



A New Mission

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

GOD'S WILL IS AN ADVENTURE

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

Have you ever wondered what God wants from your life? You might even be questioning that now.

Sometimes, God's will is considered unknowable or too mysterious to grasp. At other times, it is presented as painful or boring. However, Paul's life demonstrates that being in the center of God's will for our lives is neither unknowable nor boring. God is already at work, and He wants us to join Him. A life surrendered to God might not always be comfortable or easy, but it invites adventure and true joy.

Paul starts his second missionary journey by visiting the churches he planted during his first missionary trip. He intends to bring the Gospel to other places in Asia Minor, but he encounters people to invest in along the way, and God's Spirit directs him to travel to Europe.

When Paul and his companions travel to Europe, they discover God is already working there. People decided to follow Jesus, and the first church on the European continent was formed. Paul had plans, but God's plans were even greater! The four stories in this passage remind us that God's ideas can exceed our expectations. The biggest limit to our joy is often our lack of willingness to surrender ourselves to Him.

- What is your first reaction when you hear the phrase "God's will for your life?"
- Read Acts 16:1-5.
- When Paul recognized that God was working in Timothy's life, he invited Timothy to join him. Have you ever had someone see potential in you and take you under their wing? If so, what was that experience like?

- The challenge to Timothy didn't come without a cost. He had to leave his way of life and family behind (as well as be circumcised). Has following Jesus ever cost you something? If so, what?
- Read Acts 16:6-10.
- Acts 16:6-10 tells us that the Holy Spirit wouldn't let Paul travel to Asia (In the South) or Bithynia (in the North). Sometimes, God prevents us from going in one direction because He has something better for us elsewhere. Has God ever re-directed your plans? If so, what were the results?
- The call to Macedonia was a huge adventure. It meant bringing the Gospel to a new continent and context. It must have been exciting yet scary for Paul and his companions. When has God asked you to do something outside your comfort zone?
- Read Acts 16:11-15.
- Paul meets an influential woman in the city named Lydia. To Paul's surprise, God opened Lydia's heart, and she received the Gospel message. When have you observed God working in the hearts of the people around you?
- Read Acts 16:16-18
- Paul encounters a slave girl who was possessed by an evil spirit and used for financial gain by her owners. In contrast to Lydia, she was considered the lowest in society. Paul casts out a demon from her, and she is freed. Who is in bondage around you? Most likely, this doesn't look like physical chains, but that doesn't make their struggles any less real. People can be enslaved to addictions, behaviors, or attitudes. How might you pray for these people or be a part of setting them free?
- These narratives remind us that God is at work in people and places. As you reflect on Acts 16:1-18 is there any person you feel God is asking you to invest in? Is there any place that God is asking you to go?

Consider committing to pray this prayer daily for a week as a small group...

"God, thank you for being a good Father and wanting the best for my life. I am grateful that you want me to join you in your work in the world. Please show me where you are working today and give me the courage to follow you, no matter where it leads me."