Harvester Christian Church

Life Groups | **PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY**

ACTS | Powered by the Spirit | Spirit Powered Urgency

**WEEK 10 – ACTS 16**

Acts 16 opens with Paul and his new travel companions, Timothy and Silas, embarking on a journey to preach the gospel and plant churches. The theme for this week is **Spirit Powered Urgency**. Last week we were reminded that Christ gave the church a mission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). We will see in this chapter an urgency for believers to share the gospel at every opportunity as well as an urgency for people to respond appropriately and quickly when they come to faith in Jesus. **Pray for wisdom and understanding and then read Acts 16.**

**Acts 16:6-10**

The Holy Spirit’s guidance is very clear in this section of Acts. Paul is seeking to do ministry and looking for open doors, and yet sometimes God says “no” to his plans.

* **Read James 4:13-15.** Why is it important for us to pray for God’s will as we make plans?
* We don’t know why God said “no” to some of Paul’s ministry plans. What are some possible reasons?
* In this section (16:10) we see a change in pronouns from “they” to “we”. What does that indicate?

**Philippi**

The Holy Spirit brought Paul and his companions to the city of Philippi. It was a Roman colony largely populated by former military men who tended to despise Jews. Only ten Jewish men were required to make up a synagogue. If the local Jewish population was less than that, a “place of prayer” was established instead. Philippi only had the latter. But out of humble beginnings would grow a church for which the Apostle Paul later expressed tremendous affection and gratitude.

* How does Paul later describe his feelings for these people in **Philippians 1:3-8?**

**Lydia: The First Convert (16:11-15)**

While looking for a place of prayer on the Sabbath, Paul and his companions find a group of women and take the opportunity to share the gospel with them.

* What bits of information does Luke give us about Lydia?
* She responded to the good news about Jesus by being baptized immediately. What did she do next?
* Lydia wasn’t on Paul’s agenda for the day, but he spoke to her about Jesus because the opportunity presented itself. What does **I Peter 3:15** say we must all be ready to do?

**The Jailer and His Family (16:16-40)**

* What was the circumstance that led to Paul and Silas being thrown in prison?
* After being beaten and imprisoned, they were somehow praying and singing hymns to God at midnight. Summarize the following scriptures in regard to how we handle difficulties in life.
	+ James 1:2
	+ I Thessalonians 5:16-18
	+ Philippians 2:14-15
* Paul and Silas got to witness God working through their suffering in order to bring about something beautiful (i.e., the jailer and his family baptized into Christ). What does **Romans 8:28** promise to all believers?
* What similar circumstance does Paul describe in **Philippians 1:12-14** as he was again experiencing a type of imprisonment?
* How might God be working right now through some of the painful trials you are experiencing?

**Application**

We are focusing this week on the urgency of sharing our faith. Are we looking for opportunities to talk about the Lord with others? Do we take advantage of those opportunities as they arise?

* Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and make you sensitive to His leading.
* Ask God to bring people into your sphere of influence who are ready to hear the gospel.
* Ask God to give you the courage to take advantage of all the opportunities He brings your way.
* Write down the names of some people that you will commit to talking to about the Lord and pray for them this week.

**Discussion Questions**

Was there anything you wanted to talk about from the reading or lesson this week?

Have you ever felt the Holy Spirit was leading you like he was leading Paul in this chapter? If so, please share.

Have you ever had an unexpected conversation that turned into a chance to talk about the Lord? If so, please describe. Or, have you ever felt like you let a great opportunity go by?

What are some reasons we may not take advantage of an opportunity to share our faith when the opportunity is presented?

Paul was put in prison, but, as a result, got to witness the power of God and see a whole family come to faith in Christ. Please describe a time of hardship for you that turned into a blessing or had a payoff at the end.