

LESSON 12

LYDIA, WHO OPENED HEART AND HOME**Scripture Text:** Acts 16:6-40

This lesson teaches us how the Gospel was first taken to Europe and the kind of response it received there. Note how the church in Philippi grew from a humble beginning to take its place among the churches of early Christianity.

MEMORY VERSE: "... A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."
Proverbs 31:30

Paul and Silas Responded to God's Message to Them

Paul and Silas responded to the vision of a man of Macedonia calling for help. They entered into Philippi from Troas. The following Sabbath, not finding a place within the city to conduct services, they went out of the city by a riverside, where a prayer meeting was held. This is another prayer meeting that has made history. The man in Paul's vision turned out to be a woman. Why? Man, here, is symbolized as humanity as a whole. Do not men and women both need the Gospel?

Lydia Responded to God's Message to Her

These were hungry souls gathered in an out-of-the-way place, looking for soul food. No one but God knew where they were and could supply their needs. Lydia and her household were down by the river on that day and gave attendance to Paul's preaching. Thus, the new church was begun. Many churches in our day have been started in this manner. First there was a prayer meeting, conducted under the open sky or within some humble home. Through the influence of this meeting souls were saved. Little by little the church has

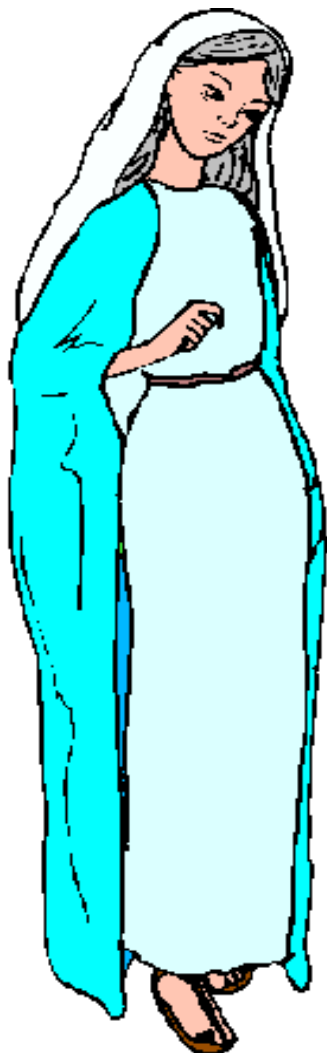
grown and now sends workers out to other cities.

Lydia, with her family, opened her heart to the message. She was baptized and opened her home to Paul and Silas. Women have always filled an important place in the evangelistic and missionary program of the church. In many instances a few consecrated women have kept the church alive and its doors open through consecration of little things.

When Lydia opened her heart to God, she also opened her home to His work and workers. This consecration of self and property is what keeps the church alive and growing. Lydia was an industrious woman and had obvious business ability. Her many associates meant many contacts for Christ.

Faithful preachers will always be important and necessary. But faithful laywomen and laymen like Lydia and her friends still make up the great army of the Lord. The lesson reads that Lydia worshiped God. Does not this fact alone go a long way in explaining the stature of this wonderful woman? Her invitation to Paul and Silas to visit and stay at her home must have been very heartening to these men of God.

Can God call on you and me whenever He sees people who need help?



Just a Thought

**"The price of wheat rises and falls,
but the price of wild oats remains the same."**