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INTO NEW TERRITORY

ACTS 16



God had appointments for Paul and his co-workers with individuals in Macedonia. Getting them to those appointments was not easy, but the Holy Spirit got them there. To do this, he closed some doors of opportunity and opened others. Paul overcame human barriers when he took the gospel to these individuals. There now was no difference between Jew and Greek, male and female, slave or free—when it came to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We do not have to beg the Holy Spirit to guide us. But like Paul, we need to seek that guidance as we are faithful to what we already know to be God’s will and as we trust God even when we cannot see what he is doing.

STRATEGY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT (16:1-15)

1. Read verses 1-5. How do we reconcile Timothy’s circumcision with the decision made at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 which Paul is delivering to the Churches? Are Paul and Timothy disregarding the council’s decision or could there be another explanation?
2. What is God doing with Paul in verses 6-10? Are these experiences unique to Paul? Does the Holy Spirit still work in these ways? Can you give an example from your own life? (See: Rom 9:9; Gal 4:6; Phil 1:19; 1 Pet 1:11; Acts 8:9)
3. In verses 11-15, what do we learn about Lydia before and after she became a believer? What does verse 14 teach us about how God saves?

WORLDLY PRESSURE AND SPIRITUAL POWER (16:16-40)

4. Read verses 16-24. Imagine you were being questioned a citizen of Philippi who missed all that had happened. Describe the events as an eyewitness. Set the scene. What did you see? How did you react?

5. Luke records in verse 24 that “Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them ...” Why were Paul and Silas singing? What is it about music that moves us? Can you give an example in your life of the role musical worship has played in your spiritual growth?

6. Read verses 27-34. Describe the Jailer’s conversion to Christianity. What do we know about him before and after his conversion? What does his story teach us about who God saves, how God saves, when God saves, and why God saves?

7. Why does Paul pull the “Roman citizenship” card in verse 37? In what ways does this serve Paul’s gospel message and mission?

8. Three individuals—a slave girl, a jailer, and a businesswoman—become the founding members of the Philippian church. What will the relationship between these unlikely friends say about the gospel?