

## LESSON 1—PAUL & SILAS IN PRISON

### OVERVIEW

**Bible Reference:** Acts 16:19-34

**Key Verse:** 1 Thessalonians 5:18—Give thanks in everything, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

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### ITEMS NEEDED:

*Signs that say:* Give / thanks / in / EVERYTHING,/ for this is God’s will / for you / in Christ Jesus.

A bag containing slips of paper for the opening activity

### OPENING ACTIVITY

Ask for volunteers who are willing to play a game but before letting them volunteer, explain the game to them.

SAY: In a minute I’m going to choose some volunteers to play a game. I have a bag with a number of slips of paper in it – Some of these represent “good” things and some represent some tasks that some of you might consider to be somewhat embarrassing. It’s random – You don’t know what you’re going to get. By volunteering you’re agreeing to do whatever you pull out of the bag.

Take volunteers for the game. One at a time, let them pull a slip of paper out of the bag and do what it says. Samples are below:

- Kneel in front of someone in the room and sing “Happy Birthday” to them.
- Do five jumping jacks
- Tell your youth minister or the leader of this game: “You are the most beautiful man/woman I’ve ever seen!”
- Give someone a high five and go back to your seat.
- Clap your hands and say, “Thank you for allowing me to play in this game.”
- Yell, “Be blinded by my awesomeness!”
- Bow and then announce to everyone, “I love you too.”

*You can add other creative ideas. Be sure that none are offensive or could cause hurt feelings. You don’t need a lot of these, just enough to launch the lesson.*

### Application

SAY: You couldn't control what you pulled out of the bag anymore than you can control certain things that will come your way in life.

If you have the Torn & Restored Heart illustration, use it here. You can buy it at [www.330resources.org/torn-and-restored-heart](http://www.330resources.org/torn-and-restored-heart). If you don't have the illustration, then simply move on....

ASK: **Do bad things sometimes happen to good people?** (Yes, they can.)

SAY: Sometimes you can do everything right and something "bad" still happen to you, but when you're walking with Jesus, how you look at "bad" things is different. For the next few weeks we're going to see how you can make the choice to rejoice, even when things don't go the way you'd like.

KEY: Because God is good and we can trust Him, we can give thanks and rejoice even when "bad" things happen.

## **BIBLE LESSON**

*(Based on Acts 16:19-34)*

**Background:** In today's Bible story, something bad is going to happen to two men who lived for Jesus. They were named Paul and Silas, who loved God and served God had been telling people about Jesus. They had traveled a long way for a long time, and they had just helped a slave girl, but helping her upset her owners. Now listen closely to what happened.

### **Read Acts 16:19-34**

*Summarize and explain this story*

ASK: **Why do you think Paul and Silas were able to sing and praise God even in the middle of a tough situation?** (Trusting God gives you peace.)

ASK: **Why do you think trusting God gives you peace?**

SAY: Even when bad things happen, God is with you and because He is with you not only can you have peace, you can also **make the choice to rejoice**.

### **Read Philippians 4:4**

Emphasize that God wants us to *always* rejoice in Him, no matter what situation we find ourselves in.

SAY: After everything I say, I want you to say: Rejoice!

*When you have a great supper, you can...* Students: Rejoice!

*When the dog eats your supper, you can...*Students: Rejoice!  
*When, because the dog at your supper, you had to get a Big Mac at McDonalds, you can...*Students: Rejoice!  
*When, because the dog at your supper, you had to eat a Big Mac at McDonalds, but then you accidentally drop it on the floor, you can...*Students: Rejoice!  
*When your mom picks her nose and your friends all see her, you can...*Students: Rejoice!  
*When someone steals from you, you can...*Students: Rejoice!  
*When a tornado is heading for your house, you can...*Students: Rejoice!  
*When you're watching TV, you can...*Students: Rejoice!  
*When don't get to watch TV because you're grounded, you can...*Students: Rejoice! *When you're TV blows-up because you watched too much TV, you can...*Students: Rejoice!  
*When you are falsely accused and beaten like Paul and Silas, you can...*Students: Rejoice!  
*Every moment of everyday, you can...*Students: Rejoice!  
*In all situations, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

SAY: You can always rejoice because if you've given your life to Christ, God will never leave you and you can always trust Him .

### **KEY VERSE**

*Choose 4 volunteers—Give them the signs that say: In, (blank sign), Give, Thanks.*

SAY: The Bible tells us to give thanks but in the first part of our key verse today, we've left out one important word. Right now it says, "Give Thanks In \_\_\_\_\_."

ASK: **What word do you think is missing?** *(Take a few answers)*

SAY: God wants us to give thanks in EVERYTHING (give the *Everything* sign to your volunteer).

REPEAT after Me: "Some Things"

SAY: The Bible *doesn't* say to give thanks in "some" things

REPEAT after Me: "Most Things"

SAY: The Bible *doesn't* say to give thanks in "most" things

REPEAT after Me: "Good Things"

SAY: The Bible *doesn't* say to give thanks in just "good" things.

SAY: The Bible says to "Give thanks in EVERYTHING."

ASK: **Does anyone know why the Bible says we should do this?** *(Take a few answers)*  
*Choose three more volunteers—Give them the signs: for this is God's will / for you / in Christ Jesus.*

SAY: God's plan for us is to always have a thankful heart.

ASK: **But how can we give thanks when bad things happen?**

SAY: Like Paul and Silas, we can give thanks and rejoice NOT because we like the situation but...

1. Because we know that God is bigger than the situation
2. Because we know we can trust God
3. Because God has promised to turn all things to the good of those follow Him (Romans 8:28).

SAY: Because of this, when bad situations happen in our lives, we can keep our eyes on Jesus and see the situation in a different way.

SAY: We'll talk more about this in the weeks to come...but right now we want you to know that you can... *"Make the choice to rejoice!"*

**Prayer**—Take prayer requests and pray with your students.

**Find more resources at [www.330resources.org](http://www.330resources.org).**

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