

**DAILY READINGS**

Sunday	Acts 16:11-40
Monday	Philippians 1:1-18; Psalm 109:8-18; Proverbs 23:17-19
Tuesday	Philippians 1:19-2:11; Psalm 109:19-23; Proverbs 23:20-23
Wednesday	Philippians 2:12-30; Psalm 109:24-31; Proverbs 23:24-26
Thursday	Philippians 3:1-4:1; Psalm 110; Proverbs 23:27-29
Friday	Philippians 4:2-23; Psalm 111; Proverbs 23:30-32
Saturday	Acts 17:1-15; Psalm 112; Proverbs 23:33-35

**DEVOTIONAL: READ ACTS 16:11-40**

Throughout their ministry, Paul and Silas knew that following Jesus was counter-cultural, but they were seeing the Lord work. Arriving in Philippi, they saw a woman and her family trust in Jesus. Then they cast a demon out of a young slave girl. However, the slave girl's masters had been profiting from her demonic oppression so they had Paul and Silas thrown in jail.

Unclothed, bruised, and humiliated, Paul and Silas' reactions at this time were counter-cultural: they prayed and sang hymns to God. They had gratitude in the midst of pain, and the Lord wasn't finished with them. A great earthquake shook the prison to the point of releasing the locks on their doors and shackles.

Paul and Silas did not see their new freedom as an opportunity to escape unjust imprisonment. Instead, they saw

it as a chance to share the love of Jesus with those around them. They showed grace to their own jailer, and the result of their counter-cultural reaction was the conversion of a whole family into the family of God.

While counter-cultural decisions may lead to persecution, they are also the catalysts for changing lives. The people of this world see godly character and they crave righteousness. However, that desire will often not move to action until they see it in action elsewhere. Followers of Christ have the opportunity and responsibility to model integrity, character, and a life that contrasts the ways of this world. As Jesus says in Matthew 5, we are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." This light cannot be contained. Its source is the true Light—Jesus. Our counter-cultural lives reflect the Creator in a world that desperately needs Him.

## REFLECTION

Why is it worth being counter-cultural to follow Jesus?

What are the values of our culture today? What are the values of the Bible? How are they the same and how are they different?

In what areas of your life do you find yourself compromising your walk with the Lord in order to fit in with the world?

## DISCUSSION

What are the things you want to be known for?

## PRAYER

Jesus, Your love knows no limits. There are no boundaries to Your compassion. Help me see people the way You see them. Help me remember that underneath layers of hate, judgment, and indifference, everyone is created in Your image. Everyone wants to be known and wants to be loved.

Give me the courage to love those who seem far from You. Remove my bias and preconceived notions that cause me to distance myself from others. Remind me that hurting people need You and that I need You. Show me again how irresistible Your love is by softening and changing my heart. Increase my empathy, compassion, and love. Make me more like You. Amen.