

Wednesday Bible Study
May 13, 2026

Bible Study: “The God They Don’t See”

Based on Acts 17:22–31 and John 14:15–21
Inspired by the sermon “The God They Don’t See”

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
Open our eyes to your presence in places and people we might overlook. Teach us to love with compassion, to listen with humility, and to recognize your Spirit already at work in the world around us. Help us grow in wisdom, courage, and grace. Amen.

Introduction

This study explores two connected themes from the sermon:

1. Learning to recognize God at work in unexpected people and places.
2. Sharing faith through love, humility, and respectful engagement rather than judgment or fear.

The sermon’s story about ministry in a nursing home reminds us that spiritual insight often develops slowly. At first, the pastor struggled to see meaning or connection in the experience, but over time he discovered deep relationships and glimpses of God’s presence among the residents.

Both Jesus and Paul challenge us to become more attentive people—people who notice love, dignity, and the Spirit moving in the world.

Scripture Readings

Gospel Reading: John 14:15–21

Jesus speaks about love, commandments, and the coming Advocate—the Spirit of truth.

Key Themes

- Love is active, not merely emotional.
- Faith is relational, not simply intellectual.

- The Spirit continues to guide and challenge people.
- God's presence is often unnoticed unless we learn to pay attention.

The sermon emphasizes that Jesus is less concerned with rigid belief systems and more concerned with lives shaped by love in action.

First Reading: Acts 17:22–31

Paul speaks to philosophers in Athens at the Areopagus.

Key Themes

- Respectful engagement across differences.
- Curiosity instead of condemnation.
- Finding common ground.
- Naming God's presence within human searching.

Paul does not begin by attacking the Athenians. Instead, he recognizes their spiritual longing and speaks into it with compassion and conviction.

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Seeing God More Clearly

1. In the sermon, the pastor admits he initially wondered whether his ministry in the nursing home mattered. Have you ever had an experience where you later realized something meaningful was happening that you could not see at first?
 2. Why do you think it can be difficult to recognize God's presence in people who are lonely, suffering, elderly, marginalized, or different from us?
 3. The sermon says, "The fact that I showed up meant everything." What does "showing up" look like in our faith communities today?
 4. Where do you currently see signs of love, justice, compassion, or resilience in the world?
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Part 2: Love as the Center of Faith

5. Jesus says, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” What do you think Jesus means by “commandments” in this passage?
 6. The sermon suggests that faith is less about “believing the right things” and more about embodying love.
Do you agree? Why or why not?
 7. What is the difference between religion rooted in fear and religion rooted in love?
 8. How can churches become better at reflecting “love in motion” rather than simply preserving traditions or doctrines?
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Part 3: Engaging Others with Grace

9. Paul speaks respectfully with people who disagree with him. What can Christians today learn from Paul’s approach?
 10. Why is curiosity often more effective than condemnation in spiritual conversations?
 11. The sermon notes that some listeners were offended while others were inspired.
How do we remain faithful and loving even when people disagree with us?
 12. Have you ever changed your mind or grown spiritually because someone approached you with kindness rather than judgment?
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Reflection Activity

You are invited to sit quietly for one minute and reflect on this question:

“Where might God already be at work that I have not fully noticed yet?”

After the silence, invite volunteers to share.

Contemporary Connection

In a polarized world, many people expect religious conversations to be harsh, defensive, or exclusionary. Sunday’s sermon offers another model:

- Listen before speaking.
- Respect people’s dignity.

- Lead with love.
- Stay open to mystery.
- Trust that God may already be present and active.

The Christian calling is not to dominate others but to bear witness to love with honesty and humility.

Closing Prayer

Spirit of Truth, help us see beyond our assumptions and fears. Open our hearts to the people we overlook and the places where your presence surprises us. Teach us to speak with compassion, listen with humility, and love with courage. May our lives reflect the grace of Christ in all we do. Amen.