



THE GOSPEL: HOPE FOR ALL PEOPLE

Open it

1. How did you first meet Jesus? What did God choose to use to introduce Himself to you?

Daily devotions

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Acts 16:11–40

2. Where did Paul and Silas end up?
3. Who are the three people they met in this passage? What interactions did they have with them?
4. What happened to Paul and Silas while they were in Philippi?
5. What stood out to you most in this passage?

Day 2

TODAY'S THEME: THE GOSPEL IS FOR DIVERSE KINDS OF PEOPLE

Read Acts 16:14, 16, 27–30

Paul and Silas have met these three different people who each had a different interaction with Paul and Silas. Two of them we know trusted in Jesus, but the third (the slave girl) we at least know had her life changed by Jesus! Think about your friends. For the most part, your friends are probably pretty similar to you. You like the same kind of things. Maybe you dress similarly, you're in the same clubs or groups, and you probably live close to each other. It can be easy to just surround ourselves with people who are just like we are and never reach out and meet different people. It's important that we as Christians interact with people who are different from us, come from different backgrounds and different interests, so that we can share the message of Jesus with them. Check out this chart to see how different the three people in our passage were.¹

Converts	Ethnically	Economically	Spiritually	Event
Lydia	Asian	Wealthy	God fearer	Public exposition
Slave girl	Greek	Poor	Demon possessed	Dramatic exorcism
Jailer	Roman	Blue-collar	Indifferent	Powerful miracle

6. **Who is someone you know who is very different from you who needs to know about Jesus? What things can help you make connections with them to hopefully share the Gospel with them?**

7. **What benefits are there to interacting with people who are different from us?**

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

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

- Pray for the person you wrote down in Question 6—that God would give you an opportunity to share the Gospel with them.
- Pray that God would help you build relationships with people who are different from you.

¹Tim Keller's *Church Planters Manual*, p. 102

Day 3

TODAY'S THEME: GOD WILL USE ANYTHING TO GET YOUR ATTENTION

Read Acts 16:13, 18, 26–28

Have you ever noticed that everyone seems to have at least a slightly different story about how they met God and got saved? For some people it's through being raised in a Christian home. For others, they grew up in a Christian home but some sort of significant life event "made it real" for them. Yet some other people may have had some friend who told them about Jesus. Who knows! The list goes on and on! God uses all kinds of unique ways to get people's attention so that they can hear about Jesus and be saved. In our passage we see God use discussion and teaching, the casting out of a demon and a huge miracle! Never put a limit on the ways that God can get ahold of someone's heart and bring them to salvation!

8. **What things have you seen God use in your life to get your attention and point you back to Him?**

9. **Knowing that God can get people's attention in many different ways, how does this change the way you may share your faith with others? How does this change the way you'll pray for your lost friends?**

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 that God will do whatever it takes to reach your lost friends.
- Thank God for the ways He has gotten your attention and drawn you closer to Himself.
- Pray that God would knock down barriers for people to hear the gospel.
- Pray for a specific friend by name, that God would save them!

Day 4

TODAY'S THEME: THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME

Read Acts 16:16–18

What a crazy story! It sounds like something that could have been in a scary movie! We could easily get hung up on the exorcism that took place in this slave girl's life and become so focused on the event that we can miss out on the important thing we can learn about Jesus—He is POWERFUL!!! It says that Paul just had to say, "In the name of Jesus Christ," and the demon left this young girl. That's because there is authority and power in the name of Jesus!

Look at it this way: maybe you've had a sibling who said you had to clean the dishes because Mom and Dad said so. And so you do it, not because your sibling told you to do it, but because of the authority that comes from Mom and Dad. Do you realize how much power Jesus has, that demons will just flee at His name?! That is some spectacular amount of power. I bet if we lived our entire life like we believed in this power, our lives would look very different!

10. How have you seen God display His power in your life?

11. Does knowing that Jesus has this kind of power and authority change the way you look at sharing your faith or stepping out in faith for God?

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 that God would help you trust in His power more and more.
- Take some time to look around you and observe God's creation and think about how that reflects how powerful He really is!

Day 5

TODAY'S THEME: FACING PERSECUTION

Read Acts 16:19–24

There are many reasons that people hate Christianity. Sometimes they may hate it because they had a really bad experience with church or another Christian. Sometimes people hate it because they believe something else, and Christianity opposes that belief. Yet sometimes people will hate Christianity because it demands they stop living the way they currently are.

Today we see some dudes who were totally taking advantage of this slave girl and her ability to see into the future. They would use her to make more and more money. Well, when Paul cast the demon out of her, she lost that ability that brought them gain. But instead of recognizing the good thing that happened here, they were too focused on themselves and got mad, so they had Paul and Silas thrown in prison.

I doubt any of us in America will be thrown in prison any time soon for our faith. But that doesn't mean we won't face different forms of persecution. People may bully us, make fun of us, cuss us out, and maybe even quit being friends with us! Just because other people treat us poorly because of our faith doesn't mean that what we believe isn't true.

12. Are you so convinced of what you believe that, even if people treated you poorly for it, you would still stand firm in your beliefs? Explain. Why do you have this confidence? If you don't, what is keeping you from being there? What's holding you back?

13. How do you see Christians be persecuted for their faith in America today? Have you been persecuted for your faith? How did it make you feel?

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 all the Christians in the world who are persecuted for their faith in Jesus that He would help them stay strong in their faith.
- Pray that God would help you stand firm when your faith is put to the test.

Day 6

TODAY'S THEME: SEEKING GOD DESPITE YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES

Read Acts 16:25–40

Paul and Silas were in prison—a cold, uncomfortable place. And the worst part was, they didn't do anything wrong to get themselves put there! It would have been really easy for them to throw a pity party and mope about their circumstances. But instead the Bible says they were praying and singing hymns. They were worshipping God! Our first thoughts might be to think they were singing upbeat praise hymns, but the Bible doesn't necessarily say that. They could have been praying for their deliverance because of this poor treatment. They could have been singing hymns about God being with His people in the darkest places of life. But the point of the matter here is that no matter what your circumstances are, look to God. Trust God no matter what life has thrown your way. God will carry you through. That doesn't mean it'll be easy, but it does mean He will carry you through!

14. What/who do you normally go to first when life gets really hard?

15. What do you think stops us from turning to God when times are tough? Why is it so important that we turn to God in the good times and the bad times in life?

16. What was a really difficult time in your life that you saw God help you through?

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

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

- Maybe you're going through a tough time right now. Pray that God would help you through.
- Thank God for helping you through other tough times.
- Pray that God would help you see your situation from His perspective and that you would grow through the hard times in life.