

September 27, 2026

Title: Investigator

Scripture: Acts 16:11-40 ESV

Series: Clear Mission, Clear Vision

Speaker: Ian Bonthron



Vision Statement: Helping people take their next _____ with Jesus

What step of _____ development are you in?

1 John 2:10-11 ESV

10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Which family are you in, Light or Darkness?

Pre-Step - _____

Worship - Give them a place to investigate Jesus

Community - Help them connect to a Christian

Equip - When appropriate, start to help them answer their questions

Serve - Let them participate with others in appropriate settings

Outreach - Practice Care, Love Share

The _____

Acts 16:11-13 ESV

11 So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. 13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.

Acts 16:14-15 ESV

14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. 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.

What did God use to bring them to faith?

_____ study and a direct _____

Act 16:14b ESV

14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to **pay attention** to what was said by Paul.

Dig into the question, dig into the Bible, get to know Jesus

Overcome your control of your life and surrender to Jesus.

_____ Jesus broadly. Look where God is working and join God in that work

Remember: Salvation belongs to _____, faith comes by _____ the Word of God

Remember effective ministry is not doing great things for God, but _____ God where he is already at work.

The Spectator

Acts 16:16-17 ESV

16 As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."

Acts 16:18 ESV

18 And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

What did God use to bring them to faith?

Deliverance through _____ and Jesus' _____

Overcome your personal pains by bringing them to Jesus

_____ them and build relationships with them outside of the church

The Skeptic

Acts 16:23-24 ESV

23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. 24 Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Acts 16:25 ESV

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

Acts 16:26-28 ESV

26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. 27 When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."

Acts 16:28-30 ESV

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." 29 And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

What did God use to bring them to faith?

The _____ of a joyful sufferer

Overcome your cynicism by seeing the _____ yet joyful Jesus

Remember: The joy in suffering got the attention of the cynic

_____ for them with your heart and life

Group Questions - September 27, 2026

Series – Clear Mission, Clear Vision

Message – Investigator – Acts 16:11-40

Getting to know you Questions:

1. If you had to relive one embarrassing childhood wipeout (bike, sports, playground, etc.), which would it be?
2. What's something you confidently tried after watching one YouTube video?

Into the Bible Questions:

1. Understanding the Journey: The sermon describes three types of investigators—the Seeker, the Spectator, and the Skeptic. Which one do you find most interesting or relatable, and why?

Lydia - Seeker (Acts 16:11–15):

2. What do you notice about Lydia's heart before she believes in Jesus? What does verse 14 teach us about God's role in salvation?
3. Paul simply shared the gospel where God had already been working. What examples do you see in Scripture and life of God preparing people before believers arrive?

The Girl - Spectator (Acts 16:16–18):

4. Why do you think Paul spent "many days" with the slave girl before casting out the demon? What does this teach us about loving people patiently?

The Jailer - Skeptic (Acts 16:23–34):

5. What do you think impacted the jailer more—the earthquake or Paul and Silas choosing to stay? Why?
6. What role did suffering play in God's work throughout this chapter?
7. Looking at all three stories, what different methods did God use to bring each person to faith?
8. What does Acts 16 teach us about why there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to helping people follow Jesus?
9. The church's vision is "Helping people take their next step with Jesus." Why is it important to understand where someone is spiritually before trying to help them grow?

10. Which of the church's cultural values (Worship, Community, Equip, Serve, Outreach with Care, Love, Share) do you see most clearly demonstrated in Acts 16?

Application Questions

1. Before you became a follower of Jesus (or where you are now), which investigator best describes you: Seeker, Spectator, or Skeptic? Explain.
2. Who is one person in your life who may be investigating Jesus? Based on Acts 16, what step do you think they are in?
3. How can you intentionally share, love, or care for that person this week?
4. Lydia responded because God had prepared her heart. How does remembering that God opens hearts change the way you share your faith?
5. The girl's story reminds us that people often carry deep hurts or strongholds. How can we become more patient and compassionate with people who seem "messy"?
6. The jailer was impacted by Paul and Silas' joy during suffering. How is your response to hardship pointing people toward—or away from—Jesus? What needs to change?
7. What is one practical way you can help someone take their next step with Jesus instead of expecting them to take ten steps at once?
8. What is your next step with Jesus this week, and how can this group encourage or pray for you as you take it?