

**Intentional**  
**Acts 16:14-15**  
**Luke 8:11-15**  
**Dr. Paul Cannings**

**A. Be Purposeful (v. 14)**

1. Lydia was well to do – Lydia’s dedication to God in a polluted religious system was already a blessing to her and her family.
2. Lydia – Lydia was single, productive, and ran her household so well that those who lived among her respected and followed her leadership. How often do you find a wealthy person caring for her servants so well they would follow her leadership to Christ so readily?
  - a) Lydia probably did not gain wealth by becoming a widow; Roman law allowed a widow to inherit only 10 percent, although widows could inherit more than that from a deceased father. More than likely Lydia is well-to-do as a seller of purple, a luxury good associated with wealth throughout Mediterranean culture for over a thousand years. (The dye had been especially procured from the murex shellfish near Tyre, but in Macedonia it could have been procured from the mollusks near Thessalonica.) Well-to-do women sometimes became \*patrons, or sponsors of pagan religious associations; those attracted to Judaism helped support Jewish causes. (from IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament by Craig S. Keener Copyright © 1993 by Craig S. Keener. Published by InterVarsity Press. All rights reserved.)
3. A worshiper of God – Lydia, without hearing the gospel message knew enough to become a person who revered God to the point that she was in awe of Him and completely continuously devoted to Him. This is despite all the false religion that existed in this city that was controlled by Rome.
  - a) She was a worshiper of God, a term used for Gentiles (e.g., Cornelius [Acts 10:2] and those in Thessalonica [17:4] and Athens [17:17]) who were not proselytes to

Judaism, but who did worship Yahweh. Even so, they were not in the New Testament church, the body of Christ. The Lord opened her heart (cf. Luke 24:45) to respond to Paul's message. Again Luke stressed the sovereignty of God in salvation (cf. Acts 13:48).<sup>[1]</sup>

b) The fact she was a woman of considerable means is evidenced by the size of her house. It would have to have been ample enough to house four men as well as her household without embarrassment (cf. Acts 16:40).<sup>[2]</sup>

4. A worshiper of God – Lydia, was continuously in awe of God because she viewed God as the superior creator she understood Him to be. Lydia continuously revered God because she had a true understanding of who God is. This is similar to David in Psalm 8.

5. Was listening – I believe that because Lydia was already drawn to God (imperfect tense meaning this was her endless disposition) , that like the Samaritan woman, she was a part of the fields being ripe for harvest.

6. Was listening – Lydia's heart was so prepared for the Lord's Word that she endlessly gave her full attention to all that Paul and Timothy were saying. She did not need any of the frills that come with church ministry today. Her heart was ready for the Word.

a) She holds the distinction of being the first convert to Christianity in Europe, and her household formed the nucleus of the Church of Philippi, to which St. Paul addressed the most affectionate and joyous of all his Epistles. (From Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, and Dictionary of the Apostolic Church. Biblesoft formatted electronic database. Copyright © 2015 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

7. And the Lord opened her heart (Luke 8:11-14) – Lydia proved to be good soil. because of how committed to the Lord she was.

a) After the resurrection, the minds of the disciples were opened to understand the Scriptures (Lk. 24:45); similarly, Lydia's heart was opened to respond to the gospel message of Paul.

8. And the Lord opened her heart – The Lord who has all power and authority moved with the will of Lydia so that her desire to experience and know God would become totally available to her. God created in her a desire to learn about Him and understand His ways.

a) The text tells us the Lord opened her heart—what a beautiful way to describe receptivity to the gospel. Paul told the Corinthians that people rejected the gospel because their minds had been darkened (2 Cor. 4:4). The light of truth cuts through the darkness; and when God chooses to open hearts (as here), people enter the eternal kingdom of His Son. Perhaps Lydia was affiliated with the Jewish synagogue at Thyatira and, having moved her business to Philippi, continued to worship with faithful Jews there.<sup>[3]</sup>

9. And the Lord opened her heart – The scripture is careful to say that the Lord opened her heart which means that Lydia was so ready to receive Christ, that the Lord powerfully moved so that her inner spirit became controlled by His power.

10. And the Lord opened her heart - Lydia's life completely belongs to the Lord because she surrendered her heart to Him and it was changed by Him. Her life now makes a difference for God's kingdom purposes. This led her to be a strong supporter of the ministry expansion of Paul. She was one hundred percent in; a soldier. She is an unsung hero in the scriptures.

11. Respond to the things – Because Lydia was ready and the Lord responded, she continuously gave her complete attention to everything that was taught by Paul and Timothy. She was devoted to their teaching.

12. Speak – Paul was continuously teaching the Word with no plans to stop and Lydia was all in.

## B. Be Faithful (v. 15):

1. She and her household had been baptized – Lydia was so engaged in what the Lord had done in her life and what He was doing in Thyatira, she convinced her entire household to surrender their lives like she did. It seems that this was something she had not done before when she was a proselyte of Judaism.

2. She urged us – Lydia’s experience of Christ was so meaningful that she took this relationship to another level and earnestly pleaded with Paul and Timothy with an authoritative tone to come stay at her home.

a) Women like Lydia were particularly prominent in Paul’s missionary efforts in this portion of Acts—the women of Thessalonica (17:4) and of Berea (17:12), Damaris in Athens (17:34), and Priscilla in Corinth (18:2). Priscilla and Lydia took an active role in the ministry of their churches. This was in part due to the more elevated status of women in contemporary Greek and Roman society. This was particularly true in the first century when women were given a number of legal privileges such as initiating divorce, signing legal documents, even holding honorary public titles. The prominent role of the women in Acts is perhaps due even more to the message Paul brought them: “In Christ Jesus, there is neither male nor female” (Gal 3:28).<sup>[4]</sup>

3. Judges me to be faithful – Lydia challenged Paul to make a decision as to whether he has to condemn her or find her trustworthy, and dependable because she proves to be someone who would remain steadfast in doing the Lord’s will. This proves true when we read verse 40.

a) But she did not merely open her home to the missionaries; she allowed it to become the gathering place for the entire Christian community (v. 40). Perhaps the wealthiest member of the Philippian church, Lydia embraced the ideal of the early church, not laying claim to what was hers, but freely sharing it with her sisters and brothers in Christ (4:32).<sup>[5]</sup>

4. Judges me to be faithful to the Lord – Lydia was so confident of the work that Christ had done in her life that she did not mind Paul evaluating her character so that he could depend on her to fulfill whatever the Lord would request of her to do. Lydia was convinced that He ruled her life.
5. Faithful to the Lord - When someone has fully surrendered to Christ, the Lordship of Christ in and through their lives always sets the agenda for how they live their lives. Lydia's life was now totally Spirit-led.
6. Come into my house and stay – Lydia not only leads her household spiritually, but she desires to continuously be a supporter of Paul's ministry so that whatever Paul needs to accomplish, for God's glory, she can be depended upon to get it done.
7. Prevailed – Lydia was compelling with her request, somewhat forceful, so as to willfully persuade Paul and Timothy to remain in her home. This exposes her excitement and passion for the ministry.
8. Prevailed – Lydia's full surrender to the Lord created a passion for ministry that made a difference in Thyatira and wherever the Lord led Paul to serve.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Toussaint, S. D. (1985). [Acts](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 399). Victor Books.

<sup>[2]</sup> Toussaint, S. D. (1985). [Acts](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 399). Victor Books.

<sup>[3]</sup> Gangel, K. O. (1998). [Acts](#) (Vol. 5, p. 271). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>[4]</sup> Polhill, J. B. (1992). [Acts](#) (Vol. 26, p. 349). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>[5]</sup> Polhill, J. B. (1992). [Acts](#) (Vol. 26, pp. 349–350). Broadman & Holman Publishers.