

“Lydia: Seeking God’s Presence”

November 5 & 6, 2016 | Heroes Series #3

INTRODUCTION

This week we study one of the lesser-known heroes of the Bible; Lydia. She is mentioned only twice in the book of Acts. Her profession was “a seller of purple fabric”, for which the area was well known. Yet she spent time among the women who prayed along the riverside at Philippi. Lydia was notably Paul’s first convert to Christianity in Europe. She opened her heart to God and her home to Paul and his companions as they ministered in Philippi. She led the way in a community that would become a source of joy to Paul because of their partnership with him in the gospel of Christ. Lydia was a pioneer in the faith and a hero on a mission.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

Are you usually the first to try something new, or are you more likely to take a “wait and see” attitude?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

God’s drawing leads to believing.

Q1. Read Acts 16:13-14; John 6:44; Ephesians 2:8-9

Acts 16 gives us some important information about Lydia. Why had she come together with the other women by the riverside according to verse 13? Before the Lord opened her heart, she was a “worshiper” of God. However, it was not through prayer or worship that Lydia was saved. What was it that enabled her to respond to Paul’s message of salvation in Jesus (Acts 16:14)? How does John 6:44 expand on this idea? There are still those who attend worship services and pray but haven’t opened their hearts to God. What is the gift of God we must receive in order to be saved (Ephesians 2:8-9)?

¹sebō- to revere

Believing leads to transformation.

Q2. Read Acts 16:15; Romans 6:4; Acts 2:38, 41; Acts 8:9-13, 18:6-8

What is the first action that we see following Lydia’s heart being opened to the Gospel? (Acts 16:15) This verse tells us the members of her household were baptized along with Lydia. The act of baptism is the outward expression of our faith in Christ’s death and resurrection for our salvation (Romans 6:4). Read three accounts of baptisms in Acts

2:38, 41; Acts 8:9-13 and Acts 18:6-8. What relationship do you find amongst belief, repentance and baptism? Are you aware of any families (including your own) that were influenced to believe the Gospel by the faith of one of its members?

Transformation leads to furthering God’s kingdom.

Q3. Read Acts 16:40

In Acts 16:14 Lydia was the first to believe, but by verse 40 the community of believers, referred to as “the brethren”, met with Paul in her home before he departed from Philippi. God had changed Lydia’s purpose, used her gift of hospitality for ministry, and transformed her home into a place where the new church could gather. Are there ways you would like to be used by God? Share with your group some of the changes God made in your life after you came to believe.

Wrap-Up

When Paul arrived in Thyatira he found women of prayer, including a worshipper named Lydia. God opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message of salvation, becoming his first Christian convert on the European continent. Lydia expressed her new found faith through baptism, and brought her household with her. Through the seed of faith planted in Lydia, the Philippian church grew and the kingdom of God was advanced. Her example of seeking God, receiving the gift of salvation and sharing it with others makes her one of the Bible’s heroes on Mission.

Memory Verse

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
Romans 6:4 ESV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: _____

Challenge: On November 12 & 13 New Life will be holding baptisms. If you have never been baptized, but would like to be, you can go to nlc.link/baptism to sign up.

