

## Pray Together

**Use the first few minutes of your time together to lead your group in a focused prayer time.**

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

## Read Together

The book of Acts provides an historical chronicle of the Holy Spirit's movement in the life of the early church. Beginning with Pentecost, readers encounter stories of the Gospel moving out from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1-12 recount Peter's mission to a predominately Jewish audience, while chapters 13-28 focus on Paul's ministry to a predominately Gentile world.

As Acts 13 opens, Barnabas and Paul (then called Saul) had embarked on their first mission journey throughout Asia Minor. God granted Barnabas and Paul extraordinary favor with the people and opened many new doors of faith to reach the Gentiles. This "controversial", new movement of God was affirmed at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. Through the confirmation of this church council, many successive missionary journeys farther west were set in motion.

It was around A.D. 50 that Paul, Silas, and Timothy visited the Macedonian town of Philippi (Acts 16:13-40). Though there were historically very few Jews in the colony, these men rallied those present to hear the completed message of Jesus. This event became a catalyst in the Philippi. The Holy Spirit would move and expand His presence well beyond what anyone could have thought or imagined. These servants learned that though they were beyond their limits and abilities, they were never beyond the limits of God's glorious presence.

## Discuss Together

**Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.**

- During their time in Philippi, Paul, Silas, and Timothy experienced an assured presence of the Holy Spirit. Describe a time when you were beyond your limits and abilities and you saw God move beyond your expectations.
- In Acts 16:14, we encounter a woman named Lydia. By all accounts she was a good person, successful, and well-respected in Philippi. Though she knew about God, she still needed to learn about the completed work of Jesus Christ. What are some opinions or ideas about God that seem to be shared by morally good people who do not know Christ as Lord and Savior? What is the danger in these opinions and ideas? Perhaps your story is similar to Lydia's. Share how the Holy Spirit moved you from "morally good" to "righteous before God".
- Spiritual warfare always follows faithful Christian ministry. In Acts 16:16-24, Luke recounts an incident of spiritual warfare which led to physical persecution against Paul and Silas. Re-read the story. How did the conflict manifest? What might have happened if Paul and Silas had turned the other cheek rather than turning and rebuking the demon-possessed girl? What were the outcomes of their rebuke? How did God redeem the situation? Does God always redeem situations like this?



- In Acts 16:30, the Philippians jailer asked Paul and Silas, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Using a partner within your group, take turns sharing the Gospel with this person. With each turn, lead the person through how they may place their faith and trust in Christ Jesus.
- Is there an area that you sense God is calling you to be faithful in...but you feel it is beyond your limits and abilities? How comforted would you feel knowing the presence of Christ were with you? How can you pray that God will give you this assurance?

## How I must obey Christ...

- Examine yourself. As a result of this study, identify a specific area in which you need to obey Christ this week.
- How do you specifically need to obey Christ in this area this week?
- How can Jesus redeem this area? How has He proven that in Scripture?
- Who will keep you accountable to this commitment this week?

## Pray Together

Read and pray through Acts 16:30-34.

