



ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

How God Turned a Band of Nobodies into a Movement for Everybody

How did a handful of ordinary people become ten thousand followers of Jesus in the year following his public execution? How did his movement gain so much momentum, especially as ten of the eleven charter members were crucified, burned, or stoned to death? How did ten thousand Christians become one million by the second century, and 3.3 billion today? Acts of the Apostles tells the story of how Christianity spread like wildfire across the Roman Empire and beyond.

Group Discussion Guide: Week 17

Conversation Starter

Think of a time in your life when you were courageous. What happened? How did you show courage? Where did your courage come from?

Courage to Stir Up Trouble

First, read Acts 16:16-18. Who was the slave girl, and what did she do to make her owners rich? Where do we see this kind of evil today?

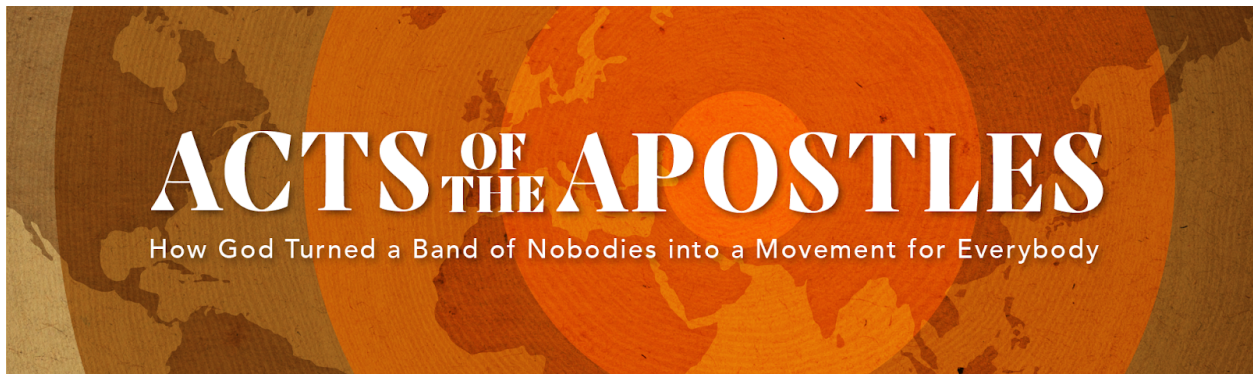
Why did Paul find it necessary to silence her (even though she was telling the truth)?

What keeps you from having the courage to stir up trouble when it's called for?

Courage to Suffer

Read Acts 16:19-24. How did Paul and Silas disrupt the peace? What happened next?

Paul and Silas were courageous enough to suffer for Christ. Have you ever suffered for Christ? If so, how?



Courage to Sing

Read Acts 16:25. What were Paul and Silas doing in their prison cell, and why was that so extraordinary?

What were the other prisoners doing, and why does our posture while suffering for Jesus matter?

Courage to Stay

Read Acts 16:26-39. Two times, Paul and Silas stayed when they could have left. In the first instance, they stayed in jail when they could have escaped. Why did they stay?

In what areas of your life is God calling you to have “the courage to stay” right now?

Courage to Strengthen Others

Read Acts 16:40. What did Paul and Silas do after the magistrates escorted them out of prison? Why was that an act of courage under the circumstances?

This first house church in Philippi could have consisted of the jailor’s family, a formerly possessed girl, and a wealthy merchant named Lydia (Acts 16:11-15). What does this ragamuffin crew tell us about the nature of the Gospel and the Church?

Read *Isaiah* 43:2–3. In a world that feels like it’s on fire and changing by the day, what reason do we have for being courageous? Where does our courage come from?