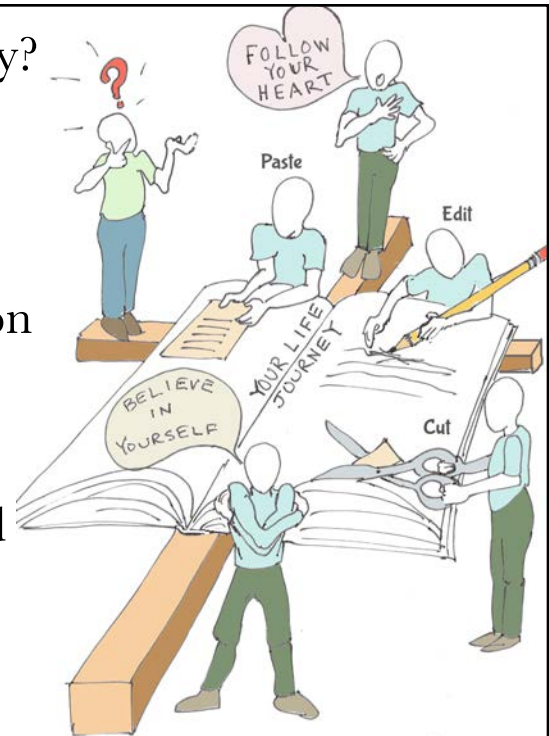
How do you make sense of your story?  
Whose voices and views guide you?

God is the beginning, middle,  
and end of each of our stories

Our story is entirely dependent upon  
and contained within His story

Therefore...

God is to be worshiped and feared  
before and under and after  
everything else



### *Application: Worship God!*

- Internal life (head & heart)
  - Conviction: deep, genuine belief
    - We contribute nothing to God
    - He has no need of us at all and He owes us nothing
    - He is “high” beyond comprehension
  - Yet...
    - He has given us His Son
    - He invites us into relationship with Him
    - His Holy Spirit lives within His children
    - He is amazingly patient and kind with our continued lowliness

***Application: Worship God!***

- Internal life (head & heart)
  - See, understand, and bow before His overwhelming and unfathomable glory
  - Guard our hearts against...
    - longing instead for other things
    - looking down on others, as though we are ‘high’ like God

***Application: Worship God!***

- Internal life (head & heart)
- External life (hands)
  - Fear: deep recognition of our lack of glory before His glory
    - Even our existence is entirely dependent upon Him
  - Unhesitating and enthusiastic submission (obedience) before the wisdom and glory and authority of God
    - Money & resources
    - Time & attention
    - Control
    - Identity & relationships
    - And more...

### *Application: Worship God!*

- Internal life (head & heart)
- External life (hands)
- Be passionate for the glory of God
  - In ourselves: fight against pride in all its forms
  - The world around us: point people to the true and unsurpassable glory of God
  - Be deeply disturbed (provoked) where worship of God is displaced by anything else
    - And take action...

### **The Big Idea**

God is the beginning, middle, and end  
of all human and natural history

**Creator of world  
and peoples  
of you and me**

**Gives life\*, appoints times  
& places for all peoples  
for our entire lives**

**Set a day  
for judgment  
for you and me**

Therefore...

God is to be worshiped and feared  
before and under and after everything else

*by you and me*



## 1<sup>st</sup> Order and 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Questions

### 1<sup>st</sup> Order Questions

- What gives meaning to life? What brings true peace?
- How will I handle life's biggest challenges?

### How do you really answer 1<sup>st</sup> Order Questions?

“Now this is **eternal life:** that they **know** you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” *John 17:3*

**Abundant**  
**Joyful**  
**Unending**

**Head: know the truth**

**Heart: in loving, daily relationship with God**

**Hands: in daily actions of godliness**