



THE GOSPEL: IT PUSHES ON

Open it

1. Do you have anybody that you once were great friends with, but you drifted apart? What made you guys best friends? What caused you drift apart?

Daily devotions

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Acts 15:36-16:10

2. Where did Paul want to go and what did he want to do there?
3. What was Paul and Barnabas' argument over? What was the outcome of their argument?
4. Who did Paul meet in Lystra?
5. Where did Paul end up going at the end of the passage? How did he know to go there?

Day 2

TODAY'S THEME: THE SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP

Read Acts 15:36

When Paul said he wanted to go “visit the brothers,” the word he used for “visit” really means to inspect or to look into.¹ So he didn’t just want to go have lunch and hang out for a few days with some friends. He had some really important things he wanted to look into. The Bible doesn’t say exactly what Paul was wanted to check out, but he was highly concerned with how the Christians they had left there were doing in their faith!

We all have to go to the doctor every so often to get a check-up and make sure we are still healthy and doing well. The doctors will check your vitals like blood pressure and heart rate and do some assessments (height and weight) and ask LOTS of questions! Their goal is to keep you healthy! Well, we need some spiritual check-ups sometimes, too. We need someone who will check in and see how we are doing spiritually and help identify different areas where maybe we need to change our diet or start exercising

6. Why is it important for Christians to get “spiritual check-ups” on a regular basis?

What sort of things would someone look for in a “spiritual check-up”? Why would they look for those things?

7. Who in your life would trust to do a “spiritual check-up” on you?

What do you think they would find if they did a “spiritual check-up” on you today? What things would you need to change?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✎ Write it down so you can ask your leader!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- God would help you find someone who could watch over your spiritual health!

¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G1980&t=ESV>

Day 3

TODAY'S THEME: GOING SEPARATE WAYS

Read Acts 15:37-41

Paul and Barnabas both wanted to go back and visit the churches they had established on their last missionary journey. But it wasn't all so easy! Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark along and Paul did not agree. It all culminated in "a sharp disagreement," which in today's talk meant—a fight. There was some drama between our beloved Apostle Paul and Barnabas "the Encourager." Ultimately this fight led to Paul and Barnabas going their separate ways—both still on mission for the gospel to spread!

Christians today will get into some pretty serious disagreements, some of which are worthy and some just plain silly. There are stories of churches who have split apart because of the choice of wall color or new carpet. As Christians we should always strive for unity for the sake of the gospel message.

- 8. Do you think Paul and Barnabas were right to split up and go their separate ways, or do you think they should have worked it all out? How would you go about trying to work it out in their situation?**

- 9. Is there someone in your life right now that you aren't getting along with? What is causing the separation? In what ways might you be wrong in how you are looking at the situation? What steps can you take to work towards unity?**

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✎ Write it down so you can ask your leader!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Pray for the person you are at odds with. Pray for their relationship with God. Pray that God would bless them. Pray for their well-being.
- Pray for yourself to be humble as you face controversy with others.
- Pray that God can help you work towards unity!

Day 4

TODAY'S THEME: DEVELOPING DISCIPLES

Read Acts 16:11-3

Paul and Silas found themselves back in Lystra and Derbe, where they came across a young man named Timothy. Timothy apparently had a good reputation around town, and Paul saw something in this young man that caused him to want to bring him along as part of their ministry team. It says that Paul took him and circumcised him because of all the Jews in those places, probably just for the sake of unity with them, so that Paul could set Timothy up for ministry success instead of building extra barriers to the gospel message. We will see through time that this budding relationship would be one in which Paul raises up and trains a new, young pastor.

Who in your life is developing you as a Christian and taking you under their wing to show you what it means to walk with Jesus as your Lord and Savior? God has chosen to use people to advance His gospel message to the ends of earth. You and I get to be part of this unfolding story. Be sure to find someone in your life who is developing you as a follower of Christ.

10. Who is someone who has a relationship with Jesus that you admire? What is it about their relationship that you like?

11. Who is someone you know who you could take under your wing and help develop as a follower of Christ? What things would you do that would help develop them as a disciple?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Pray for someone who could develop you as a follower of Jesus.
- Pray for someone who you could develop as a follower of Jesus.

Day 5

TODAY'S THEME: ENCOURAGEMENT

Read Acts 16:4-5

Paul and his team brought some really great news back to the churches they visited from the decisions that were made in Jerusalem! As Paul and his team shared with these churches the decisions that had been made back in Jerusalem, they were encouraged to hear the good news that they did not need to follow Jewish laws and customs in order to be saved. It says that the churches were strengthened and grew in number after hearing this great news!

Being encouraged is always a huge boost. Think about the last time you said something encouraging to another person. If you're like me, I had to think through about twenty times I was critical of someone before I was able to think of a time I was encouraging. It can be difficult to encourage others. It doesn't always come naturally for us! But it's so important to look for every opportunity to encourage those around you. Look at the power it has to strengthen and grow entire churches!

12. Think of a time when someone said something encouraging to you and it just meant the world to you. What was it about?

13. Why do you think encouragement is so important and powerful?

14. Who do you know that needs some encouragement this week? How can you encourage them?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Pray first that God would encourage you.
- Pray that God would encourage other Christians around the world who are facing very difficult times in life—even being threatened for their faith.
- Pray that God would use YOU to encourage someone else!

Day 6

TODAY'S THEME: FOLLOWING GOD'S WILL

Read Acts 16:6-10

These verses contain a lot of stuff that sounds pretty strange if we are honest. I mean, how did they know it was the Holy Spirit who forbid their going to Asia? It says that Paul had a dream one night and he knew from this dream that God wanted them to go Macedonia. That's some crazy stuff! When is the last time you made a major decision in life based on a dream?

Am I about to tell you to literally follow your dreams? No. But we have all asked the question to some extent, "What is God's will for me?" How in the world do you figure that stuff out? Maybe it isn't always from interpreting your dreams, but it does come from having a close relationship with God: listening to His Word, seeking Him in prayer, and asking for godly advice. Sometimes you may know God's calling for your life as clearly as Paul knew. But maybe you will learn God's calling in your life slowly—one frame at a time—learning to trust God every step of the way! Either way, here is my promise to you: You will never miss God's will for your life as long as you are walking closely with Him and striving to honor and obey Him in all that you do.

15. How would you define God's will?

16. Paul received guidance through both positive (vision) and negative (forbidden by the Holy Spirit) means. Describe a time when God used either a positive or negative outcome to lead you where he wanted you to go.

17. How do we go about hearing from God and letting Him lead us?

Where might He be leading you? What steps can you take to obey?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- That God would continue to reveal His will to you as you walk closely with Him.
- That God would lead and guide you to where He wants you to be.