

ACTS

Bible Study

2018-2019



Lesson: 17
Acts 16:1-15

Read this week's scripture and answer the questions below. As you read, consider how these verses fit into what you are seeing or experiencing today. Prepare to share with your small group anything that jumped out at you, confused you, encouraged you, challenged or convicted you.

1. Read verses 1-15. We see Paul moving out on his second missionary journey. He returns to strengthen the churches he helped found years before and he strikes out for new territories, welcoming new believers. Think on Paul's example. Who are the faithful men and women in your life that you might reach out and encourage? Who are the men and women in your life that need the gospel, in word, in deed? Pray over these names; then reach out.
2. Spend time in verses 1-4. Here Paul calls Timothy into his ministry. Timothy's mother is a Christ follower of a Jewish background; His father is a gentile (presumably not a believer). Think on how Timothy's own family, experience, background has positioned him to share the gospel, a story rooted in the story of Israel, with the Gentile world. You too have a family, experience, background that God has shaped to equip you for ministry. Think on that today. Pray on it. Ask Him to send you to those places, those people for whom you have been prepared.
3. Look at verse 5. Here we are reminded of the fruit of the Spirit's work through the apostles: strengthened churches, growing churches. We live in an age when the church endures great criticism, some fair, some unfair. Consider your own heart: have you been critical of the church? Does that lead you to repentance? Does that lead you to work to strengthen and grow the church? Wherever those thoughts lead, let them lead you to prayer for the church, the bride of Christ.
4. Rest on verses 6 and 7. On two occasions, The Spirit forbids Paul and Timothy to go where they think they ought to go. Has the Lord ever showed you a plan that was very different from your own? Have you ever encountered a hard no? Can you see God's faithfulness to his own plan of redemption that is far greater than our own plans? Take this chance to be honest before the Lord. Pray your hopes; pray your frustration; pray your unfiltered thoughts; pray to seek, trust and surrender to his plans, and not your own.
5. Take in verses 8-10. Look closely at verse 10, especially at that word, "immediately." When the Lord gives Paul a vision, he responds immediately. He gets up; he goes. What has the Lord given you a vision for? What's your response time like? We are called to worship. We are called to be stewards. We are called to bring light to darkness, the words of life to a dying world. Pray for vision. Pray to get going.
6. Read and consider verses 11-15. The spirit leads Paul and Timothy to Phillipi, a leading city. It would be easy to see this as a strategy. But don't. It's obedience. It's following that leads to new opportunities. Pray for understanding of this paradoxical power. Pray for the leading of the spirit and a willingness to follow.
7. Pay close attention to verses 13 and 14. The apostles share the word. The Lord opens Lydia's heart. We have a job. He has the power. Pray for faithfulness. Pray for the lost to be found. Pray for His name to be known, the only name with the power to save.