

Your “Manner of Life” Matters

1. When Paul and Barnabas separated, Paul chose Silas, a prophet and a previous leader of the church in Jerusalem, to accompany him on his second missionary journey. They traveled over land through the Roman provinces of Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches that had been started on the first missionary journey (Acts 15:41). In Lystra, Paul found a young believer named Timothy (Acts 16:1). What spiritual qualities did Timothy possess at this time that made him a good choice for missionary service (Acts 16:1, 2; II Timothy 3:15)?
2. Before Paul would allow Timothy to accompany them on the missionary trip, he required Timothy to be circumcised (Acts 16:3). Previously, Paul had fought zealously against the Judaizers who taught that individuals needed to be circumcised in order to be saved (cf. Acts 15:1, 2). On another occasion, Paul even refused to allow Titus to be circumcised (cf. Galatians 2:1-5).
 - a. Why did Paul require Timothy to be circumcised (Acts 16:3; cf. I Corinthians 9:19-23)?
 - b. Paul’s desire for Timothy to be circumcised teaches an important spiritual principle that the church of Jesus Christ has often missed as it attempts to reach the world for God. What do you think it is?
3. At Philippi, the four missionaries encountered a demon-possessed slave girl who said, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation” (v. 17).
 - a. Why do you think Paul did not want this slave girl to promote their work among the people of Philippi?
 - b. Are any of your friends, acquaintances or relatives blinded and trapped by Satan? As you ponder their spiritual state, what thoughts and feelings do you have? What can you do about their situation?
4. Paul and Silas were thrown into prison while Timothy and Luke remained free (Acts 16:24). In prison, their feet were fastened in stocks where they could not easily attend to the bruises they had just received. Instead of complaining or calling on God to judge their enemies, they were praying and singing hymns of praise to God (Acts 16:25). Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, “Any fool can sing in the day. It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but the skillful singer is he who can sing when there is not a ray of light to read by ... Songs in the night come only from God; they are not in the power of men.”
 - a. What do you think is meant by the phrase, “songs in the night” (Job. 35:10; Psalms 42:8)?
 - b. Are you experiencing a trial in your life? What could you do to “sing songs in the night” and bring more glory to God during your trial?
 - c. How can a Christian choose joy in the midst of unpleasant circumstances?
5. What one or two qualities from the life of Paul, Silas, Timothy or Luke would you like to see God build into your life? What practical steps can you take to make this a reality?

Acts 16:1-10

¹Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. ²He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. ³Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. ⁴And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

⁶Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. ⁷After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. ⁸So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.



Read: Acts 17:1-15

- M. v. 1,2** — The first two cities mentioned here were probably without a synagogue, and that's why Paul and Silas only "passed through." However, when finally arriving in Thessalonica (a large city of 200,000), what did they look for and what did they do? Do you sense urgency in their actions? How urgently are you in seeking opportunities to minister for Jesus Christ?
- T. v. 2,3** — How can a thorough understanding of how to "reason Christ" help you bring others to Him? Read 1 Peter 3:15 and consider how important it is to know why you believe what you do.
- W. v. 4** — With a clear presentation of the gospel, mixed with solid evidence for the truth of the Scriptures, is it realistic to believe others will come to know Christ? How does that encourage you in your desires to share spiritual truth with others?
- T. v. 5-9,13** — What can we sometimes expect to happen when we share Christ? Are you one who is "turning the world upside down" for Christ? If not, would you like to be? How can you start? Ask Pastor Troy, a deacon or an ENCORE leader if you need concrete ideas.
- F. v. 10a, 13-15** — How do we find balance between entering a potentially dangerous situation to share the gospel and retreating when danger is imminent? How did the other believers react to threats against Paul and Silas? Did they merely pray for them, or did they take action?
- S. v. 10b-12** — Paul and Silas had a message to share! Did they waste any time? Why was the Word of God more accepted here in Berea (v. 11 mentions two reasons)? Which of these two areas do you need to work on so the Word can take better root in your life?

Acts 16:11-40

¹¹Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis, ¹²and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. ¹³And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. ¹⁴Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. ¹⁵And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

¹⁶Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." ¹⁸And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. ¹⁹But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

²⁰And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; ²¹and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." ²²Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. ²³And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. ²⁷And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

²⁹Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³²Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.

³⁴Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

³⁵And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, "Let those men go."

³⁶So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace."

³⁷But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out."

³⁸And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. ³⁹Then they came and pleaded with them and brought them out, and asked them to depart from the city. ⁴⁰So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.