

**THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW**  
**Christianity In The Making: From Jerusalem To The South Bay**  
**Acts 16**

**Digging deeper in personal study and reflection.**

Paul had no idea that his traveling companions would eventually play such an important role in church history. Can you think of any “traveling companions” in your life that may have much greater potential than you could imagine right now? Can you think of any ways that you might encourage their development as an employee, student, spouse, friend or follower of Jesus?

Have you ever had a time in your life when you were not sure about God’s will and what you were supposed to do but now, looking back, you can see God’s guidance in it all along?

How do you typically respond when your heart is set on something and the door just doesn’t open for you to go in the direction you want: Keep on knocking? Break the door down? Look for another door that’s open? Give up? The book of Philippians can also be referred to as “Paul’s joy letter.” Read the following passages and see if you can jot down a few sources of Paul’s joy. Philippians 3:7-9, 3:17-4:1, 1:3-6

Happiness depends largely on our circumstances, but joy is more of a quiet confidence in God and His promises. As you look at your own life can you identify any sources of joy that have influenced you even when you weren’t happy?

In Philippians 4:4-13 Paul gives us a game plan for being in God’s will regardless of where we are in life. Make a list of 3 or 4 things that we can do to be in God’s will regardless of our circumstances.

Paul also gave us multiple examples of how to endure persecution and use every opportunity to minister to others. His letter to the Philippians was written in the midst of a bad situation. Read Philippians 1:12-14 and 1:27-30 and jot down a few of the opportunities Paul sees in trials and suffering.

When you are experiencing hard times, what does it look like to “conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”?

If you found yourself unjustly beaten up and sitting in a prison cell beside Paul, what would you want to hang onto from this week’s study?

**For discussion with your small group, an accountability partner, your spouse, or for your own reflection.**

1. Looking back at this week’s teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. How did the Lord open your heart to respond to the Gospel? What people did he use as part of the process?
3. What type of music lifts your spirits? What music reminds you of the “good old” days?
4. Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey starts with a bit of controversy as he and Barnabas split over whether to let John Mark go with them. (Acts 15:36-41). What do we learn about Paul and Barnabas through this? What do we learn about God? What are some implications for us as we participate in God’s mission?

