

Week 08
048/317

Transforming Daily
“... *philosophers* ...”
Acts 17:18

There are some really great minds in the world today. They are philosophers of the highest order. However, sometimes the greatest minds lack the smallest amount of common sense, or at least reject any other thought on any given matter other than that of their own ilk. To be fair, at times all of us act that way, but not on a regular basis.

Paul is confronted with this very issue. He is confronted by Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Oversimplified, one philosophy accentuated the pleasures in life, free from pain, while the other accentuated the philosophy of man's self-sufficiencies, so to speak, one celebrated the body and the other celebrated the mind. There's much more to their respective tenants, but suffice it to say that they each celebrated the creature over the Creator. When Paul preached God's Word, God's philosophy and theology, obviously the epicureans and stoics were more than bothered about the matter. So they did what all people do who are full of pride, they attacked what they didn't understand and weren't willing to accept.

Today is no different. There are many people differing in their points of view, their philosophy of living, if you will, and they don't want to entertain any other point of view but their own. The key to their confrontation against Christianity specifically is fear. Simply put, they fear what they don't understand. Make no mistake about it, while they may not be practicing epicureans or stoics, they celebrate the creation over the Creator. The responsibility and privilege of the believer is to live a life that celebrates the Creator over His creation.

Paul did not take the confrontation personally. He used it as an opportunity to witness. He was not threatened by their false doctrine and was willing to listen to them. After hearing their arguments, he realized there was an opportunity to turn the tables, and he simply offered them Jesus.

Are you careful not to take spiritual conflict personally? Are you careful to remain behind the cross? Do you fear the philosophy of others? Can you distinguish between what they believe and what you believe? Can you articulate the gospel? Just remember, whether you know it or not, you are always surrounded by informal and formally trained philosophers.