

Significant.

(Acts 17:16–34)

Understanding what others value can give us an audience to share what they truly need to understand.

1. If others are significant to God they ought to be significant to us. (Acts 17:16-23)

- a. Compassion requires seeing others, even those with a very different lifestyle and belief system, as precious to God and therefore precious to us.
- b. Compassion requires understanding, valuing what others value, and deliberate effort.
- c. Compassion requires sensitivity, accurately noticing the opportunities provided and taking them.

2. Valuing others and their viewpoints does not silence our voice: it gives us one. (Acts 17:24-34)

- a. We want them to want to hear what we have to say.
(Colossians 4:2-6)
- b. Love speaks up, it does not ignore.
 - Defining our terms is very important when we present the gospel.
 - The essence of the gospel remains the same regardless of the audience.
- c. An awareness of creation is different from knowing personally the God who created it. (Romans 1)
 - Some are reaching for truth. We can have the privilege of helping them find what they are looking for.
 - Because all people are eternal and judgement is imminent, this ought to motivate the way we share the gospel.

Questions for application and discussion:

1. Paul was in Athens “waiting” for the return of his friends. It was while he was waiting that all of the events of these verses took place. Divine appointments are rarely the expected ones. What opportunities is God giving you that you might be overlooking?

2. Paul was asked to share more about his beliefs by those who desperately needed it. Colossians 3:6 says to “season our conversations with salt.” How can you do this with your neighbors, co-workers, friends, and family?
3. What do you believe motivated Paul to listen to those that believed very differently from him? How did he display true compassion to them? How can you display true compassion to others in the light of our impending judgement?