

Acts: The Spirit, the Church and the Spread of God's Word
How to Reach the Stubborn and the Seeking
Acts 17:1-15
Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Nov 10, 2019

I. You can be sure you have everything you need to reach both the stubborn and the seeking in the Word of God.

Acts 17:2,4 “And Paul...reasoned with them from the Scriptures... And some of them were **persuaded** and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.”

Acts 17:11-12 “Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; **they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed,** with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.”

The stubborn Thessalonians and the seeking Bereans were both reached by the same means—God's Word!

Hebrews 4:12-13 “For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. **And no creature is hidden from his sight,** but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

A. Nothing will remind you of the life-changing power of God's Word better than being regularly changed by it yourself.

Matthew 4:4 “But He answered, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’”

Romans 15:4 “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

II. You need to prepare to engage the lost with hope and help from God's Word.

Acts 17:2-3 “And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he **reasoned** with them from the Scriptures, **explaining** and **proving** that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.’”

A. **Reason** with them. (Dialogue, not monologue.)

B. **Explain** truth to them. (“Big reveal,” not “fun facts.”)

C. **Prove** things to them. (Answer *their* questions instead of proving your favorite points.)

1 Peter 3:15-16 “...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with

gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”

How can you prepare to know God’s Word and use it effectively with others?

- a. **Confess** sin and repent.

1 Peter 2:1-3 “So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.”

- b. **Commit** to diligence.

2 Timothy 2:15 “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

- c. **Carry out** what you’re learning.

James 1:22 “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

- d. **Coach** someone else.

2 Timothy 2:2 “...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”

Ezra 7:10 “For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.”

III. You need to pray for God to work in the hearts and minds of the lost you’re trying to reach. God alone can save!

John 6:44 “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

Isaiah 43:11 “I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior.”

Questions for Community Group and/or Personal Application:

- 1) The Thessalonians were stubborn, the Bereans were seeking, and both were lost. Which group can you most closely relate to?
- 2) Who have you forgotten God can reach with His Word?
- 3) Pastor Peter said “We give up on the stubborn because we think they’re too closed,” and “Sometimes we don’t pursue the seeking because we think they’ll probably find God on their own.” Can you relate to both these statements? Which one resonates with you more than the other?
- 4) Recall a time when God’s Word brought about change in your life.
- 5) When you think of a lost person, who comes to mind? Are they stubborn or seeking? Pray the Lord would reach them as only He can, and ask Him if He might use you to do so.