



*Study of Philippians*

*The house church at Philippi  
and beyond  
with the women who led there.*

*"Grace and peace to you from God our  
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."*

## Table 2

## Acts 16

Welcome to Table 2!

I'm excited to begin our study of Philippians.

Let me change ~~excited~~ to overjoyed.

This is a much better word to capture my feelings about studying Philippians.

Philippians is a letter bursting with joy.

Paul was smitten with this small church he had the joy of planting. (So am I!)

### **Change of Plans**

Paul did not have Macedonia on his mission trip itinerary. I don't know about you, but I get a little flustered when my travel plans are interrupted. However, I will say that I've been on enough mission trips to know the number one thing you need to pack for a mission trip is: flexibility. I'm so curious about how Paul handled having his plans changed not once but three times!!! He had been a Pharisee and they were not the type of people who were known for being easy going or go with the flow kind of people.

Let me also welcome our new friends! We're so glad you're here!

I'm thrilled to have new people joining our Flipping Tables community.

Let me take a minute to give you the layout of the three tables.

- Table 1 is the podcast. New episodes release on Tuesday.
- Table 2 is the lesson that corresponds to the podcast lesson. This is where we get to dig a little deeper. These lessons can be expected a few days after the podcast releases. It comes straight to your inbox.

- Table 3 is a discussion guide to use with one or more people. I recommend you do it around a table with yummy snacks or a meal. Table fellowship is a pillar of our community! These guides are available at [Flourishministry.com](http://Flourishministry.com)

The three tables are my way of inviting you to a three course meal. If you're in Lexington and you would like to join our Wednesday Table 3 group, reply to this email. I'll send you the information to join our group. Of course you can do this with your people and study with us from anywhere. This is a perk of the times we live in. Thank God for the gift of technology!

My heart was overjoyed to have my daughter as the first guest in this series.

She's been a wave of God's grace to us. I'm excited for you to get to know Lydia.

Listen to Episode 40: Living Stones of Philippi on [Apple](#) or [Spotify](#).

His Word before my words: [Acts 16:1-15](#)

### **Meet the Mission Team**

**Paul** formerly known as Saul of Tarsus. A zealous Pharisee who excelled at persecuting the first century followers of Jesus. Until the day he was literally blinded by the Light of Jesus on the road to Damascus. Here's some passages to skim to get to know Paul: [Acts 9:1-31](#), [22:2-29](#), [Philippians 3:4-6](#), [Galatians 1:13-24](#). Note the noteworthy details of this remarkable transformation from persecutor to missionary extraordinaire!

**Silas** was called a prophet speaking much encouragement in [Acts 15:32-33](#). Paul chose Silas to be his missionary partner after Paul separated from Barnabas. We humans often complicate things. God turned this for good by doubling the missionary efforts of the Church at Antioch. Silas we will learn was also a Roman Citizen. Peter calls Silas a faithful brother in [1 Peter 5:12](#). Seems like Silas was a true asset to the Church!

**Timothy** We meet Timothy in our passage. He became so dear to Paul that he called Timothy "my true son in the faith." He would go on to pastor the church at Ephesus. Mission partners often become family then and still today.

**Luke** was a doctor who used his skills to investigate the evidence by interviewing eye witnesses in order to write the Gospel of Luke and Acts. In our Acts 16 passage when we read "we" this is our clue that Luke himself became an eye witness to the spread of the gospel. Having a traveling physician would have been extremely helpful to Paul.

These are only brief bios. What other details do you know about these men?

Acts 16 unfolds during Paul's second missionary journey. Let me encourage you to look at a map of Paul's missionary journeys. This helps the Bible come to life. These are real places. My Bible has a great map. In case your Bible doesn't, I'm linking one [here](#). I said on the podcast, Paul was in modern day Turkey, but through the vision, Paul's course was changed to sail across the Aegean Sea to Greece.

- Read Acts 16:1-12. List each location mentioned and find it on the map.
- How do you handle roadblocks or being redirected in everyday travel?
- What do you discern God is wanting to teach you through these obstacles?

Philippi was famous for silver and gold mines and springs of water. At one time the city was named Crenides, meaning "fountains" or "springs." Later, around 359 BC, the city was renamed Philippi after Philip of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great. Under Alexander, the city rose to become the capital of the Greek Empire. By New Testament times, the city had come under Roman rule with a diverse population of native Thracians, Greeks, and Romans. A famous school of medicine existed in Philippi.

From archeology we can learn from the city ruins that there were forum, agora, streets, gymnasium, baths, library, and acropolis. Also, the site contains what may be a 400 BC temple of Apollo and Artemis, along with numerous inscriptions and coins.

- Agora- "a gathering place"...The agora was the center of the athletic, artistic, business, social, spiritual, and political life in the city.

I'm highlighting what an Agora is because it will be the location of the second big occurrence in Philippi. Put a pin here!

Alexander the Great used the gold mines to finance his war to overthrow the Persian Empire. Eventually under the Roman Empire Philippi became a Roman Colony.

Philippi was “the place where the armies of Mark Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius in the decisive battle of the second Roman civil war in 42 B.C.” (Hughes) Retired Roman soldiers were given fertile land so the city was populated by many soldiers. This was a good place to spend your retirement.

Here’s something fun! Remember the medical school at Philippi? This might be significant to Dr. Luke. Here’s an excerpt from an Christian Archeology Site Associates For Biblical Research:

*“Some scholars have suggested that Dr. Luke’s hometown was Philippi, which is a possibility borne out by the pronouns used in the book of Acts. Up until chapter 16, Luke is writing about the work of Peter and Paul. When Paul, Silas and Timothy get to Alexandria Troas the pronouns change from “they/them” (Acts 16:7–8) to “us/we” (Acts 16:9–10). Dr. Luke escorts the group to Philippi (Acts 16:11–12). He is with them when they go to the place of prayer (Acts 16:13, 16–17). When Paul and Silas leave Philippi, Dr. Luke stays behind (Acts 17:1). Paul picks him up on his way to Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 20:5–6). Luke appears to have stayed in Philippi for at least six years.”*

I kept running into this possibility in my studies. I thought I would pass the information on to you. Whether it was Luke’s hometown or not I don’t know, but it seems clear from Acts that Luke stayed in Philippi for a long stretch of time.

The dates for Paul’s second missionary journey are believed to be between AD 49-52.

Now that we know the mission team, some about the city, and when this all happened, we can turn our attention to the leading lady, Lydia, in our lesson.

*Acts 16:13* On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.

There was no synagogue. This tells us there were less than 10 married men in Philippi.

When there was no synagogue, Jews gathered outdoors near running water for prayer.

Paul knew the Gangites River would be the best place to begin.

Where do you think you and your living stones community would gather to worship if you had no building?

Where is your favorite spot to pray?

Our study will give us several opportunities to talk about prayer. **Let's try to remember the Church at Philippi was an answer to prayer.** Can you imagine what it was like to be praying and the answer to your prayers sits down beside the river to pray with you?

*Acts 16:14* One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

Lydia was a wealthy business woman and she was captivated by Paul's message. All of her success had not satisfied the longing in her heart. She knew there was something missing. She had prayed. God heard her prayers. He sent Paul for her among others.

A couple of things important stand out to me. **First, the Lord opened her heart.**

Faith is a work of God. Jesus said, *no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him (John 6:44)*. We are saved by grace through faith. God does it all. **Second, a most important element in evangelism is asking God through prayer to open hearts, for without this there can be no genuine conversion.**

Read this quote from F. F. Bruce carefully...*"Had there been ten Jewish men, they would have sufficed to constitute a synagogue. No number of women would compensate for the absence of even one man necessary to make up the quorum of ten."* (Bruce)

"No number of women" but the first person to believe and respond to the gospel was a woman. God brought Paul, a former Pharisee, to speak the gospel which landed so gracefully on Lydia's heart already prepared to yield to Jesus.

When we get into Philippians, Paul will talk about all of his amazing qualifications which included being a Pharisee. **He considered everything he was before Christ to be garbage. All that mattered to Paul post conversion was knowing Christ.** I don't know if Paul was shocked to find the man in his vision was actually a woman, but I truly believe Paul rejoiced. Paul followed the Table Flipper wherever He led him.

**How about you?**

The table flipping ministry of Jesus will challenge every hidden room in our hearts.

This is a very good and generous gift from God.

God is after our whole being. He wants all of you. Jesus paid it all so that you could know Him more fully and completely. This is why we're going to Philippi.

He wants to fill you completely being the only One on the throne of your life.

This will take some courage. Pray for God to make you like the women of those days.

“For the women of those days were more spirited than lions.” (Chrysostom)

Will you prepare to meet God on the footsteps of your heart?

Our Lord wants to lead us to a deeper intimacy with Him.

Let's go on an adventure. I'm all in. How about you?

At Philippi, we learned the first living stone was a woman.

Jesus through Paul kept bringing women to the table.

Women were given opportunities to learn and lead.

Lydia and her entire household were baptized. Lydia wanted a place to worship and pray. Jesus flipped the tables and gave her something even better than what she thought she wanted. She was filled with generous hospitality.

She invited the whole mission team to stay with her. And just like that... Philippi had a Church. We will meet more of the living stones next week. We will spend one more week in Acts 16. I'm honored to lead you in study of this beloved letter we call Philippians.

By grace,

Julie