



## OPEN

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This week we begin a new message series looking at various lives in the New Testament changed by a single common factor: an encounter with Jesus. Some were seeking Jesus, others were found by him. Some met Jesus face-to-face, some were told about him by others. We begin with a woman named Lydia from the story of Acts 16. While we are not told a lot about Lydia, there is a lot we can learn from her life. Her encounter with Jesus did not appear overly dramatic but nonetheless miraculous in the sense that Acts tells us that in hearing about Jesus “the Lord opened her heart”. Lydia’s open heart led to her life being open to Jesus, and much more. This week we look at four traits of a heart being opened by God.

## REFLECT

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- In verse 14, Acts says, “the Lord opened her heart”. What do you think that meant or looked like in the moment?
- Take time to read Acts 16:1-10, the story of how God re-routed Paul and his companions so that Lydia would hear the Gospel message. List together the various points of how God re-directed Paul’s path to Lydia.
- From our passage, list as many traits or clues about Lydia that you can identify to put together a character sketch of the kind of person she was.
- What level of prior knowledge of God, or biblical knowledge, do you deduce Lydia had before hearing about Jesus?

## DISCUSS

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- Prior to hearing about Jesus, Acts describes Lydia as a “worshipper of God.” This suggests that Lydia was not a Jew by ethnicity but someone who had accepted the truth of God’s Word in the OT, and someone who was seeking the true God – not the religion of her Roman upbringing in Thyatira. In today’s world, how would you describe a ‘spiritual seeker’ like Lydia? Do those kinds of people still exist?
- From our text, what can we deduce regarding Lydia’s financial success and position of influence?
- Despite her achievements, Lydia was someone who was looking for more than a career and a big house. How do we need to be the same, like Lydia? Is that an issue today?
- From Sunday’s message, what are four indicators that we can see at play in Lydia of a heart that is being opened by Jesus? Which one strikes you the most?

## APPLY

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- In the message, it was stated that an open heart is not a one-time decision but an on-going inner state. On a scale of 0-10, 10 being ‘totally open,’ how would you rate the openness of your heart to Jesus today?
- As a group, come up with and discuss things that help keep your heart open and soft to God.
- Which of those things can you give special attention to this coming week?

## PRAY

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- To close, read Ezekiel 36:26, God’s promise to give us a new heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to fulfill that promise in you.
- Ask God to help you – and us as a community – like Lydia, seek first the Kingdom, above our earthly pursuits.
- Ask Jesus to open your heart and show you where he wants you to get personal in embracing his mission, as Lydia did.