

I am Free!
Today's Reading
Acts 16:1-38



Some of the most meaningful times you will spend with the Lord will not be at the highest points of your life. In fact, they may come at times that seem least likely...at times when circumstances would tell you to give God the cold shoulder rather than quality time. Trace Paul's experiences in Acts 16 and you will see what I mean.

Paul had completed one missionary journey, participated in a conference in Jerusalem, formed a new team, and sought God's leading for the next steps in his ministry. God directed him towards Philippi. After seeing a family come to Christ and be baptized at a riverside service, opposition arose. Angry people seized Paul and Silas. They were falsely accused and severely beaten before they were placed in jail. While incarcerated in an inner cell with their feet securely bound in stocks, it could have been a good opportunity to fume in anger. Hadn't

God directed them to this vile city? Hadn't He allowed all of this to happen to them?

Rather than allowing anger and bitterness to get the best of them, they chose to see this as a time to worship and an opportunity to praise. At midnight, they began to pray and sing. This decision to spend that time with God kept them free from bitterness. God's decision to open the prison doors and open the chains set them free from prison.

The "hang time" they spent with God was counterintuitive. There is a message in that for you. There will be times when circumstances will imply that spending time with God is the last thing you should do! There will be times when hanging out with Him is the last thing you want to do! But by persevering with Him in prayer and praise, you will discover an incredible freedom come over you. It is a freedom that breaks chains of bitterness and anger. It is a freedom that severs what seems like a relationship between your immediate circumstances and your joy.