

# Life Group Discussion Guide

Against All Odds: How the Name of Jesus Spreads  
Week 11: Unstoppable but Uncomfortable • Acts 14:8–20

Pastor Jon defined a worldview as, “a system of beliefs that work together to inform our identity, our choices, our values, and so forth.” The tricky thing about worldviews is—even though we all have one—we usually don’t examine our own until something comes along to challenge it.

- How would you describe your worldview?

As we continue our journey through the book of Acts, Paul and Barnabas have just arrived in the city of Lystra. Here, the people’s worldview—which is informing their false worship—is confronted by a perspective-shaking, belief-quaking message: the gospel. Let’s take a look at three things that happened as a result.

## 1. False Worship is Displayed

Our text this week begins with the miraculous: a man, lame from birth, leaps up and begins to walk. How do onlookers respond? Believing their gods had come down to them in human form, the people rush to offer sacrifices of worship to Paul and Barnabas.

Now, to us it might seem that the people of Lystra were primitive. But, according to their worldview, this was the proper way to respond to such an incredible display of power. In our context, we have a different worldview, but we still respond to displays of power with worship-like energy and devotion. Pastor Jon put it this way:

*“Why do you think that very intelligent people migrate to places like Silicon Valley or New York City? Because these are places of power. Still today people identify sources of power and sacrifice everything—their romantic life, their aspirations to a family, their best years, even their health—for the demands of the company (and behind the company, the ideal) they bow and subscribe to. Is this not worship?”*

- What sources of power have you seen people respond to with worship-like energy and devotion?
- How about yourself?
- How does it challenge you to consider your actions as being motivated by false worship?

## 2. False Worship is Exposed

When Paul and Barnabas realize what the Lycaonians are about to do, they rush into the crowd with an urgent message that accomplishes three things:

*a. Gets them to question their worldview*

Paul begins by questioning them, “Friends, why are you doing this?”—a simple question that packs a lot of punch:

*“We rarely question why we do what we do. Why do we binge shows? Why do we use our phones so much? Why do we put in so much overtime at the office? Why do we buy the newest devices, the biggest houses?”*

- Can you resonate with any of the “why” questions above? Do they bring another to mind? Take time now to question why you do what you do.
- Does your self-examination reveal any lies you’ve believed? Empty promises you’ve chased? Idols you’ve worshiped?

#### *b. Gently corrects their worldview*

After challenging the crowd to question their actions, Paul continues, “We too are only human, like you.” Like the Lycaonians, people today still try to put humans on a pedestal. As Pastor Jon pointed out, influencer culture is about this very thing.

*“We pin our hopes on rich people who can make us rich. Beautiful people who can make us beautiful. We believe a human is the answer to our deepest longings and problems. We’re lured by the promise, ‘I’m happy, and if you follow me you can be happy too.’ But Paul reminds us, ‘We are only human, like you.’”*

- Have you ever looked to a person to make you happy or satisfied? Talk about it.
- What happens when we chase satisfaction from anyone other than Jesus Christ?

#### *c. Builds for them the doctrine of God*

Paul doesn’t leave his listeners with an unraveled worldview, but presents them with three fundamental truths: There is one God. You are accountable to Him. He is good.

Here, we see that the gospel both comforts and confronts.

### **Comforts**

Paul begins his gospel proclamation by declaring, “We are bringing you **good news**, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God.” The people of Lystra didn’t know that Zeus and Hermes weren’t real and that sacrificing to them was pointless. So, to find out that you could turn from these worthless things was, for those with ears to hear, freeing! And this same truth still sets us free today:

*“Think of the many worthless things we know we can turn from because of the gospel. Salvation through politics? Fitness? Money? Religion? Romantic love? No, thank you! It is such a gift to know that these things, as a way of ultimate meaning and purpose and life, are worthless.”*

- What does your lifestyle reveal about whether you consider the pursuits of this world to be meaningful or worthless?
- What is your reaction to hearing that you don't have to pursue them?

## **Confronts**

Paul's message, however, was not only comforting. He boldly confronts his audience to "turn from these worthless things"—a call to repent of their false worship.

- Have you turned from the things that promise happiness, security, and satisfaction apart from the one true God? What is the evidence of this change in your life?
- If God is revealing an area of false worship in your own life, take time now to pray in repentance and "turn from these worthless things to the living God."

### **3. False Worship is Frustrated**

This time, Paul's message doesn't go over so well. Verse 19 tells us, "Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead."

The crowd's explosive reaction leads us to this week's **Big Idea: When the gospel confronts false worship, the response is never neutral.** It's either faith or violence. We've seen both through our journey in Acts, and we see the same in the Gospels. As Pastor Jon pointed out, this reality should cause us to stop and consider our own context:

*"While we thank our God for the conditions of peace we get to live in, may our peace not be the result of a harmless faith, a passive faith, a faith that presents no challenge to the gods of our culture—a faith unwilling to call out false worship."*

As our passage concludes, we find an example of the bold faith Christ calls us to as Paul, having been left for dead, gets up and walks back into the city where he had just been stoned.

*"The nerve! The courage! You cannot keep a gospel-man down. Not a man. Not a woman. Not a child. Church, the gospel is unstoppable. If Christ has come into your life, Christ in you is unstoppable. Like the lame man after his healing, like Paul after his stoning, like Jesus after his death, are you standing on the gospel?"*

- Do you believe the gospel is unstoppable?
- What would it look like for *you* to confront false worship and stand boldly for the gospel?