



The last half of the book of Acts reveals the amazing story of how the Jesus' community became a global movement, and it reveals keys to how it has remained so. There is so much to apply as we explore how we can “proclaim the kingdom of God with all boldness and without hindrance.”

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

1 OBEYING GOD’S “NO”... Read Acts 16:6-7. Paul was eager to go through the “open door” to continue with the mission God gave him. As he pursued God’s big “yes” he heard God’s surprising “No”. How do you think Paul might have felt after twice being prevented from carrying out his intentions? How would you have been tempted to respond?

2 Obeying God’s “no” meant having an open agenda. Rather than start moping, Paul resolved to keep moving. Read Acts 16:8-10. Have you ever been frustrated by the Holy Spirit’s leading because it seemed to contradict your plans? What was God trying to teach you or show you in that moment?

3 Paul knew obedience meant having an open agenda, and it led to an open **door**. Read Acts 16:11-15. What does Paul and his companions’ quick response to the Macedonian man’s request indicate about their basic ministry purpose? How does that compare to how we sometimes respond today?

4 Paul was expecting to find the man in his vision but instead he found a woman with an open **heart**. What qualities and characteristics do you notice about Lydia in verse 14? What does that verse reveal about our role in sharing the gospel with others?

IMPORTANT NOTE: Rick reminded us that “*God opened her heart, Paul opened his mouth, Lydia got baptized, and then she opened her home. Thus was planted the first church in Europe, and one of the*

most special churches in all of Paul’s ministry. And it happened because Paul would not allow “no” to hinder his pursuit of the purposes of God. Realize that closed doors are not a rebuke. When God rejects our plans it does not mean He has rejected us.” Keep this in mind as you wrap up this study by remembering not to let “no” hinder you...

5 DON’T LET “NO”... Hinder your trust in His purposes. When “no” arrives it always brings a test of faith with it. Rick said “*we can often look back on paths we would not choose and see a course we would not change*”. Share an experience like that from your life and talk about what you learned in the process.

6 DON’T LET “NO”... Hinder your vision for His purposes. We must understand that God’s vision includes us, but it is never about us. God does not exist to make much of us; we exist to make much of God (see **Colossians 1:16**). Why is that often difficult for us to understand? Share an example of a time you attempted to pray God into your agenda instead of asking to be led into His.

7 DON’T LET “NO”... Hinder your pursuit of His purposes. It is not wrong to try a good thing that God might stop. What is wrong is to stop pursuing the next good thing. Paul knew the what (make disciples); he just needed to know the where. Where might God be leading you in your pursuit of His purpose of making disciples?

