

Acts.



Paul vs the Idols of Athens

The **Problem** of Idolatry

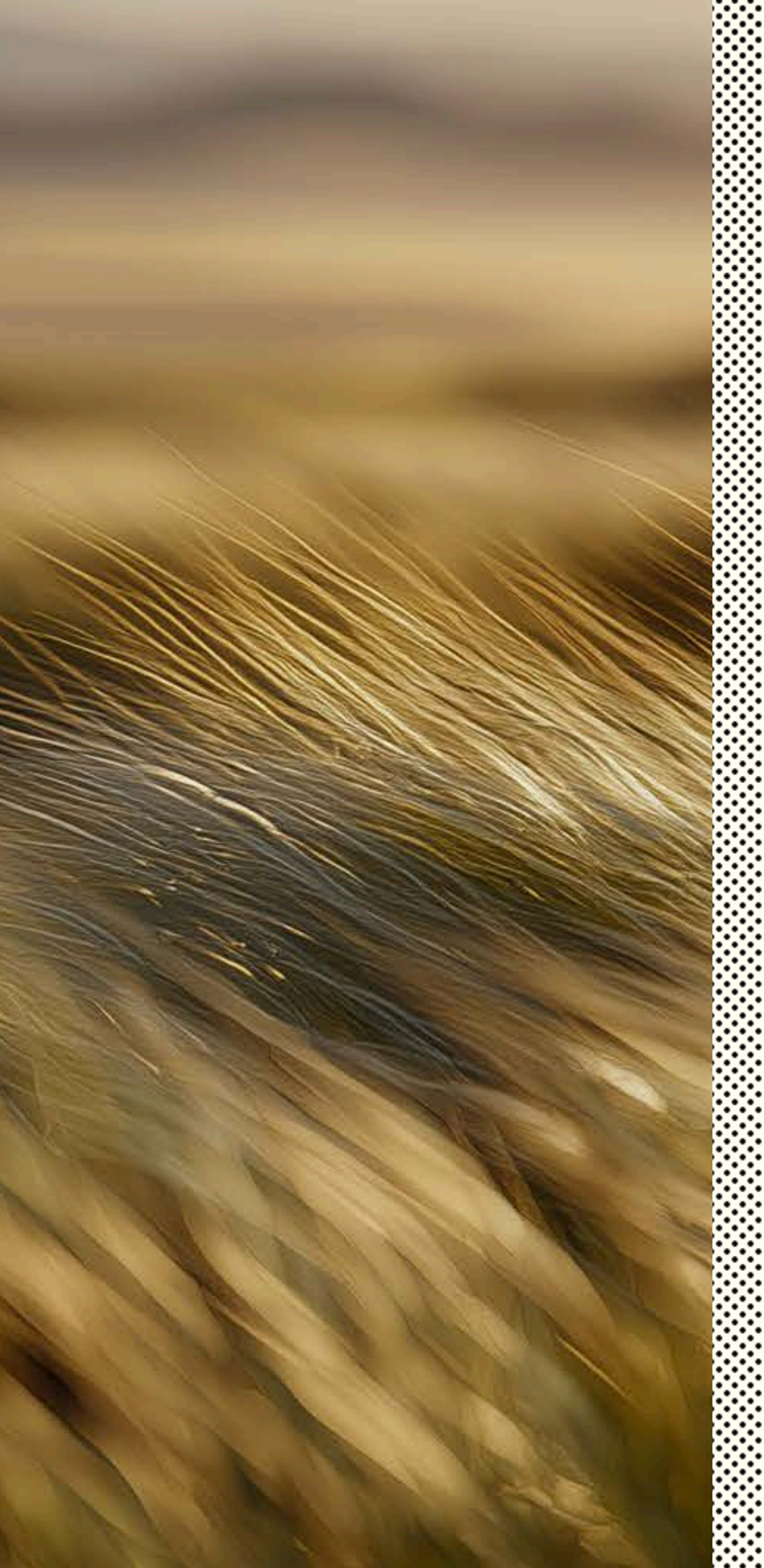
↳ ACTS 17:16-21

The **Root** of Idolatry

↳ ACTS 17:22-23

The **Cure** to Idolatry

↳ ACTS 17:24-34



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The Problem of Idolatry

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.

ACTS 17:16 NIV

“Son of man, these men have set up idols in their **hearts...**”

EZEKIEL 14:3a NIV

What is an idol? It is anything **more important** to you than God, anything that **absorbs your heart and imagination** more than God, anything you **seek to give you** what only God can give... **Anything** can be an idol, and **everything** has been an idol.

TIM KELLER | "COUNTERFEIT GODS"

So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ A group of **Epicurean** and **Stoic** philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

ACTS 17:17-18 NIV

Epicureans

Worldview

Agnostic/Materialist

Purpose of Life

Pleasure

Way of Life

Avoid pain and suffering



The Problem of Idolatry

Epicureans

Stoics

Worldview

Agnostic/Materialist

Pantheist

Purpose of Life

Pleasure

Virtue

Way of Life

Avoid pain and suffering

Avoid weakness

The Problem of Idolatry

	Epicureans	Stoics
Worldview	Agnostic/Materialist	Pantheist
Purpose of Life	Pleasure	Virtue
Way of Life	Avoid pain and suffering	Avoid weakness
Heart Idol	Comfort	

The Problem of Idolatry

	Epicureans	Stoics
Worldview	Agnostic/Materialist	Pantheist
Purpose of Life	Pleasure	Virtue
Way of Life	Avoid pain and suffering	Avoid weakness
Heart Idol	Comfort	Control

Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the **Areopagus**, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.”

ACTS 17:19-20 NIV

Now all the Athenians and the foreigners residing there spent their time on nothing else but telling or hearing **something new.**

ACTS 17:21 CSB

So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, **continue to walk in him,**⁷ being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, **just as you were taught,** and overflowing with gratitude.

COLOSSIANS 2:6-7 CSB

Idolatry functions widely inside religious communities when **doctrinal truth** is elevated to the position of a false god. This occurs when people rely on the rightness of their doctrine for their standing with God rather than on God himself and his grace... Another form of idolatry within religious communities turns **spiritual gifts and ministry success** into a counterfeit god... [Christians] who believe with the mind that “I am only saved by grace” can come to feel in their heart that their standing with God depends largely on how many lives they are changing. Another kind of religious idolatry has to do with **moral living** itself... Though we may give lip service to Jesus as our example and inspiration, we are still looking to ourselves and own moral striving for salvation... Making an idol out of doctrinal accuracy, ministry success, or moral rectitude leads to constant internal conflict, arrogance and self-righteousness, and oppression of those whose views differ.

TIM KELLER, “COUNTERFEIT GODS”



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The **Problem** of Idolatry

↳ ACTS 17:16-21

The problem is **we are all guilty.**



Paul vs the Idols of Athens

The **Problem** of Idolatry

↳ ACTS 17:16-21

The **Root** of Idolatry

↳ ACTS 17:22-23

The **Cure** to Idolatry

↳ ACTS 17:24-34

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious.²³ For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: **TO AN UNKNOWN GOD**. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

ACTS 17:22-23 NIV

For **although they knew God**, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, **they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images** made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles...

²⁵ **They exchanged the truth about God for a lie**, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

ROMANS 1:21-23, 25 NIV

The essence of idolatry is the **entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him...** Wrong ideas about God are not only the fountain from which the polluted waters of idolatry flow; **they are themselves idolatrous.** The idolator simply imagines things about God and acts as if they were true.

A.W. TOZER | "KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY"



Paul vs the Idols of Athens

The **Root** of Idolatry

↳ ACTS 17:22-23

The root is **a wrong view of God.**



Paul vs the Idols of Athens

The **Problem** of Idolatry

↳ ACTS 17:16-21

The **Root** of Idolatry

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The **Cure** to Idolatry

↳ ACTS 17:24-34

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

ACTS 17:24-28 NIV

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ACTS 17:24-28 NIV

“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, **we should not think** that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image **made by human design and skill.**”

ACTS 17:29 NIV

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

JOHN 1:18 NIV

Here then, is the revolution: for all our dreams, our dark and frightened imaginings of God, **there is no God in heaven who is unlike Jesus. For he is God...** And in fact, if we do not go to this Word to know God, then all our thoughts about God, however respectful, worshipful or philosophically satisfying, will be **nothing but idolatry...** In Christ the Word, we exchange darkness for light as we think of God. **For he perfectly shows us an unsurpassably desirable God, a kind God who is against all that is wrong, a God who thaws us. And only when we see that will we truly love him.**

MICHAEL REEVES | "REJOICING IN CHRIST"

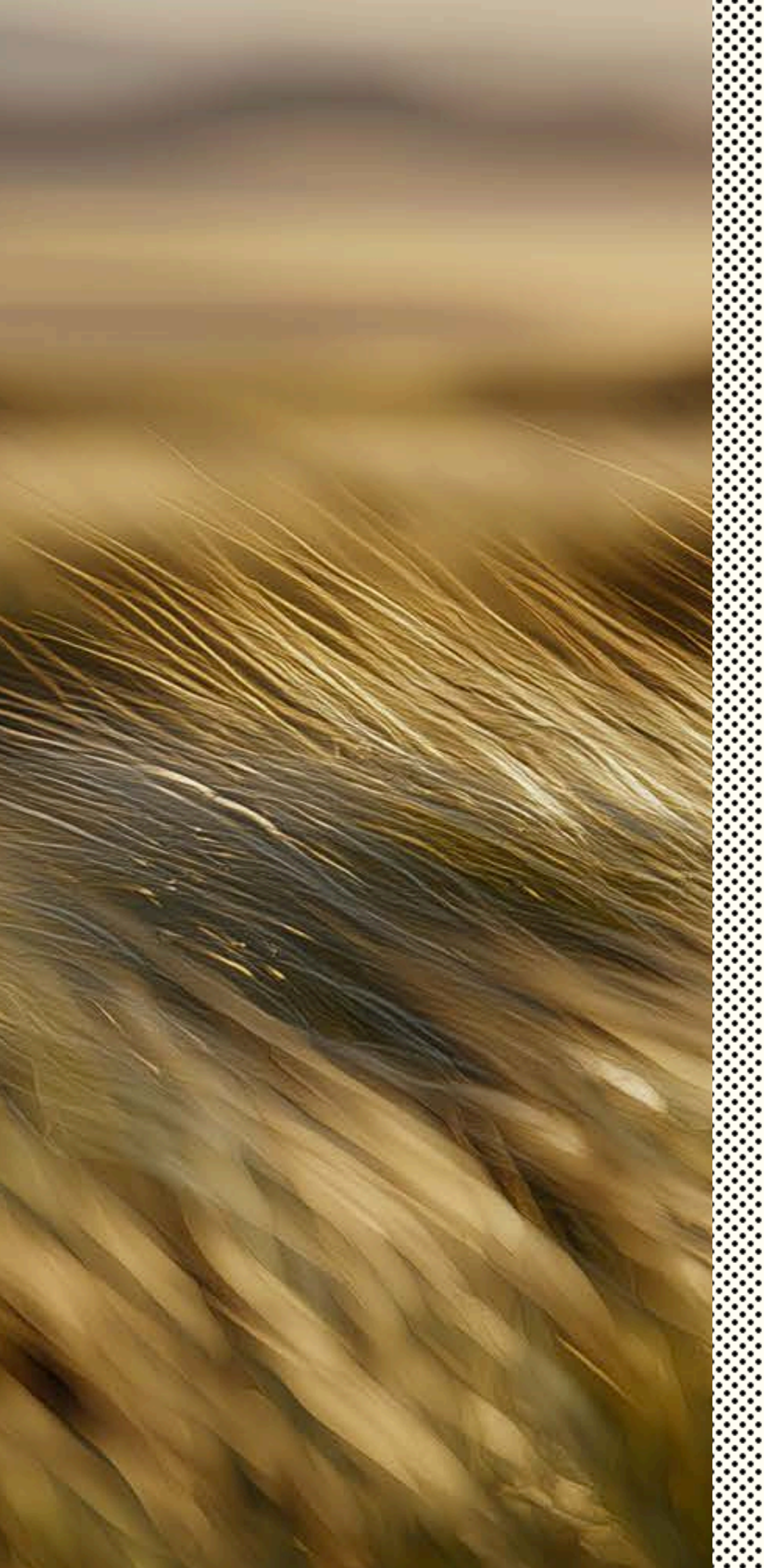


Paul vs the Idols of Athens

The **Cure** to Idolatry

↳ ACTS 17:22-23

The cure is **a right view of God revealed in Christ.**



In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now **he commands all people everywhere to repent.**³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

³² When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them **sneered**, but others said, “We want to **hear you again** on this subject.”³³ At that, Paul left the Council.³⁴ Some of the people became followers of Paul and **believed**. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

ACTS 17:30-34 NIV

How to repent of our idolatry

Acknowledge the Problem

↳ Confess our guilt of our idolatry

Find The Root

↳ Confront the lies and wrong views we have believed

Embrace The Cure

↳ Fix our eyes on the one true God, revealed in Christ

