



## ADULT BIBLE STUDY: Leader's Guide

Although this study can stand alone, it is designed to go along with *"To the Ends of the Earth"* movie. The context is the mission journey of Paul to help participants understand the purpose and power of sharing the gospel around the globe—beginning with people nearby. The study leads participants to the stories of different types of people in order to connect them to the central importance of Jesus' story. Although Paul is a primary character in this account, it is not so much about Paul but about God's powerful activity of bringing even the most unlikely people to faith in him.

**Contents of this Guide for Leading the Sessions includes:**

1. Approach for Leading the Study (p. 1–3)
2. Storyline and Objectives for Each Section (p. 3–7)

### APPROACH FOR LEADING THE STUDY

#### SPEND TIME IN PREPARATION

**Although the study is intended to be simple enough to follow, preparation by the leader will make the lesson go smoothly and help draw the truths and applications from the Scripture passages.** Here are some suggestions for preparation:

- Watch the movie to catch the flow of action and messages being conveyed.
- Read the Bible passages ahead of time. Mark out key points you feel should eventually be noticed or discussed. Continue to be open to hearing from participants any additional insights.
- Look at the additional passages in the textboxes and be prepared to use the ones that might seem appropriate to the audience.
- Choose at least two application questions in the "Telling Your Story" section and challenge people to leave with at least one idea in the "Living the Story" section.
- Read "A Portrait of Paul" by David Valleskey (available through NPH) to get more in-depth insights about his mission work.

#### GAUGE YOUR AUDIENCE AND TIME LIMITATIONS

**The leader does not need to teach everything in the lesson but should choose what is most appropriate or needed for the audience and time constraints.** What you emphasize and spend time with may depend on how new the audience is to Christianity or how theologically trained they are. If it is a mixed audience ensure you keep a balance—not making it too simple for those looking for depth, but not drowning or distracting new people with information or topics that would detract from the simple message of the lesson. The narrative paragraphs are inserted to help communicate the point of the section especially to those who are new to leading it, or for the individual who is studying or reviewing it alone.

It will require a different approach for those who have 30 minutes available compared with those who have 90-minute sessions. Plan your flow accordingly. There should be plenty of material for the 90 minutes (including the textbox topics).

**MS-Word files are provided so that you can customize the lessons as you see fit based on your time and audience (as well as your teaching style).**

**If you have only 45 minutes or less**, you could do one or more of the following with the main study:

- Skip the video viewing and have enough copies that they can view at home.
- Skip some of the study segments and assign them for individual home study or small group study during the week. Have them report back what they discovered.
- Arrange the class period to be able to have different groups work on separate sections for 10 minutes and report back their findings and insights.
- Split it into additional lessons and extend the course.
- Skip the narrative sections and just summarize it in your own words at the end of each section.
- Send groups or families home with the “Living Your Story” section to report back what they have decided to do.

## MAP OUT YOUR APPROACH

*It’s beneficial if participants have the opportunity to view the entire movie before the study begins. You could schedule a screening of the movie a week before the first study session, talk about what stood out most for them, and encourage viewers to participate in the upcoming class.*

**Each Bible Study lesson** corresponds to each segment of the movie. In the first part of each lesson the corresponding movie segment is identified along with where you start and stop on the video timeclock.

1. **The Call of God** (Paul) (*start–2:10*)
2. **The Gospel Goes to Foreign Cultures** (Timothy) (*02:11–13:31*)
3. **The Seeker Discovers Truth** (Lydia) (*13:32–19:38*)
4. **The Oppressed is Set Free** (Slave girl) (*19:39–23:06*)
5. **The Hopeless Gains Faith** (Jailer) (*22:10–33:33*)
6. **The Believers Gather in Joy** (Philippi church) (*33:34–end*)

**NOTE:** *The DVD contains the chapter selections from the menu. Be aware that it may continue to play until the end of the movie unless you stop it. So ahead of time, note at what scene the next chapter starts (notice timing and action), so that you can stop the movie at the proper point.*

**Sessions:** For each Bible Study session you could consider the following flow. Respectfully keep things moving and do not get hung up or distracted along the way.

1. **Start:** You can start out and end with singing or reciting a few verses of a hymn (one is suggested). An option for a hymn is the one specially composed with the movie’s message “We are Sent by the Lord”: [<https://welscongregationalservices.net/download/tteote-worship/>]
2. **Connect:** Capture the joys, struggles, or concerns participants had that week. Offer a prayer related to input and asking the Holy Spirit’s guidance on the study.
3. **Review:** Spend a moment recounting the main point of the previous lesson and touching on last week’s assignment—how participants “put it into practice.”
4. **Engage:** Open people to the topic with the initial questions. It is often beneficial to have people talk it through for 4–5 minutes in small groupings (3–5). Have them first chose who will report their discussions and share the best insights (or also the funniest comments to keep things engaging).
5. **View:** Play the related segment of the movie.

6. **Discuss:** Work through the main body of the lesson. Depending on time, you may have to move more quickly through some sections. Prepare to spend good discussion time on the ones you feel are most key for your audience.
7. **Apply:** Don't crunch the time so tight that you don't have comfortable time for one or two application discussions in "Telling Your Story" and challenging participants with options suggested in "Living the Story."
8. **Pray:** End with a prayer about key thoughts, concerns, or applications discussed during the session.

**Put into Action:** Make sure you have time for some application discussions in the "Telling Your Story" and "Living Your Story" section. Have the group walk away with a clear understanding of how this will affect their lives and how they intend to live it out more fully.

## THE STORYLINE AND OBJECTIVES OF EACH SESSION

**Movie Theme:** Jesus came not just to benefit one type of people. Jesus was God's answer of love for people of every culture or background. The message of Jesus is a power that changes even the most unlikely hearts. It gives truth to the seeker, hope to the hopeless, and freedom to the oppressed. God sends messengers to share the life-changing story of Jesus to the ends of the earth.

**Objective of the Bible study** is that *each viewer, amazed by the grace of God, embraces how fully accepted they are in Christ, how powerful the gospel is for others, and captures the passion and urgency to share it with people of different lifestyles and cultures.*

1. **The Call of God (Paul)** *(start–2:10)*
2. **The Gospel Goes to Foreign Cultures (Timothy)** *(02:11–13:31)*
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4. **The Oppressed is Set Free (Slave girl)** *(19:39–23:)*
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**Conclusion:** God accepts ALL people of ALL nations who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and gives them equal status as his saints with full membership in God's family and co-heirs of eternal life.

- Christ is the center of God's dealings with us.
- The gospel is the power to change even the most unlikely person.
- Faith in Christ unites people of all races, nations, ages into one family—equally loved.
- It is our mission to go and tell others.

### Key passages:

Romans 1:16: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.*

Acts 10:34-35: *God does not show favoritism but accepts people from all nations.*

Galatians 3:26-29: *So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Ephesians 2:19-22: *You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household....*

## Flow of Lessons (story-telling):

1. **Relating to the World's Story** (starting with life challenges today)
2. **Reading the Scripture Story** (capturing the original story)
3. **Watching the Movie Story** (viewing the related segment)
4. **Learning from Their Story** (being Paul, Timothy, Lydia, Slave girl, Jailer, Philippi church)
5. **Telling Your Story** (applying it to your circumstances to share to others)
6. **Living the Story – Project** (incorporating it into your daily life as your mission)

## SESSION ONE: THE CALL OF GOD

### The Story of Paul – *A Call to Faith – A Call to Mission*

**Movie Storyline:** The movie begins with Paul on the ground having flashbacks of his persecution of Christians and stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:57–8:1). Paul was on his way to Damascus to take more Christians as prisoners to Jerusalem (Acts 9:1-16). Jesus calls out, “Saul, why do you persecute me?” Jesus sends him on his mission to be a witness about what he has seen and heard from Jesus. Paul is joined by Silas, Timothy, and Luke who are journeying with him now. Timothy is unsure about going forward because of possible persecution. Paul reminds the others of the mission—to be a light for the Gentiles and bring salvation to the ends of the earth. At night Paul gets a vision from the man pleading for him to come to Macedonia (Acts 16:1-10).

**Application:** God’s call to faith is an effective one and a prime example of God’s grace. The knowledge that Jesus had died to forgive him and came alive to give him life... changed Paul from a man of pride and hatred into a model of love and humility. Paul’s call to faith was also a call to mission. In Paul’s case, it was a unique mission to reach the Gentiles—especially those who hadn’t heard about Jesus. God blocked Paul from going where Paul planned and redirected him to a new mission field—what we now know as Europe (Greece). God calls us to faith through the gospel and has a calling for us—a role to live in his mission for the world. In one way or another, all of us are involved in the task of taking the gospel message to the ends of the earth.

#### Themes/teachings:

- God’s effective call to faith.
- God’ power to turn a hostile enemy into a courageous ambassador for Christ.
- God ultimately controls and directs our steps.
- God’s leading and plans for us are related to his mission in the world.

## SESSION TWO: THE GOSPEL GOES TO FOREIGN CULTURES

### In the City of Philippi – *Learning to Create a Bridge to Different Worldviews*

**Movie Storyline:** The scene shows Paul and crew entering Philippi. Philippi is unfamiliar and uncomfortable territory, but Paul is sure this is where God is leading them. They observe the diversity as well as the darkness of the city in all the activity of the marketplace—slavery, idolatry, lust. In this setting we get a brief introduction to our other main characters—slave girl, Lydia, Jailer, charm seller. The group continues through the city and sees its rough side and lack of compassion. Hurting people is ignored as privileged people exhibit their arrogance. Paul introduces the one true God in a city of idols.

**Application:** God often leads us down unfamiliar paths that are out of our comfort zone. But that is where he placed us for our unique role in his mission. In a global and mobile society, where we encounter many whose perspectives and lifestyles are so different from ours, what do we really know about them? Our inner perspectives about them will either open a door for sharing the gospel or turn us away from the opportunities to reveal God’s love.

**Themes/teachings:**

- Differences and uncomfortable situations test our perspectives and prejudices: We need to recognize we all are sinners in need of a Savior.
- Paul makes use of connections in order to save some— “being all things to all people” approach— (cf. Jesus to Samaritan; Peter to Cornelius).
- Awareness of culture around us is important. It includes caring and meeting the opportunities to witness no matter where you are.

### **SESSION THREE: THE SEEKER DISCOVERS TRUTH**

#### ***The Story of Lydia – Finding the Grace of God in a World of Self-righteousness***

**Movie Storyline:** The scene opens with the Jailer disgusted with the dirty work of his job. Then we meet the women at the river. Lydia respects and tries to follow the Jewish laws and rituals but realizes something is missing. She tries to be kind and helpful, but Paul leads her to see the failure of our hearts to live the level of love that honors God. Paul leads her to realize that Jesus is the promised Messiah who has done all that is needed to save us. His death wasn’t defeat but victory. It wasn’t weakness, but the price of forgiveness. So we are saved by faith alone. That leads Lydia to rejoice and want baptism for herself and her household.

**Application:** By nature, we think we can gain God’s favor by what we do or by our moral purity. Our conscience and Scripture reveal our sinfulness and hidden shamefulness. It is the insurmountable obstacle in our hearts and may show in hidden prejudices, disgust, or hatred toward those who don’t live the way we think they should. We fall far short of the glory of God and don’t have the ability to earn his favor. But Jesus gained our forgiveness with his blood shed on the cross and clothes us with his purity. Our relationship with God is built on his forgiveness and our faith in what Christ did in our place. It draws us to trust him, worship him as Lord, receive his blessings, and extend his love to others.

**Themes/teachings:**

- The short-sightedness of our striving to be good to gain favor with God.
- The law reveals our sinfulness and need of a Savior instead of paving a way for saving ourselves.
- The importance of searching and understanding the Scriptures—Jesus is central.
- Jesus is Messiah promised by Scripture... We are saved by faith in him (good works follow).
- We are clothed in Jesus’ righteousness through baptism.

## SESSION FOUR: THE OPPRESSED IS SET FREE

### *The Story of the Slave Girl – Showing Compassion to those Enslaved by their Demons*

**Movie Storyline:** The taunting from the slave girl continues. She is not only controlled by evil spirits but is taken advantage of by her owners for their benefit. Paul talks to people about their idols and tells them of the one true God who gives them life and breath. That God will come to judge the world on the day he has set. Only Jesus can save them. Then the spirit controlling the slave girl increases the taunting with identifying them as servants of the Most High God. Paul drives out the spirit and frees her. The owners incite a riot against Paul for his merciful actions in contrast with their uncaring corruption and enslavement of the girl. They make Paul look like the bad one because they had lost their money-making scheme. Paul and Silas are treated unjustly and dragged away to prison.

**Application:** We sometimes struggle in life and are enslaved with our own “demons.” Other times we are put down by those we feel take advantage of us. Some feel stuck in abuse or enslaved by addictions. All religions are seeking to understand the spiritual world and find truth but don’t understand God. The devil and his influence are real, but so is the almighty God. The gospel of Jesus frees us from the devil’s control and brings us into a whole new life. However, don’t expect the world to be supportive. Often, they are hostile in response. This is the suffering often endured for Christ.

#### **Themes/teachings:**

- The devil is real and powerful and affects our lives, our worldviews, and behaviors.
- In a world of idols there is only one true God who stands in judgment over the world and us.
- Jesus overcame Satan and frees us from the power and curse of slaveries that hold us down.
- The devil increases his attack when Jesus and the gospel threaten his work.

## SESSION FIVE: THE HOPELESS GAINS FAITH

### *The Story of the Jailer – Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel*

**Movie Storyline:** In prison, Paul and Silas sing Psalms and pray. They show contentment amid their suffering in an inner prison cell. They are confident that nothing can separate them from the love of God. Paul is committed to live or die for Jesus and his mission no matter the personal cost. Although the situation looked grim for Paul and Silas, suddenly there is an earthquake that frees them from their chains. The jailer is ready to commit suicide, until Paul reveals that they are all still there. The jailer finds the answer to “what must I do to be saved” when they share, “believe in Jesus Christ.” Paul shares the gospel with him. The jailer and his family are baptized.

**Application:** Even when it seems the world is unjustly against us, God is our hope and strength. We realize it is an honor to stand with Christ despite suffering. Heaven is our home, not this earth. Our life’s response becomes a witness to those around us who are watching and listening. Sometimes people feel stuck in a disrespected layer of society with a dead-end job. They are consumed with a fear of failure, dishonor, or punishment. Sometimes it seems hopeless with no way of escape. But God hasn’t abandoned us. He calls us to believe in him and be saved. Jesus has taken on the burden of sin, carried our shame, and given us a future with honor. He provides us with his washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit—frees us from our chains of fear and condemnation

**Themes/teachings:**

- Suffering for being a Christian becomes an opportunity to display faith and love.
- Hope sees more than this world and the situation surrounding us. It sees heaven.
- God’s Word gives strength. Prayer responds with faith in the power of God.
- God doesn’t abandon the broken-hearted but comes to give them rest.
- What must I do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.
- God washes us clean in his blood...and brings that to us in baptism.

**SESSION SIX: THE BELIEVERS GATHER IN JOY**

***The Story of the Church at Philippi – Jesus brings unlikely partners together as family***

**Movie Storyline:** The scene begins with Paul and Silas claiming their rights as Roman citizenship and receiving an apology from the magistrate who realizes they were wronged. The new believers gather at Lydia’s house. So many different backgrounds come together as family—united in Christ. Paul uses the topic of citizenship to help them see the greater treasure—being citizens of the kingdom of heaven and waiting for their Savior-King to return to bring them there. Paul encourages them to take care of each other and grow together in Christ, so they can be lights to the world around them. Then he shows his desire to move on to the next cities to carry out the mission. Timothy shows new confidence in sharing Jesus with others. Paul looks back at Philippi with thankfulness and joy, and then looks ahead to the task of bringing the light of salvation to the ends of the earth.

**Application:** God has made us part of his family and citizens of heaven. It provides a totally different perspective about life. We find encouragement in gathering around the Word, prayer, breaking of bread, and fellowship. There we live as a Christ-community and show care for one another. We are led to realize our mission is to reach out with the gospel to the end of the earth (which often starts with our family and our neighbor).

**Themes/teachings:**

- Those in Christ become family—fellow citizens of the kingdom of God awaiting his return.
- Gathering together around the Word is a natural and important part of living in Christ.
- Living out our faith includes being lights and messengers of the gospel—to the world.