

Adult Study Guide

Introduction

Many of us have had disappointments, anger, struggles, dreams deferred, and sometimes have been in dire circumstances. We struggle for a way out. How do we find the answer? We find the solution by living in the Word of God and on His promises. This always brings hope, and hope breeds life.

Background Information

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it. Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies. Hebrews 13:1-3 (NLT)

A Philippi Church is a group of inmates who pray, worship God, and testify to the love and power of God within the prisons, as Paul and Silas did during their imprisonment. The Philippi Church Prison Ministry encourages and assists inmates to form bible studies in the dormitories. The ministry provides a study Bible, Bible dictionary, and a wide variety of interactive Bible studies as well as Christian-worker training material available to group leaders. Philippi Fellowships share the gospel, transforming broken lives. You can find additional information at txb.org/philippi, paul.atkinson@txb.org, Paul Atkinson, Director, Multi-Housing/House Congregation & Philippi Churches, (214) 828-5217.

Set Up

Create an inviting atmosphere for discussion as you begin this lesson. Allow participants to sit down in small groups so they share and easily transition to other activities.

Focus Topic

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

We are called to be faithful servants of God and carry out the Great Commission. We are to share the hope found in the gospel and what He’s called us to do, as well as encourage and assist others to learn of Jesus, praying for personal transformation, as we learn more about Jesus’ love.

Pray

Pray that God will speak to you and guide you to obey the Great Commission. Pray to start where you live and be willing to live on mission. Whether the church is an apartment, multi-housing church, micro church in communities, or groups within a prison, wherever God plants a church, pray!

Study

Testimony

Consider how this study applies to your life.

Paul and Silas

Ask the small groups to read Acts 16:22-30

Paul and Silas were accused of causing disorder and promoting unlawful customs among Romans. Any time we go against what the culture does we will likely experience pushback. A mob revolted against Paul and Silas influencing the magistrates to act rashly. Paul and Silas were stripped, beaten, and thrown into jail. At midnight Paul and Silas showed confidence in God with whatever the outcome would be. This made the prisoners take notice as they heard the prayers and songs of praise unto the Lord. This was a powerful testimony to the prisoners. After the earthquake loosed Paul and Silas, the Philippian jailer knew he would have to serve their sentence. He considered a quick death by execution instead of imprisonment as the answer. Acts 16:22-30 (NLT)

But Look at God!

The jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?" and they said, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thou house," Acts 16:30 (KJV)

Encourage the group to share their thoughts regarding the journey of Paul and Silas. Allow the entire group to share.

Activities

1. *Ask the group if anyone would share about a midnight experience they may have had. Did you get a breakthrough?*
2. *Ask the group to share experiences or situations that may have imprisoned them physically or mentally, and only through prayer was there release. Record the response on a flipchart or whiteboard. Discuss the similarities between personal experiences and the experiences in the scripture passage.*
3. *Pray for the inmates in the Philippi Ministry to become disciples who make disciples.*

What can you do?

Pray: *Pray that your brokenness will lead to a breakthrough.*

Promote: *Tell others about the Philippi Ministry.*

Give: *Donate online at iamtexasmissions.org/give.*

How can your church help?

Write letters or notes of encouragement to those who are imprisoned and who are in leadership roles in the Philippi Ministry.

Pray As We Go

Help us keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Hebrews 13:1-3 (NLT)

And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. Romans 5:5 (NLT)

Let us be like Paul and Silas, trusting in God and not compromising our beliefs. Let us bring hope to those imprisoned within prisons and those burdened outside prison walls. For we know God loves us, and this hope will not lead to disappointment.

Let us start living in the word of God and His promises.

About the Writer

Lynn Montgomery

Lynn Montgomery is a member of the Mt. Olivet Baptist Fellowship Church, Tyler, Tx. She enjoys reading and tutoring students. Also, she enjoys serving on the WMU Board of Directors of Texas.



Mary Hill Davis

Mary Hill Davis, president of Texas WMU from 1906 to 1931, saw Texas as a rich harvest field with its mixture of Anglo, Black, European, and Mexican populations. In 1910 she led the Baptist women of Texas to set aside a week to pray for the needs in the state and to take up an offering as was done for foreign and home missions. Following her death in 1934, the Texas missions offering was named in her memory.