



CONVERSATIONS

session page

God is a Sneaky Sneak

Acts 16:9-15 | Session 17.21

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Remind the group of Daniel's introduction, focusing on the complex relationship between Paul and Lydia and how it came about. Ask the group:

- When has someone tricked you into something that was good for you?
- At what times do you do this to other people and why?
- Why does it sometimes take being "sneaky" to help people?
- In what ways does God surprise you sometimes?
- How do you catch God when God is blessing you in an unexpected way?
- In what ways do you think faith is related to surprise?

Content

Read Acts 16:9-15, then watch the Bible Background Video and ask:

- How did Paul end up among the Philippians, according to the scripture?
- Why might someone see God as “tricking” Paul into going to where he would meet Lydia?
- What is significant about being the first convert in Philippi?
- While this is alluded to in the podcast, how does Lydia contribute to Paul’s ministry and the formation of the church?
- Given that many scholars believe that the last authentic letter written by Paul was to the Philippian church, what does this say about the impression that this event had on Paul and his work?

Closure

Watch this clip from “The Big Bang Theory” where Mary, Sheldon’s mother, tricks Sheldon and Amy into resuming their relationship and ask:

- What does Mary demonstrate (she says men, but I suspect that all people might be this way) about how to convince people to do what you want them to do?
- Why was Mary willing to trick them into coming back together?
- At what points do we encounter people who need to be brought together, and how do you think this could be accomplished?
- What sorts of “surprises” can congregations use to bring their members together?
- With whom in the community does your congregation need to connect, and how might you urge this connection along?

Close with a prayer.

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