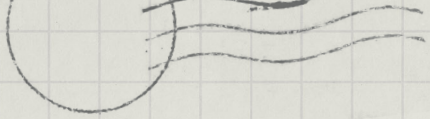


FOOTSTEPS OF PAUL

BOLD BROTHERHOOD
GOSPEL MISSION

TONY MERIDA

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For a more thorough treatment of the book of Acts see Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Acts. Christ-Centered Exposition* (Nashville: B&H, 2017). Adaptations of this commentary are found in this study.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

TONY MERIDA is the founding pastor of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, and is the Vice President of Planter Development for Send Network. Tony has written several books, including *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, *Love Your Church*, *Church Planter*, and multiple volumes in the *Christ-Centered Exposition* commentary series.



HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Footsteps of Paul consists of eight weekly lessons that can be used for group or personal Bible study. Each week includes a group session and three days of personal study. For the best group experience, allow sixty to seventy-five minutes for the group sessions.

» CHECKPOINTS

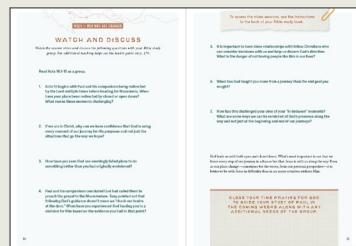
Each QR code will take participants to a short video from Tony Merida sharing additional details and resources about the locations where this study was filmed. Our desire is not just to help you follow the footsteps of Paul but to take you along on his journey.



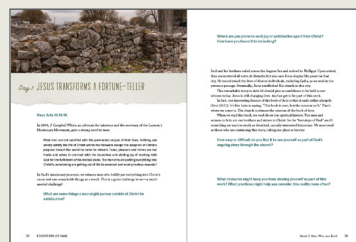
» THE JOURNEY

START. Each week begins with a group session to reinforce the themes being studied.

WATCH AND DISCUSS. This section is the primary group experience. Group members may watch these videos together or prior to the group meeting. Codes to access the teaching videos are included with your purchase of this study and can be found on the insert located at the back of this book.



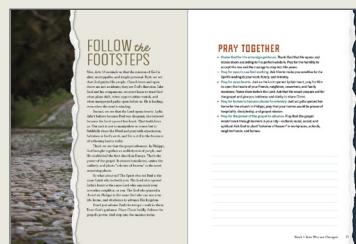
PERSONAL STUDY. Following the group session, group members should complete the three days of personal study at home. Through this personal study, group members will explore biblical content and application that support the concepts included in the video teaching.



WRAP UP. Each week ends with two concluding elements: “Follow the Footsteps” and “Pray Together.”

Follow the Footsteps. This section wraps up each week’s teaching and includes a specific challenge for men to apply what they’ve learned that week.

Pray Together. This section contains five to seven prayer prompts to pray as a group and throughout the week between group sessions.



INTRODUCTION

Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ. —1 Corinthians 11:1

How likely are you to call others to follow your example? If you are self-aware, you probably hesitate to speak this out loud, even if in honest private moments you would consider your example worth following. And you likely have learned to be wary of those who are quick to invite others to “be like me,” who may have an overinflated view of self. But that’s exactly what Paul did in 1 Corinthians 11:1.

Yet, the “me” Paul encouraged others to be like wasn’t just Paul; rather, it was Paul as one seeking to imitate Christ with his whole life. Other translations use the word *follow* instead of *imitate*. Paul was confident in telling others to follow him only so much as he was confident he was following Christ. Being like Paul was never the goal; being like Christ was. Just as Paul deemed himself and Apollos “coworkers with God” in 1 Corinthians 3:9, the point was not that they were equals with God but they were equals with one another as they served God together. Likewise, the invitation of 1 Corinthians 11:1 is a call to follow Jesus together—in the same manner as Paul.

Throughout the book of Acts, we are given direct insight into Paul’s journey following Christ after His miraculous conversion on the Damascus Road (Acts 9). The second half of Acts records Paul’s three major missionary journeys. For the purposes of this study, we will focus on portions of the second and third of these journeys (Acts 16–20), where Paul traveled through several regions of modern Greece and Turkey, always proclaiming the gospel while also meeting, training, correcting, and exhorting believers along the way. As we study these passages, we see Paul’s manner of following Christ included boldness, a love for God’s Word, engagement with the culture of the day, ongoing reliance on God’s promises, and a desire to finish well.

Though this was only one portion of Paul’s life, it is clear he lived in alignment with his parting words to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:24:

But I consider my life of no value to myself; my purpose is to finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God’s grace.

Paul’s life is worth imitating because he shows us how to follow Jesus faithfully every day. As we do, we can confidently call others to do the same.

PAUL'S TRAVELS IN ACTS 16–20

Paul's second missionary journey carried him through Macedonia and Achaia in AD 50–52. Paul and Barnabas parted company early in this journey due to a disagreement about the participation of Barnabas's nephew, John Mark, who had abandoned the team on the first journey (Acts 15:38). As a result, Paul took Silas and established churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, while Barnabas went with John Mark. Paul also spent eighteen months in Corinth, strengthening a fledgling church there. Four of Paul's New Testament letters are addressed to churches known from this second journey, and most scholars believe that 1 and 2 Thessalonians were written during this journey. Paul's third missionary journey (AD 53–57) focused on the city of Ephesus, where he spent the better part of three years. Toward the end of this journey, Paul worked hard to collect another relief offering for Jerusalem believers. Scholars believe Paul wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans during this journey.



**Content adapted from Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*





WEEK 1

MEN WHO ARE CHANGED

ACTS 16:6-15



GROUP
SESSION
I



AS WE BEGIN THIS STUDY, tracking a portion of Paul's missionary journey, it is important to remember our two focuses: bold brotherhood and gospel mission. Throughout this journey, we will meet several of Paul's traveling companions. But these were more than acquaintances and even more than friends. Those Paul traveled with along the way were his brothers. And vital to these relationships was the shared gospel mission of these brothers. These men were changed by Jesus, and that became the most important thing about their lives. The same is true for us. We desperately need community rooted in the gospel of Jesus. As we embark on this journey, let's seek these types of familial relationships that are only possible in Christ.

- » **Who are the people you are closest to? How have you grown close in these relationships?**
- » **How does being found in Christ give us a deeper level of connection with those in the church?**

WATCH AND DISCUSS

Watch the session video and discuss the following questions with your Bible study group. For additional teaching helps see the leader guide on p. 170.

Read Acts 16:1-15 as a group.

- 1. Acts 16 begins with Paul and his companions being redirected by the Lord multiple times before heading for Macedonia. When have your plans been redirected by closed or open doors? What makes these moments challenging?**
- 2. If we are in Christ, why can we have confidence that God is using every moment of our journey for His purposes and not just the situations that go the way we hope?**
- 3. How have you seen God use seemingly failed plans to do something better than you had originally envisioned?**
- 4. Tony pointed out that following God's guidance doesn't mean we "check our brains at the door." When have you experienced God leading you to make a decision for Him based on the limited details He had revealed to that point?**



To access the video sessions, use the instructions
in the back of your Bible study book.

5. **What is the danger of not having close relationships with other Christians to help us consider and discern God's direction?**

6. **When has God taught you more from the journey itself than the result you sought?**

7. **How has this challenged your view of your "in-between" moments? What are some ways we can be reminded of God's presence along the way and not just at the beginning and end of our journeys?**

God leads us with both open and closed doors. What's most important is not that we know every step of our journey in advance but that Jesus is with us along the way. Even as our plans change—sometimes for the worse, from our personal perspective—it is better to be with Jesus in difficulty than in an easier situation without Him.

CLOSE YOUR TIME PRAYING FOR GOD TO
GUIDE YOUR STUDY OF PAUL'S JOURNEY
IN THE COMING WEEKS ALONG WITH ANY
ADDITIONAL NEEDS OF THE GROUP.



Day 1 THE POWERFUL SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

Read Acts 16:5.

When you and I cross state lines in the U.S., it usually doesn't feel like a big deal. You might notice a new welcome sign or a different speed limit, but for the most part, life looks about the same.

In Acts, the gospel crossed boundaries that were far more significant. Following the pattern of Acts 1:8—Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth—we watch the mission of Jesus leap forward into entirely new territory. This wasn't like driving from South Carolina into Georgia or from Michigan into Ohio. This was a massive leap across cultures, languages, and worldviews. The gospel broke through walls that separated people for centuries.

Here's a broad outline of Acts as a whole, based on Professor Patrick Schreiner's commentary on Acts:

- » God Empowers His Witnesses in Jerusalem (1:1–8:3)
- » God Scatters His Witnesses to Judea and Samaria (8:4–12:25)
- » God Sends His Witnesses on Missionary Journeys (13:1–21:14)
- » God Delivers His Witnesses to Jerusalem and Rome (21:15–28:31)¹

In all this, Luke (the author of Acts) emphasized the unrelenting progress of the gospel over a *thirty-year* period. Acts tells of the ongoing advancement of the kingdom over these three decades. Look at what happened in thirty years! What might the Lord do with you and your church over the next thirty years?

In Acts, the gospel advanced not just into different regions of the world but into different segments of society as well.

We see the gospel confronting Roman law courts, Greek philosophers, rural Asian farmers, and government officials. All sorts of people were transformed by the good news. Albert Barnes, a nineteenth-century pastor and theologian said of Acts:

This book contains incontrovertible evidence of the truth of Christianity. It is a record of the early triumphs of Christianity. Within the space of thirty years after the death of Christ, the gospel had been carried to all parts of the civilized world—and to no small portion of the uncivilized world. Its progress and its triumphs were not concealed. Its great transactions were not “done in a corner.”

It had been preached in the most splendid, powerful, and corrupt cities; churches were already founded in Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and in Rome. The gospel had been spread in Arabia, Asia Minor, Greece, Macedon, Italy, and Africa.

It had assailed the strongest existing institutions; it had made its way over the most formidable barriers; it had encountered the most deadly and malignant opposition; it had traveled to the capital [Rome] and had secured such a hold even in the imperial city as to make it certain that it would finally overturn the established religion and seat itself upon the ruins of paganism.

Within thirty years, it had settled the point that it would overturn every bloody altar, close every pagan temple, bring under its influence the men of office, rank, and power, and that the banners of faith would soon stream from the palaces of the Caesars.²

Along the way, we see that the Lord used some regular guys, just like you and me, who were surrendered to Him. And so, when we read Acts, we respond, “Do it again, Lord!” and, “Use me for your glory, Lord!” “Make us a bold brotherhood to live out this gospel mission!”

Several summary statements in Acts display the powerful spread of the gospel:

- » *So the word of God spread, the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly in number, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith (6:7).*
- » *So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers (9:31).*
- » *But the word of God spread and multiplied (12:24).*
- » *So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers (16:5).*
- » *In this way the word of the Lord spread and prevailed [in Ephesus] (19:20).*

The gospel really is the power of God. It still works. And if we are going to be His witnesses, we need an unshakable confidence in the gospel.

How confident are you in the power of the gospel?

What are some ways we grow our confidence in God's power to transform, according to His Word and work?

EMBARKING ON THE JOURNEY

We begin our study in Acts 16, traveling with Paul on what are often called his second and third missionary journeys. We're going to walk with Paul to Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Miletus.

Our first stop: Philippi.

Today's passage contains one of the most comforting truths about our mission: **God is in control of the mission!** He opens doors, He closes doors, and He opens hearts. He changes lives. It's God's mission, and we're invited to join Him!

As we follow the footsteps of Paul into Philippi, we see a God who directs, protects, and empowers. The same Spirit who guided Paul in the first century can guide us today in our homes, workplaces, communities, and ministries.

How does recognizing the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life move you toward greater confidence in the gospel?

How can we actively focus on God's work in us over our own abilities?

We are called to be bold, obedient, and expectant. Our task is not to manufacture results, but to faithfully walk where God leads, trusting that He will do what only He can—open hearts, transform lives, and advance His kingdom.

As we study Acts 16, let us ask: Are we listening for God's direction? Are we ready to step out in obedience when He calls? Are we prepared to move into new, challenging, or humble places, trusting that God can work miracles there?

How would you answer the questions above?

How can you grow in these areas?



The footsteps of Paul are more than historical—they are a blueprint for faithful men today who will advance the gospel by faith, courage, and unwavering trust in the Lord. This portion of Scripture (Acts 16–20) is extremely exciting. Imagine for a moment the life of a missionary in the first century. No planes, no cars, no GPS, no smartphones—just a vision, a message, and the courage to carry it into unknown lands. This is the world Luke introduced in Acts 16, as we begin to follow Paul's footsteps to Philippi.



Day 2 GOD GUIDES THE BROTHERS TO PHILIPPI

Read Acts 16:1-12.

Have you ever gone on a trip that you couldn't stop talking about? I can only imagine going on this trip with the apostle Paul!

Paul's missionary companions are mentioned in Acts 15:36–16:5. Interestingly, and unexpectedly, we see that Paul and Barnabas had a *sharp disagreement* over John Mark (15:39). Barnabas wanted to bring him along, but Paul didn't. Paul didn't like that John Mark went home on the first trip (13:13). It's not clear why he left at that time, but it seems Paul didn't think it was justified. (Some options for his departure include sickness, a change in leadership, hardship, or homesickness.)

As a result, Barnabas took Mark to Cyprus, and Paul took Silas to previously visited areas (15:40-41). (Paul and Mark seem to have later reconciled; see 2 Timothy 4:11.)

Right from the jump, we see the messiness and hardship of ministry. There's a certain realism that is introduced here that we can appreciate. Ministry and mission will involve times of conflict, disappointment, and other challenges. The book of Acts doesn't ignore these problems.

**When have you faced hardship when pursuing obedience to God?
What makes this especially challenging?**

What are some different ways we might respond to obstacles as we pursue ministry?

We don't have to panic when we encounter conflict and disagreements. Troubles will arise! Aim to deal with them biblically, and keep doing the work.

Next, we read that Paul received a new helper: Timothy (16:1-5). As Paul's story unfolds, we see the wonderful relationship he had with Timothy. Paul considered this young man from Lystra a "son."

Somewhere along the journey, the brothers determined to go to Asia, but the Holy Spirit prevented them from going there (16:6). We don't know exactly *how* they were prevented. Did they receive a divine vision? Did the Lord withdraw a sense of His peace? Did they experience transportation obstacles? Did sickness hinder them? We don't know; all we know is they were blocked. Figuratively, they had their passports in hand, but the Lord said, "No."

God may prevent us from doing certain things in a host of ways. If doors close, don't despair. Keep trusting in the Lord, who leads His people. He is with us, no matter where we go (or don't go).

Another closed door is mentioned in the next verse (v. 7). The team traveled northward in an attempt to go to Bithynia (to reach cities like Nicaea and Byzantium), but *the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them*. The team's geographical destination remained unclear, but it was clear God was guiding them.

Paul and his companions faced multiple closed doors in this passage of Scripture. How can we guard against discouragement in moments like this?

What are the ways we can prepare daily with the Lord to face the certainty of difficulties in life and ministry?

MACEDONIAN CALL

Next, we see in verse 8 that the team was led away from Bithynia, through the wild backwoods of Mysia, over to the coast and down to Troas. Then Luke recorded this calling in verses 9-10.

Many have speculated about the identity of this Macedonian man, but we aren't told who he is. What we are told is that Paul related this vision to Silas and Timothy, and they agreed that God's purpose was for them to evangelize the Macedonians.

In verse 10, Luke said, *After he had seen the vision, we immediately made efforts to set out for Macedonia*. This is the first occurrence of “we passages” in Acts. Most believe this shift refers to Luke joining the team at this time. All four men set out to cross the Aegean Sea, eventually making it to the port of Neapolis, walking from there to Philippi, and staying several days in the city (16:11-12).

We should be careful not to miss the Trinitarian nature of this Macedonian call. In verse 6, *the Holy Spirit* prevented them from going to Asia. In verse 7, *the Spirit of Jesus* didn't permit them to go to Bithynia. And later in verse 10, *God [the Father]* called them to go to Macedonia.

While this story is descriptive, not prescriptive (that is, our takeaway shouldn't be that everyone should wait for a vision before making an important decision), we can still make some safe and helpful applications regarding God's guidance. Here are four:

- » **First, God both closes doors and guides us through open doors.** God blocked these men from going to Asia and Bithynia but called them to Macedonia. In the first two instances, they were told, “No.” In the last case, they were told, “Yes.” The Lord prevents, and He permits.
- » **Second, God's guidance isn't just circumstantial; it's also rational.** Following God's guidance involves the need to think over matters, as this text illustrates. It's not about guessing but about using godly wisdom. The verb *concluding* in verse 10 carries the notion of “putting the pieces of a puzzle together”—that is, gathering information and drawing a conclusion.
- » **Third, God's guidance is personal and communal.** It involves sharing data and considering God's will with other godly individuals. Notice the plural terms *them*, *we*, and *us*. We should make important decisions by receiving counsel from other godly Christians.
- » **Finally, God's guidance is often gradual and unpredictable.** This trip doesn't follow a neatly ordered formula for knowing God's will. Paul and his companions must have been perplexed after traveling an extremely circuitous route. Sometimes, there are seasons where you feel you are going nowhere and accomplishing nothing. Be encouraged. God doesn't guide us like Waze. He has His own ways.

The late Tim Keller said, “It is often like a mountainous road, on which you often labor hard, doubling back and seeming to get nowhere, until you come to some vantage point where you can see the ‘big’ picture and see how much progress you’ve made and where you are going.”³

When have you been able to look back and see how God was working in your life through seasons of obstacles and hardship?



AS YOU JOURNEY

- **Advance** the gospel with confidence, knowing it is unstoppable.
- **Trust** God’s sovereign leading as He opens and closes doors.
- **Seek** the Spirit’s guidance personally and with others.
- **Depend** on God alone to open hearts.

How does reflecting on these moments help to grow your faith for the future?

So how do we proceed in moments of uncertainty? Begin with God’s revealed will in the Bible, and then remain sensitive to the Spirit’s guidance, seek godly counsel, and think over the situation carefully. Don’t grow discouraged along the way. As long as He is with us, we have reason to rejoice, whether we’re in a season of perplexity and wandering or one of certainty and fulfillment.



Day 3 THE LORD OPENS HEARTS

Read Acts 16:13-15.

When Paul and his companions reached Philippi, it was the first time Paul preached the gospel in Europe. And while there were some believers in Europe already (see Acts 2:10; 16:9), Paul's visit here was a world-changing event. Europe and the rest of the world would never be the same.

Although the geographic distinction between continents was not as prominent at the time, it was still a milestone trip. Going from Asia Minor to Macedonia was a cultural boundary-crossing mission.

In this journey, Luke told of the first recorded convert in Europe, Lydia, and the first church established: this congregation in Philippi.

While there seems to be a number of converts during this time (16:40), Luke only records three particular individuals. Acts contains more case studies of conversions than any book in the Bible. It's possible Luke selected the following three stories to show that the gospel is for everyone and that the power of Jesus is unmatched.⁴

INDIVIDUAL	BACKGROUND	STATUS	SPIRITUAL STATE	EVENT
Lydia	Asian	Wealthy	God-Fearing	Public Exposition
Fortune-Teller	Native Greek	Poor	Spiritually Tormented	Dramatic Exorcism
Jailer	Roman	Blue Collar	Practical and Indifferent	Persecution/ Miracle/ Witness

THE LORD OPENS LYDIA'S HEART (ACTS 16:13-14)

In Philippi, there was no Jewish synagogue, so Paul and his companions went to the next best thing: a place of prayer by the river, just outside the city gate. It was a modest gathering, but a mighty work of God in Philippi came from this humble beginning.

Among the group was a woman named Lydia. Interestingly, “Lydia” was also the name of the region in Thyatira, which may have been a trade name she used. Luke described her as “God-fearing,” similar to Cornelius (Acts 10)—a Gentile who acknowledged the God of Israel but had not fully converted to Judaism.

Lydia came from the city of Thyatira, on the other side of the Aegean Sea. Surprisingly, the first convert on European soil was from Asia Minor. She wasn’t from Philippi at all. Charles Spurgeon reflected, “What an odd thing it seemed that this woman should be a woman of Thyatira in Asia, and Paul must not go and preach in Asia; and yet, when he comes to Macedonia, the first person who hears him is a woman from Asia!”

Lydia wasn’t the only person who came to faith while traveling. Naaman journeyed to Israel to meet Elisha (2 Kings 5); the Ethiopian eunuch was returning from Jerusalem (Acts 8); Paul was headed to Damascus (Acts 9). Often, God uses times away from home—college, military service, or other journeys—to bring people to Himself.

Has there been a time when you were away from home that God drew you near in a new way? Describe this experience.

Lydia was also a seller of purple cloth. Thyatira was the center of the purple dye trade, a product of high value, often associated with royalty. Producing it required boiling large numbers of sea snails to extract the dye—a time-consuming and labor-intensive process. Lydia was clearly a wealthy entrepreneur setting up her business in Philippi. Yet despite her success, she was still searching for something more.

Lydia is a reminder that the treasures of the world fail to satisfy. How have you seen this to be true?

Why are we still tempted to pursue these things over Christ?

Luke tells us: *The Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying* (v. 14). This is a beautiful testimony of the Lord's converting power. You can't help but admire the quietness of this world-changing event—the first recorded conversion on European soil! The Lord opened her heart like a flower opening to the sun, and she embraced Paul's message about the Messiah. By grace, she recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah, the fulfillment of the Scriptures.

Notice the pattern here. Some are spiritually blind; some see. But the means of transformation is always the faithful proclamation of the gospel. Gospel advancement is God's work, through the Word, through His messengers. And it often begins quietly, with a simple conversation or in a small group gathered in prayer.

This should stir compassion in us for our unbelieving friends, coworkers, and family members. Like Lydia, they may be searching, but only God can open their hearts. Our role is faithful prayer and proclamation. Keep commending Christ. Your Lydia may be waiting. Be expectant.

God is the One who opens hearts. How does this take the pressure off of presenting perfectly and having all the right answers with others?

LYDIA'S BAPTISTERY

Lydia was the first Christian convert in Europe. But God's work didn't stop with Lydia. He used Lydia's gifts and hospitality to spread the gospel to others in the region. For more on Lydia's baptism site, scan the QR code below.



LYDIA OPENS HER HOME (ACTS 16:15)

After her conversion, Lydia was baptized along with her household, likely including servants who believed through her witness. She didn't stop at personal faith; she acted in response. She invited Paul and his companions to stay at her home—a gesture of generosity, hospitality, and strategic ministry.

This home became the gathering place for what would become the Philippian church. Paul would later commend this congregation for their generosity and faithful support of ministry (Philippians 4:15-18).

Hospitality is a powerful tool for ministry. Opening our homes, our time, and our resources can serve the church, provide care for others, and advance the gospel. Small beginnings—just one family or one gathering—can grow into life-changing communities of faith.

How might God be calling you to use your home or some other arena as a welcoming presence for Christ?

Lydia's story reminds us that the gospel is for everyone. Christ reaches the religious and irreligious, the wealthy and the poor, the educated and the ordinary. The message of Jesus is for all people, across all cultures and circumstances.

Wherever we are—on the golf course, at the grocery store, on campus, or in our workplaces—we carry one message: Jesus Christ is the one way of salvation, the one mediator, the hope for every heart. Our task is to take the gospel to everyone we encounter, expecting God to do what only He can.

Lydia's conversion shows us the quiet yet powerful work of God's grace. Christ is for all, Christ is over all, and Christ is all we need. Lydia's story began by a river with a small group of women and a faithful missionary and ended in a baptized household and the birth of a vibrant church in Philippi.

Take some time to identify your mission field. How is God calling you to live for Him in the places you live, work, and play?



FOLLOW *the* FOOTSTEPS

Men, Acts 16 reminds us that the mission of God is alive, unstoppable, and deeply personal. First, we see that God guides His people. Closed doors and open doors are not accidents; they are God's direction. Like Paul and his companions, we must learn to trust God when plans shift, when opportunities vanish, and when unexpected paths open before us. He is leading, even when the road is winding.

Second, we see that the Lord opens hearts. Lydia didn't believe because Paul was eloquent; she believed because the Lord opened her heart. That truth frees us. Our task is not to manipulate or coerce but to faithfully share the Word and pray with expectation. Salvation is God's work, and He is still in the business of softening hearts today.

Third, we see that the gospel advances. In Philippi, God brought together an unlikely mix of people, and He established the first church in Europe. That's the power of the gospel: It crosses boundaries, unites the unlikely, and plants "colonies of heaven" in the most surprising places.

So what about us? The Spirit who led Paul is the same Spirit who indwells you. The Lord who opened Lydia's heart is the same Lord who can reach your coworker, neighbor, or son. The God who planted a church in Philippi is the same God who can use your life, home, and obedience to advance His kingdom.

Don't just admire Paul's footsteps—walk in them. Trust God's guidance. Share Christ boldly. Believe the gospel's power. And step into the mission today.

PRAY TOGETHER

- **Praise God for His sovereign guidance.** Thank God that He opens and closes doors according to His perfect wisdom. Pray for the humility to accept His nos and the courage to step into His yeses.
- **Pray for eyes to see God working.** Ask Him to make you sensitive to the Spirit's leading in your work, family, and ministry.
- **Pray for open hearts.** Just as the Lord opened Lydia's heart, pray for Him to open the hearts of your friends, neighbors, coworkers, and family members. Name them before the Lord. Ask that He would prepare soil for the gospel and give you boldness and clarity to share Christ.
- **Pray for homes to become places for ministry.** Just as Lydia opened her home for the church in Philippi, pray that your homes would be places of hospitality, discipleship, and gospel mission.
- **Pray for the power of the gospel to advance.** Pray that the gospel would break through barriers in your city—cultural, racial, social, and spiritual. Ask God to plant "colonies of heaven" in workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and homes.
