

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, July 8, 2007

Passage: Acts 16

Memory Passage: Acts 16:30-31

TODAY: *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 16:1-5.** As recorded in Acts 15, Paul and the other leaders/elders had just decided, after great dissension and debate, that the Gentiles should not be required to be circumcised, so why did Paul circumcise Timothy as recorded in Acts 16:1-3? Was Paul not following the rules the elders had issued, was it hypocrisy? Why or why not? (read: 1 Corinthians 9:20-23)
- (b) What can we learn from Paul's actions in Acts 16:1-3?
- (c) Did the rules/guidelines of the elders, which were being delivered to the churches by Paul and his companions, have anything to do with the churches being strengthened and increasing in number, as recorded in Acts 16? Why or why not? What does Christ say about his commands - do they bring us joy or dread? (Read: Matthew 11:28-30 and 1 John 5:3) Do we normally think of rules or commands bringing us happiness and joy? Why or why not? How are God's/Christ's rules/commands different than those we encounter in the world in everyday life?

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 16:6-12.** As recorded in these verses, how many times did the Lord providentially influence Paul and his traveling companions as to where they traveled and ministered? What does this teach us about the Lord's involvement in the lives of his children and in the growth of His church?
- (b) Who wrote the book of Acts? Where was the author from most likely? Hint: there is something in these six verses which provides strong evidence as to where he was from or at least the place he was living at that time, look closely at which *Person* the author uses in his writing – that is - does he write in 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person consistently throughout these six verses? If not, when does he change and why?
- (c) Can you think of a time when God worked providentially in your life to place you where He wanted in order to use you for ministry? Was it on a missions trip, a job relocation, or even times where God, in His providence, put you in the path of someone in the “normal” course of everyday life?

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 16:13-21.** According to verse 13, where was the first place Paul and his companions went to minister? Why do you think they went there? What other places did Paul go to minister/proclaim the gospel when he arrived in a city – see Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:1-2, 10, 17; 18:4? Is there anything we can learn from this? If a church is not teaching Jesus Christ, as the Bible reveals Him, is it appropriate to proselytize the members of that church (i.e. attempt to convince them to come to our church or another church that teaches the truth about Christ)? Why or why not?
- (b) Verse 14 states, “the Lord opened Lydia's heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul” – what does it mean for the Lord to “open a heart”? (See also: Ephesians 2:1-5; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14) What did Lydia do when God opened her heart? What must human beings do to be saved? (see: Acts 16:30-31, John 3:16)

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 16:19-30.** According to verse 19, why did the masters of the slave-girl get angry with Paul and Silas? What was the motivation behind their anger? See 1 Timothy 6:10 and Hebrews 13:5. How can we keep ourselves from committing this sin? See: 2 Peter 1:3-13; 1 Timothy 6:8-19
- (b) Do you think Paul and Silas were surprised that they were persecuted? Should they have been surprised? See: John 15:18-20, Philippians 1:28-30. Are Christ's words in John 15:18-20 and Paul's words in Philippians 1:28-30 applicable to all time periods – are they applicable to us today?
- (c) Read Colossians 1:24, what does Paul mean in this verse – does he mean something was “lacking” in Christ's suffering on the cross? If not, what does he mean? Does the persecution Paul and Silas suffered, as recorded in Acts 16, help you understand the meaning of Colossians 1:24? Why or why not?
- (d) Acts 16:25 states Paul and Silas were praising God while in prison after being beaten with rods – why/how do you think Paul and Silas were able to praise God in these circumstances? The book of Acts tells us of another occasion where believers were beaten for their belief in Christ and then praised God afterwards - who were they and where in Acts is it recorded? Hint, see Acts chapter 5. In that incident, what was the reason they gave for praising God after their persecution. In the “sermon on the mount” in Matthew chapter 5, Jesus gives words of encouragement for times when we are persecuted for His name sake – what encouragement does Jesus give?

(e) Read Luke 6:20-36 carefully and compare Jesus' teaching in these verses to what happened to Paul and Silas in Acts 16, be sure to include in your answer comments on how Paul and Silas responded to their persecutors.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 16:31-40.** What happened to the jailor as recorded in these verses? Do you think Paul and Silas' suffering/persecution and subsequent praising of God had anything to do with the salvation of the jailor? If so, what? Read John 12:32-33, according to these verses what is the key act of Christ which He uses to draw all men to Himself, in other words, what is the main focal point of our salvation? Now, consider again what Paul wrote in Colossians 1:24 – and then comment on the role Paul's suffering (and in this case Paul and Silas' suffering) played in bringing the Philippian jailor to Christ.
- (b) In general, what impact does witnessing suffering have on those who witness it? In general, who has a more powerful testimony - someone who has experienced great suffering or someone who has experienced an extremely easy and comfortable life? According to Job 1:7-11, what was Satan's main argument to God against Job?
- (c) Is there an occasion(s) where God allowed you to suffer or be persecuted for His name? (remember, persecution includes people "making fun" of you because of your faith or even just excluding you, etc.) If so, could you see How God used it for His glory?
- (d) What did the jailor do after he believed in Jesus Christ? Read 2 Corinthians 7:9-12, according to these verses prepare a definition of "true repentance" (i.e. a repentance that leads to salvation). Now, compare your definition of "true repentance" to the actions of the jailor in Acts 16:31-40, commenting on the various characteristics of repentance he possessed or displayed.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. Read Acts 16 again and ask God to reveal and emphasize truths from this chapter that He wants you to see.

DATE: July 8, 2007

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God Builds His Church - One Stone at a Time

"Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end ..."