

Prep:

Please make sure to review the material in the guide so you are prepared for the conversation in your Life Group.

Welcome:

Take a few minutes to see what members in your group hope to do in 2017.

Video:

Show the video. It is about 3 minutes long. It will set up the conversation for Conversations with God.

Scripture

Acts 16: ⁶ Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷ When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸ So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹ During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for

Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Observation: Twice the Scripture passage states that the Holy Spirit kept Paul and his companions from going to specific areas on their journey. But there is nothing in the text to identify how the Holy Spirit communicated this to them.

Question: From what you know of Scripture, what are some ways the Holy Spirit could have communicated this information to Paul and his companions?

QUESTION: Have you ever felt that God was trying to direct or redirect you? What happened? Did you wonder at the time if this was just your imagination?

QUESTION: Why do you think some people are not comfortable with the claims some people make about God speaking to them?

OBSERVATION: Some people have made some pretty strange claims about God speaking to them. There have also been times when people have tried to avoid responsibility and claimed it was because God told them. Some people have said some pretty harsh things and claimed God told them to say it.

QUESTION: If God were going to speak to people, what kind of things do you think He would weigh in on?

QUESTION: Which of the following do you think God is more likely to communicate with you about:

- Warnings
- Guidance
- Assurance
- Serving opportunities
- Wisdom and insight
- Preparing you for something
- Generosity

OBSERVATION: When you speak to someone using words you are directing their thoughts. The same thing occurs when you write something. God

can direct our thoughts without actual sound or images.

- God can remind us of something in Scripture that can provide clarity, direction, or assurance.
- God can give insight into something that is frustrating or confusing you. Suddenly you see the situation in a very different light.
- God can give a prompting to take some action that would benefit someone else. He can give a prompting just to begin a conversation with a person, because He knows where that conversation will go.

QUESTION: Obviously, not every thought and insight is God trying to communicate with you. So, what are some ways you tell the difference?

QUESTION: What kind of spiritual practices or approaches do you think would be helpful for you to discern God's direction in your life?

OBSERVATION: Familiarity with Scripture can be very helpful when trying to discern God's voice in your life. God will not contradict Himself. He will not ask you to do something that violates his Word. The more familiar you become with Scripture, the more confident you will be in determining whether a thought you have is from God or something you made up.

QUESTION: Why do you think God wants to communicate with people?

OBSERVATION: In the Apostle Paul's situation, we are not told why the Holy Spirit redirected them. Maybe there were people who were not yet ready to hear the Gospel. Maybe there were people whose hearts had been prepared by the Holy Spirit and they were ready. We don't always know why God is redirecting us. He does not always tell us.

QUESTION: Do you have to understand the situation or know the reason to be obedient to a prompting from God? How much trust is required to follow a prompting you believe might be from God?

QUESTION: How would you feel, if someone told you something that confirmed what God had been prompting you to do? How would you feel if God asked you to confirm something in another person's life?

PRAYER:

Ask for Life Group members to share any concerns they would like prayer for. Then as a group, take a few moments and try to imagine what God might want to say to your friends in the group. Try to convert that thought or insight into a prayer for your group. Remember to be respectful and gracious.