# "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 know. 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 "worshiper1" 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)?

<sup>1</sup>sebō- 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.

#### Q1

Acts 16:14 NIV - 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.

John 6:44 ESV - 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV - 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

#### Q2

Acts 16:15 ESV - 15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

Romans 6:4 NIV - 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Acts 2:38, 41 ESV - 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 8:9-13 ESV - 9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. 10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." 11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

Acts 18:6-8 ESV - 6 And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." 7 And he left there

and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. 8 Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.

encouraged them. Then they left.						