

Start.

Week 1 of 8 : StartingPointGroup.org

INTRODUCTION

Everything that exists had a starting point . . . including you. You may have started on purpose. You may have started by accident (from your parent's perspective). You may even have started through the magic of medical science. Whatever the circumstances, you had a starting point and it began before you were aware of it.

Physical life is one of many starting points. Your formal education had a starting point. Your career had a starting point. Your romantic life had a starting point. Your experience as a parent had a starting point.

Faith has a starting point as well.

LISTENING GUIDE

- Your **faith** has a starting point as well.
- **Framework for Faith:**

God is **good**.

God punishes **evil** and rewards **good**.

God answers **prayer**.
- *"For most of us - our **childhood** faith doesn't hold up well to the rigors of **adult** life."*
- *"The Bible says" is not an adequate **starting** point or **returning** point for many adults.*
- *"The Bible says" was never **intended** to be the starting point for the Christian faith.*

Acts 17

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁹ 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."*

²² 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."

²⁴ *"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.'"

²⁹ *"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."*

³⁰ *"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 both of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." At that, Paul left the Council.

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"The Starting Point for the Christian faith isn't the Bible or Belief - it's a QUESTION."

Who is Jesus?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How and when did your faith journey begin?
2. Where would you say you are on your faith journey?
Starting - Turning - Returning - Somewhere Else
3. How well has your faith held up under the rigors of life?
4. How has your view of God changed
during different seasons of your life?
5. What one question do you hope to have answered
by the time we finish our 8-weeks together?

MOVING FORWARD

God did something outrageous in this outrageous world he created. He wants you to know about it because it has personal implications for you. The starting point for adult faith is not a Bible Story. It's not even the Bible. It's a question: "**Who is Jesus?**"

The starting point for adult faith is a person. Jesus came to remove the mystery, to make what was previously unknown, known. Jesus came to bring light to a dark world.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

*John 12:46 - "I have come into the world as a light,
so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."*

HOMEWORK: Read Chapter 1 | Answer Reflection Questions

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