



WEEKLY STUDY

How to Deal - Week Four

This week, Pastor Jacob shared that he named his daughter Lydia because of the account in Acts 16. Lydia was an important character in the early church in Philippi. She had some wealth, and she had some faith, and God opened her heart. My prayer for this week is that God would open our hearts to His great love for us.

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for someone you know who seems to have a heart that is closed to God. Pray that God would open them up to a whole new experience of His grace and mercy.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: ACTS 16.11-15 (NIV)

From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis.¹² From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

¹³ *On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.¹⁵ When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.*

- Philippi was a Roman colony and this account was the first recorded response of evangelism after the vision of the Macedonian Call. This passage reads like a divine appointment. Lydia was already there, worshipping God. And Paul was seeking a way to establish the Gospel in this new place. Have you ever experienced what feels like a divine appointment? How did God reveal his plan? Was it before you arrived, or was it revealed after the fact?
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- **Prayer Prompt: You armed me with strength for battle; you humbled my adversaries before me. (Psalm 18.39)**
- *God, you know my lying down and my standing up. You have prepared the steps before me and you are always with me. Guide me in your way today. Amen.*

TUESDAY: LUKE 19.1-10 (NIV)

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd.⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ *When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.*

⁷ *All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."*

⁸ *But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."*

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

- Have you ever noticed how often the response to salvation is sharing your home—showing hospitality? When God brings transformation into our lives, we want to share it. Some of us are better gifted for hospitality than others, but the heart is the same. In the case of Zacchaeus, it almost works in reverse. Jesus announces that he’s coming over for dinner, and it changes everything for Zacchaeus and his entire household. Has God ever seemed to barge in on your life and bring radical change?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! (Ephesians 3.20)**
- *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: ACTS 16.11-12 (NIV)

From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. ¹² From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

- Notice the details Luke has included here. They go quickly, but we find out that this 150 mile trek only took a couple of days (which is less than half of the return trip). The wind must have literally been at their backs, and it is clear that God’s mission for them was gaining steam. When was the last time you felt that God was so clearly directing your steps?
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- **Prayer Prompt: In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps. (Proverbs 16.9)**
- *God, I want to experience the clarity of call that Paul received. Fill me with the assurance of having the wind at my back. Amen.*

THURSDAY: ACTS 16.13-15 (NIV)

On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.¹⁵ When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

- There must have been many converts made in Philippi, but only a few are specifically mentioned. It is clear that Lydia was an important figure for the movement. She had faith, resources, and a heart that was available to God. If you were to be described in a few short sentences, what details would people include? What are you known for? What is your heart-posture before God?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. (James 4.7-8)**
- *God, would you adjust my posture before you. I want to be open and available to you. Come and have your way with my life. Amen.*

FRIDAY: PHILIPPIANS 1.1-6 (NIV)

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

²*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

³*I thank my God every time I remember you.* ⁴*In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy* ⁵*because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,* ⁶*being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

- Paul clearly had a deep connection with the church in Philippi. Knowing the background of his initial experiences there, we can sense a healthy pride in how God used him to spread the Gospel in Macedonia. Like any institution that involves human beings, the church had to figure some things out—they made mistakes. But the heart of the church that began in Lydia's living room maintained a healthy community. Have you experienced Christian community over the long haul? What are the difficulties? What are the blessings?
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- **Prayer Prompt: And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1.9-11)**
 - *God, fill me with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ. May you receive glory in it! Amen.*

SATURDAY: PHILIPPIANS 1.27 (NIV)

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel

- Whatever happens... This phrase has stuck with me over recent years. Because so much happens in our lives, and the thing that is most immediate and pressing, can seem like the only thing. But as followers of Jesus, we have a different perspective. When was the last time you were reminded to conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel?

- **Prayer Prompt: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8.28)**
- *God, thank you for those who you have put in my life that help me to remain focused on Jesus. Send more, and send me! Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Insert your own name and story in the pattern of Lydia's introduction in Philippians.

Lydia, (Your name _____),

A dealer in purple cloth (how others describe your role or contribution _____)

A worshiper of God (how others see or describe your relationship with God _____)

Listened... (When are you most tuned into the voice of God? _____)

And the Lord opened her heart. (How has God changed your heart? _____)