



MIND
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

Start by asking:

- When have you felt like God had directly told you or someone you know something – either through some vision or some supernatural occurrence?
- With whom did you share that information and what was the result?
- When might God have been revealed to you through more subtle means, like chance encounters, conversations, or a set of circumstances?
- Why do you think God chooses to speak to us in either of these ways and why do you think people may value one way more than another?
- How do you typically respond when you think God has contacted someone, even if they don't see that in themselves, and why?
- To what degree is being "contacted" by God an important aspect of faith?

Content

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

- Since earlier verses, like Acts 16:6-8, say that the Spirit “prevented” or “did not allow” them to work in certain areas, how and why do you think the Spirit did this?
- What circumstances might have led them to this conclusion?
- Why do you think Paul paid closer attention to this dream and how else might he have interpreted it?
- Some scholars believe the writer of Acts, Luke, joined Paul at this point of the story, so how might this influence the way the story was told?
- Why might Paul have chosen to start his work in Philippi by looking for Jews or others who already worshiped God?
- Why, in a patriarchal culture, did Paul begin with women rather than men?
- What can we learn about Lydia from these few verses?
- Where can we sense God’s Spirit moving in this story from the more overt ways to the more subtle ways?

Closure

Continue by asking:

- While in this story we see the Spirit moving through interactions, chance encounters and open hearts, in what ways do you notice God's Spirit moving most often today?
- How do you think Paul, Lydia and others in the story kept themselves open to seeing and experiencing God's subtle work around them?
- What things have you done before to nurture this kind of sensitivity, and how might we work to be more sensitive to God's presence and guiding?
- How does a congregation work to promote such sensitivity among its members?
- At what points do congregations discourage this sort of sensitivity, and what sorts of messages might yours be ignoring?
- Who might most be changed in your community if congregations became better listeners to God's urging?

Close with prayer.

Writer: Jon Parks