

***Advancing Through Adversity***  
***Date: 5/1/16***

**Read Together**

**Read the Scripture and overview below before your Life Group meets.**

Scripture passage: Acts 16 and Philippians

Suffering through adversity is an inescapable part of every person's life, and we all handle challenging circumstances differently. From bad moods to emotional breakdowns, our actions, reactions, and attitudes take shape and reveal what we believe about God. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas find themselves in the midst of suffering. Thrown in jail illegally, they were beaten, bruised, and bound. Yet, their response on the evening of their prison experience revealed the intensity of their love, faith, and knowledge of Jesus Christ. What would seem like an "abnormal" response to some, was actually a "normal" part of these believers' lives.

We will see that their perspective is vital in adversity for believers. Confident faith in Christ, a patient and humble attitude, persistent pursuit of the Gospel, an eternal mindset, resilience, and contentment – these were all traveling companions with Paul and Silas on their journey to advancing the Kingdom of God. What about you? How do you respond when faced with adversity? Do others see you in the midst of struggle and know that you are a child of the Living God? Every believer must decide how he or she will advance through adversity. How will you respond?

**Pray Together**

**Use the first few minutes of your lesson to lead your group in a focused prayer time.**

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

**Discuss Together**

**Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.**

- Give examples of times when you have had to deal with adversity. How did you respond?

**Read Acts 16:1-24.**

- Discuss the context of the passage. Where were Paul and Silas? How did they get to Philippi? Why had they come?
- Talk about the conversion that happened in Philippi in verses 11-15.
- What conflict arose in verses 16-24? What happened to Paul and Silas as a result of this conflict?



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### Read Acts 16:25-40.

- How did Paul and Silas respond to the conflict?
- What miracle occurred?
- What was the result of the miracle?
- What is your normal response in adversity? What should it be? Why?

**Pastor McKinley noted six responses to adversity that every believer should travel with as they continue their life on mission. Discuss each response and its impact on your life and the lives of those around you.**

- **Be Confident** – Will you choose to live in faith or fear? (Philippians 1:1-6, 12-14)
- **Be Patient** – Humility is the attitude of patience and pride is the attitude of impetuous action. Which will you choose to exemplify? (Philippians 2:1-4, 12-16)
- **Be Persistent** – Will you choose to give in or advance in faith? Will you choose despair or joy in the midst of your adversity? (Philippians 3:1, 13-15, Acts 16:25)
- **Be Transient** – Will you choose an earthly perspective or an eternal perspective? (Philippians 3:20-21, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)
- **Be Resilient** – Will you choose to allow the joy of the Lord to shape you or your surrounding circumstances? (Philippians 4:4-9)
- **Be Content** – Advancing through adversity is a reality when you know Christ. Apart from Him all suffering is simply unfair chaos in a conflicted world. Will you choose to allow God to supply all your needs to get through your adversity? (Philippians 4:10-20)

### Do Life Together

**These questions are meant to encourage you to apply spiritual truth and live on mission for Jesus. It is your Life Group leader's responsibility to challenge you and hold you accountable to taking steps of growth and faith. Take these questions to heart. Allow the Holy Spirit to prompt you to grow in your role as a disciple and ultimately, a disciple-maker.**

How might God desire to use you to impact the life of a non-believer in your current place of adversity as you adopt the six attitudes and responses discussed above?

