

STUDENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

EMPOWERED – Session 11

Empowered to Speak Into the World

Acts 17:16–34

SESSION FOCUS

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to engage the world with wisdom, humility, courage, compassion, and faithful presence.

Acts 17 tells the story of Paul speaking in Athens among people with very different beliefs, assumptions, and worldviews. Rather than reacting with fear or hostility, Paul listens carefully, observes thoughtfully, and points people toward Jesus.

This session explores how Christians can remain rooted in Christ while engaging a divided and complicated world faithfully.

The goal is not argument or cultural domination.

The goal is Spirit-led witness marked by truth, humility, and love.

OPENING REFLECTION

Take a few quiet moments before beginning.

- Why do conversations about faith often become difficult?
- How do fear or anger sometimes shape Christian engagement with the world?
- Why do some Christians withdraw while others become combative?
- What does faithful Christian presence look like today?

Personal Notes:

SCRIPTURE READING

Read Acts 17:16–34 slowly.

As you read, notice:

- how Paul observes the culture around him
- how he speaks
- and how he keeps Jesus central throughout the conversation.

KEY IDEA

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to engage the world thoughtfully, compassionately, truthfully, and faithfully while remaining centered on Jesus.

PART 1: ATTENTIVENESS BEFORE REACTION

(Acts 17:16–17)

Paul carefully observes the culture around him.

Faithful witness begins with attentiveness and listening.

Reflection Questions

1. Why is listening often difficult?
2. How do assumptions affect relationships and conversations?
3. What helps believers remain thoughtful rather than reactive?

Personal Notes:

PART 2: SPEAKING WITH WISDOM & HUMILITY

(Acts 17:22–23)

Paul begins with connection rather than condemnation.

The Holy Spirit produces humility and wisdom.

Reflection Questions

4. What makes difficult conversations feel threatening?
5. What is the difference between conviction and hostility?
6. Why is humility important in Christian witness?

Personal Notes:

PART 3: THE HOLY SPIRIT ALWAYS POINTS TOWARD JESUS

(Acts 17:24–31)

Paul ultimately points people toward Jesus and resurrection.

The Holy Spirit keeps Christ at the center.

Reflection Questions

7. Why do Christians sometimes lose focus on Jesus in difficult conversations?
8. What helps believers remain centered on Christ?
9. How can Christians speak truthfully without becoming defensive or combative?

Personal Notes:

PART 4: FAITHFULNESS, NOT CONTROL

(Acts 17:32–34)

People respond differently to Paul’s message.

Believers are called to faithfulness rather than controlling outcomes.

Reflection Questions

10. Why do people often feel pressure to “win” conversations?
11. How does trusting God change the way believers engage others?
12. What does faithful Christian presence look like in everyday life?

Personal Notes:

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Take a few quiet moments to reflect honestly.

- Where do you most need wisdom, humility, or courage?
- How do fear or frustration shape your reactions to others?
- What would more Christ-centered engagement look like in your relationships or conversations?

Personal Response:

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray for:

- wisdom
- humility
- courage
- compassion

- and Christ-centered faithfulness.
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OPTIONAL PRACTICE FOR THE WEEK

This week:

- Re-read Acts 17:16–34 daily
- Practice listening carefully during conversations
- Pray before difficult interactions:

“Holy Spirit, help me respond with wisdom, truth, and love.”

- Reflect on areas where fear or anger affect reactions
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FINAL THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit does not form fearful or hostile believers.

The Spirit forms people who remain rooted in Jesus while engaging the world with wisdom, humility, compassion, and truth.
