**Discussion Guide for Community Groups**

**Living for Christ in a Secular World – Divine Nature**

**Icebreakers:**

1. Outside of present company—who is the most moral/upright person you have ever known?
2. Are ethics or moral standards important to you? (Why?)
3. If you are falling short of the ethical standards set forth in scripture, are you more likely to excuse your behavior or repent?

**Read the following passage:** **Acts 17:24-31 (NKJV)** 24  God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25  Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26  And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27  so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28  for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' 29  Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. 30  Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31  because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

**Background:** *Paul is on a missionary journey through Greece. The message of the Gospel is making inroads but has created a good deal of persecution. Paul finds himself in Athens, a city that celebrates the virtues of the Greek gods. Unfortunately, in Greek Mythology, the gods lived just like everyone else. In the midst of the idol worshiping city, Paul finds himself on THE Hill (Areopagus) where the people of Athens gathered to hear the latest in news, politics, religion, philosophy and entertainment. Paul begins to educate the crowd concerning the Unknown God and His Divine Nature.*

**Acts 17:24,25 (NKJV) 24  God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25  Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.**

1. So, if the universe exists without a creator how do you explain away the idea that “Nothing can come from nothing?” (Rene Descartes argument for believing in God)
2. Why do you think the Greeks built altars and temples for the Greek gods?
3. Did you notice that Paul has already moved past the idea of God dwelling in a temple, even the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Where or what is the temple of God?

**Acts 17:26-28 (NKJV) 26  And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27  so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28  for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'**

1. Since we are all of one blood, why do you think racism exists?
2. Have you ever felt like you were a mistake? (Your parents may have even referred to you as a mistake; meaning you were unexpected)
3. What do you think Paul meant when he said, “for in Him we live, and move, and have our being?”

**Acts 17:29 (NKJV) 29  Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.**

1. How would you describe modern-day idolatry?
2. What is the danger of “thinking” of the Divine Nature as a construct of man?
3. The Divine Nature is described in **Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23  gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

**Wrap-up: Acts 17:30,31 (NKJV) 30  Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31  because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."**

* *Define the idea of repentance.*
* *Why is repentance better than judgment?*