

Are You Listening to a Broken God-finder Device?

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Does your mom or dad have a GPS device they use when they drive? It's usually a small flat box, about the size of a deck of cards. People can type in the address and a map to that place shows in the TV-like display on the front.

The best part, though, is that a voice comes from the box to give directions. "Turn left" it might say, or "Take the next highway exit." I like to pretend that there's a teeny-tiny lady inside the GPS shouting directions from an itsy-bitsy map, but that isn't really how it works.

My sister and I went on a trip using a GPS device. Once, after we'd stopped for gas, the GPS box said, "Turn right." We turned right and drove one block. Then the box said, "Turn right." We turned right and drove one block. Then the box said, "Turn right." We turned right and drove one block. Then the box said, (Can you guess?) "Turn right." We turned right, drove one block and were right back where we started! And still, the box said, "Turn right." We went around the block twice before we were sure the GPS was broken. As long as we were listening to the GPS box, we were *never* going to get home. We needed to find another way to get directions.

That's probably how the people of Athens felt. The Bible tells us that the city was full of places to worship. The people knew that there was a God, but they didn't know how to find Him or how to please Him. They didn't even believe that there was just one God; they thought there were several of them.

Lots of experts were telling the people of Athens different things—"Pray to this idol made of rock" someone might have said, or "worship the sun-god." There were idols and ideas everywhere. Some people said that it was best to eat and drink all you wanted all the time, but others said that you should try to never enjoy anything at all. It was as if the city was full, not of GPS devices, but god-finder devices, that told people to turn this way and that way to find a



god. But all of the god-finder devices in Athens were broken. None of them pointed to the one true God.

When the apostle Paul visited Athens, He was upset to hear so many different voices giving the wrong directions. He knew the one true God and that the only way to know God was through His Son, Jesus Christ. Paul walked through the streets of Athens and saw idols everywhere. There was even an extra altar with a sign on it that said "To the unknown god" just in case the people had missed one.

Every day Paul talked with people in the marketplace about Jesus, and even some of the experts in the worship of idol-gods listened carefully to him. The experts took Paul to Mars Hill where all the city leaders met. Paul was asked to talk to the crowd gathered on this big, flat rock.

Paul remembered the altar to the unknown God and said, "What you worship as unknown I will proclaim [explain] to you." He told the crowd that the unknown God was really the one true God, who created the world and everything in it. He explained that God doesn't live in a temple and that He is so great and powerful that He doesn't need people to help Him. But people need God. He gives us life and breath and everything else. God is alive like we are, not made of gold or silver or stone, and He isn't something just imagined by people.

Paul explained that because God created the world, we should obey Him. He told the crowd that God commands everyone to repent and that God has a day picked out when He will judge the world for sin. God proved that day was coming by raising Jesus from the dead.

I'm sorry to tell you that when some people heard Paul, they laughed and joked. Some people wanted to hear more, but *some* people joined Paul and believed. The Holy Spirit helped them to stop listening to all the broken god-finders.

So what about you? Are you relying on a broken god-finder? Or did you find a better way to get directions—reading the Bible yourself, listening carefully when the Bible is taught and asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand?

