

# OUR HOPE IS A WITNESS TO OTHERS

YEAR: KNEEL / FOCUS: LIVING ON MISSION / SERIES: ACTS

## BIG TRUTH: OUR HOPE IS A WITNESS TO OTHERS

1 Peter 3:15; Lamentations 3:21-24; Romans 5:2; 2 Corinthians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; Hebrews 10:23

## BIBLE VERSE: ACTS 16:25

*“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”*

## BIG IDEAS

- We are a testimony of hope and victory.
- We value the redemption of others over our own freedoms.
- We value the redemption of others over our own hurts.

## BIBLE PASSAGE: ACTS 16:25-40

## KNEEL: LIVING ON MISSION

The Kneel Year is an exploration of what it means to worship God with our all (Luke 10:26-28) and to use our influence to lead others to do the same. We know that as we pursue a life of worship, we will pursue a life of both wisdom and mission. Throughout this year we will study and pursue the wisdom of God through the book of Proverbs and the mission of God through the book of Acts, and we will learn how both of these things must inform and shape our influence as Jesus followers!

## SERIES AIMS



### Every student should know...

- The gospel has the power to turn the world upside down.
- They are empowered and chosen to be a gospel witness in the world.
- Our salvation has come by grace alone.



### Every student should feel...

- Comfort that the Lord is with them wherever they go.
- Hope in the God of salvation.
- Responsible to use their influence to live for Jesus alone.



### Every student should strive to...

- Read, study, and meditate on the entire book of Acts.
- Memorize the Bible verse each week.
- Pray consistently for boldness to make Jesus known.



### Every student should want...

- To pursue faithfulness in living on mission.
- To share the gospel with people in their lives who do not know Jesus.
- To sacrifice their personal freedoms for the sake of the gospel

## GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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# OUR HOPE IS A WITNESS TO OTHERS

**BIBLE VERSE: ACTS 16:25**

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**Our daily lives witness to others.**

*“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them”*

- When Paul and Silas were imprisoned, they chose to trust and hope in Christ. Though they had been beaten and mistreated, they didn't let this type of discouragement keep them from turning to the Lord. They sang hymns and prayed to God, and they did this out loud. They witnessed to the people around them.
- Nothing we do is done in isolation. People see us and notice us. Especially when we take a stand for Christ. Our daily lives are a witness to others of the hope we have. If we live a daily life of unfaithfulness, our witness is that we don't really have a hope. If we live a life of daily faithfulness, this is a witness to others.

**Our response to trials witnesses to others.**

*“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God...”*

- Paul and Silas faced much persecution and opposition to the proclamation of the Gospel. They were beaten and imprisoned. Their response to their trials was to continue praising God and sharing the Gospel. They did this because their hope was in Christ and not in this world. Their response was a witness to the people around them. The other prisoners heard their songs and prayers and were amazed.
- When we respond in hope to the trials that we face, people around us notice. It impacts the people around us when we continue to trust Christ even in the most difficult of times. Sometimes this has a more profound effect on people than our words.

**Our daily, consistent faith witnesses to others.**

*“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”*

- Paul and Silas had great faith. They trusted God. Their faith and trust were not in their rescue in this world, but in their eternal home. When they were singing and praying, it wasn't because they necessarily thought they would be delivered every time, but because they trusted that in the end, their eternity would be secure.
- Our daily faith is a witness to others. We can live with a consistent faith daily because our hope is in our eternity and not this world. When we live with our eternity in mind, we can remain faithful no matter our circumstances. Even if God doesn't deliver us from difficulties in this life, we still have hope because of what He's promised for our eternity.

# OUR HOPE IS A WITNESS TO OTHERS

## BIG IDEA #1: WE ARE A TESTIMONY OF HOPE AND VICTORY.<sup>1</sup>

### [ THIS ]

When Paul and Silas were imprisoned for setting the slave girl free from the evil spirit, their hope in Christ was a testimony to the prisoners and the Philippian jailer. As their story continues in Acts 16:25-34, we see that an earthquake occurs, shaking the foundations of the jail, setting them free. The Philippian jailer fearing for his life, attempts to take his own life, but Paul and Silas stop him. The jailer asked them what he must do to be saved and from the testimony of Paul and Silas, he and his entire household are saved. Paul and Silas were a testimony of hope and victory to the world around them. Because they remained faithful and trusted Christ, they testified of their hope to the Philippian jailer. The Philippian jailer was transformed by the Gospel and his entire household walked from darkness to light.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**Consider the story of the Philippian jailer. What influence did Paul and Silas have on the Philippian jailer?**

In Acts 16:25, we find Paul and Silas in prison, but they are singing hymns and praying to God. Their prayers are answered when the earthquake happens, and they are set free. They remain in the prison and save the jailer's physical life. Saving his physical life leads to his spiritual life being saved. Their hope and trust influenced him to have hope and trust in Jesus.

### [ THIS ]

As we live out our faith daily, we are a testimony to others. Our daily lives matter and play a part in leading others to the truth of Jesus. When we continue to trust and have hope during our darkest times, we show the world around us that we truly trust and believe. When we obey God's Word and follow His commands even when it costs us greatly, we reveal that we truly believe in the Gospel. People notice this and it impacts their lives. We cannot take for granted the effect our faithfulness will have on others. Often, we may think that no one is noticing us, but people notice when we are faithful and when we are not. As we live faithfully during every circumstance, we, too, can lead others to the truth. Just as Paul and Silas led the Philippian jailer to the Gospel, we can lead others to the truth. People can come to know Jesus by seeing that we have hope and victory over this world.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**What are some challenges you face in living victoriously in this world?**

Our daily trials and struggles are some of our greatest challenges. 1 Corinthians 15:57, 1 John 5:4-5, and John 16:33 teach us that because of Jesus, there is power over these things. He has overcome them and through Him, we have, too.

**How has someone's testimony of hope and victory encouraged you to live and serve Jesus more faithfully?**

James 5:13, Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, and 1 Thessalonians 5:11 show us that as the body of Christ we are to build one another up. As we live life together, our hope in Christ and the victorious life we live will build up others. We are encouraged by the faithfulness of others. When other people face difficulties and remain hopeful and victorious, this encourages us.

1. Acts 16:29-30: The Philippian jailer found hope in Paul and Silas because they maintained their hope in Christ.

# OUR HOPE IS A WITNESS TO OTHERS

## BIG IDEA #2: WE VALUE THE REDEMPTION OF OTHERS OVER OUR OWN FREEDOMS.<sup>2</sup>

### [ THIS ]

Freedom is a high value in our culture. It is often held as a higher value than the redemption of others. Because our country is founded upon the idea of individual freedom, it can quickly become an idol in our hearts. We do not like to be told what to do. To follow Christ, we must lay down our freedom. By doing this, we submit our will and turn away from our flesh nature. We make a statement. We say that we value our other's redemption over our freedom to do what we please. When we do this, we are choosing to lay down our own lives to follow Christ. Paul and Silas did this when they remained in the prison after the earthquake. They could have left the prison, but instead, they remained. By remaining they saved the life of the Philippian jailer. The jailer would have been killed for losing the prisoners. Instead, Paul and Silas remained and kept the jailer from killed himself. Not only did they save his physical life, but they led him to eternal life by sharing the Gospel with him. They valued his redemption over their own freedoms.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**Read Acts 16:25-29. How did Paul's and Silas' actions impact the jailer's response to the Gospel?**

When Paul and Silas chose to give up their freedom and remain in the prison, they paved the way for the jailer to hear the Gospel and receive it. The sacrifice of their personal freedom opened a door for him to receive the Gospel and for his entire household to be saved.

### [ THIS ]

Proclaiming the Gospel is fulfilling our created purpose. Because we are made to glorify God, when we tell others about Him and how they can be redeemed, we bring Him glory. When we value the redemption of others over our own lives, we will set aside our own freedoms to pave the way for the redemption of others. Instead, we will focus on making sure we point them to truth and lead them to the cross. Just as Paul and Silas made sure the Philippian jailer was safe and that he knew how to be saved, we should be willing to set aside our own liberty to make sure people are in a place to be redeemed. For us this might look like giving up some of the things we love or not doing some of the things we like to do to make room for others. It might look like limiting our activities or going to countries or places where we would not have as many freedoms as we do here in America. This is valuing redemption over our own freedom.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**What are some of your personal freedoms that you are willing to give up to carry the Gospel to others?**

Giving up our personal freedoms means we set aside our rights and our own schedule. Matthew 7:12, 22:39 and Hebrews 13:16 remind us to love our neighbors as ourselves and to give to others. Doing this will enable us to set aside our liberties to carry the Gospel to others.

**How does the culture's view of personal freedom and liberty get in the way of sharing the Gospel with others?**

Galatians 5:13-14 and 1 Corinthians 6:12 teach us that we have freedom in Christ, but we aren't always to use this freedom. It is greater to set aside this freedom to reach people for Christ.

2. Acts 16:28: Paul remained in the prison to keep the jailer from killing himself. When we hope in the Gospel, we value others more than ourselves.

# OUR HOPE IS A WITNESS TO OTHERS

## BIG IDEA #3: WE VALUE THE REDEMPTION OF OTHERS OVER OUR OWN HURTS.<sup>3</sup>

### [ THIS ]

In Acts 16:35-40, Paul and Silas are released from their wrongful imprisonment, but they do not value their release over the redemption of the Philippian jailer and his family. Instead, they rejoice that he and his family come to believe in Christ Jesus. Though they do insist that they are treated as the Roman citizens that they are, they do not insist that they are repaid for the hurt that they have received. Instead, they are thankful that redemption has occurred for some. They were beaten with rods and wrongfully imprisoned, yet they valued the salvation of their fellow prisoners and the jailer over their own hurts. They valued the proclamation of the Gospel over their own lives even. When Paul set the slave girl free, he didn't even think of the consequences to his own life. Instead, he valued the proclamation of the Gospel because it is the way people are redeemed.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**Read Acts 16:25-34. How can personal hurts distract you from telling others about Jesus?**

Paul and Silas didn't let their personal injuries and wrongful imprisonment keep them from telling others about Jesus. When we are personally attacked and experience hurt, it often distracts us from the proclamation of the Gospel. We focus on our injury and hurt instead of focusing on telling others about Jesus.

### [ THIS ]

Valuing the redemption of others over our own hurts is living out the two greatest commandments—love God with everything and love our neighbors as ourselves. When we do this, we will value the redemption of others over retribution for our hurts and injuries. Whether we receive right and proper treatment will not matter to us as much as if people come to know Jesus. This is a hard position and perspective to take. It requires that we die to ourselves so fully and completely that we willingly accept abuse and mistreatment. It requires that we do not demand retribution or even justice for ourselves. Instead, we keep our focus on telling others about Jesus and making sure we do not put up any roadblocks to the Gospel in the lives of others. We do this because we know that our eternal hope is in heaven not here. When we value the redemption of others over ourselves, we show that our hope is to witness to others. This is our purpose, and we will live in a way that enables us to do that.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**What are some hurts or injuries you've experienced that are difficult to get over? How can focusing on God's purpose for your life help you overcome them?**

Ecclesiastes 12:13, Romans 12:1, and 1 Corinthians 10:31 help us see that our purpose is glorify God in all that we do. If we keep this perspective, when we are hurt and wrongfully accused, we can overcome these things to persevere in proclaiming the Gospel. We do so because glorifying God is greater than receiving justice for any wrong committed against us.

**Why is the redemption of others more important than your personal hurts? Does this mean God doesn't care about when we are hurting?**

God is sovereign over all things and more powerful than we are. If Romans 12:19, we see that vengeance belongs to Him; this means we do not have to worry about getting justice for ourselves. Matthew 6:33 teaches us all that we need to focus on in this life.

3. Acts 16:31-32: *Though Paul and Silas were wrongfully imprisoned, they didn't let this keep them from sharing the truth with the Philippian jailer and his family.*