

## **Discussion Guide (Leader Guide)**

### **Acts 16 Part 1**

Note: Please refer to the *How To Study The Bible Handbook* while discussing this passage.

#### **Breaking the Ice:**

- If you could be the “best in the world” at any one thing, what would you choose? Why?

#### **Practicing What Was Preached:**

- Pete talked about how God doesn't always reveal the whole vision of where He's leading you. Where in your life do you wish you had more details about God's direction?
- Even though you may not know where you're headed, how can you maximize where you're at right now? How can you flourish where you are right now? How can you surrender to God where you're at right now?

#### **Taking a Deeper Look at the Text:**

*Passage:* Acts 16:11-15

*Pray:* Ask God for eyes to see, a mind to understand, and a heart to apply.

#### **Observation**

Briefly go over this list of observations to help your group understand what is happening in this passage. Include your own observations as well and feel free to welcome additional observations from others too.

Who:

Main Characters – Paul & Lydia

Secondary Characters – “we/us” is the missionary team that includes Luke

What:

One sentence summary – Paul and the missionary team head to Philippi and meet a successful merchant named Lydia; she becomes a believer and convinces Paul and the team to stay with her at her home.

When:

The Chronological Significance – see the below diagram of the timeline of Acts. Acts 16 covers the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey.

BOOK OF ACTS																				
Author	Luke, the Doctor																			
Time	2 yrs - 33-35 AD ca.			14 yrs - 35-48 AD ca.				17 or 19 yrs - 48-65 or 67 AD ca.												
	FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH						FOUNDER OF CHURCHES													
Sections	Spirit of the Church		Growth of the Church		Persecution of the Church		Expansion of the Church		First Journey of Paul		Second Journey of Paul		Third Journey of Paul		Arrest of Paul		Trials of Paul		Imprisonment of Paul	
Chapters	1	4	5	7	8	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	19	20	21	23	24	26	27	28
Topics	Peter			Peter & Philip			Paul													
	To the Jews			To the Gentiles in/around Israel			To the Gentiles outside Israel													
Place	Jerusalem			Judea & Samaria			Uttermost Parts of the Roman Empire													

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Where:

Setting – Check the map below to see where Paul and the missionary team traveled. Philippi is famous in classical history as the place where the world's future was determined as Octavius met Brutus and Cassius in a terrible conflict. Because of this, many Roman soldiers retired in the area and Philippi was proud of its Roman connection.



Why:

Significance – Lydia insisted on Paul and the team staying with her in Philippi, which is where the Philippian church began. This is the first European church. One could argue that westernized Christianity began in Lydia's home!

How:

The Lord "opened her heart to respond to Paul's message." God is the one that did the work of opening Lydia's heart.

### Interpretation

- Content: How would you describe what this passage is about in your own words?  
Encourage your group to describe what this passage is about in a sentence or two.
- Context & Culture: Lydia was a seller of purple. She came from Thyatira, a city in the province of Lydia in Asia Minor. Her name originally might have been the designation of her home, "a woman of Lydia." At the time Lydia

met Paul, she lived in Philippi, a leading city of Macedonia on the European continent. As a wealthy and influential businesswoman, Lydia sold articles dyed purple, a prized color made from certain mollusks—a respectable and lucrative trade. She had a spacious home that could accommodate many guests and servants to meet their needs. This had to be a rare achievement in her day.

- Consultation: Is there anything about the passage that you still don't understand? What kind of resource(s) could you use to gain more understanding?

See the “Free Online Tools” page in the *How To Study The Bible Handbook*.

### **Application**

#### *Know Yourself*

- God “opened (Lydia’s) heart”. How has God opened your heart? What has God given you a sensitivity or passion for that, when you hear about it, you’re more apt to respond? How has God opened your heart to hear Him and respond to Him?
- How has your heart been closed to things that God is saying to you or calling you toward?
- Lydia was a successful businesswoman and used what she had and what she was good at for the benefit of God’s Kingdom. What do you have or what can you do that God could use?

#### *Relate*

- Is there anything that God opened your heart to at one point in your life but now feels like you’re more closed off to it? Why or why not?
- What would you say to someone whose heart is closed to God because of injustice? Tragedy? Experiences with Christians who didn’t represent God well?

- If you could design a ministry where your gifts or resources could be used for God, what would it look like?

*Meditate & Practice*

- Plan some ways that your Group can get together to serve others over the summer. This can be something that is inspired by things or skills that people in your group noticed they have that God could use.