



Links Players

RELATING TO GOD 2: THOSE WHO BELIEVE

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." (Acts 16:31, NIV)

YOU HAVE CERTAINLY HEARD GOOD TEACHING about how your faith in Jesus should be an active one. As with golf, you need to be doing to be learning, because neither sport nor kingdom life was meant to be played on the couch.

With that in mind, what might we make of a jail cell? Is it a place where one can actively live for Jesus? Let's consider these questions with Paul and Silas in ancient Philippi, where the two had been locked up overnight because they had cut into the livelihood of some local slave owners.

Maybe you know the story. Paul and Silas were changing the mood of the environment by singing songs of worship and praying, as the other prisoners listened in. During the night, an earthquake shook all the doors of the cells open and loosened every prisoner's chains. This was their chance! Get out now! But no one moved. We don't know exactly why. Maybe the worship of Paul and Silas led the others to do the just thing; maybe the disciples encouraged them to stay. Whatever the godly reason, no one moved.

When the jailer saw that the doors were open, he assumed all had escaped and he prepared to kill himself. But Paul stayed his hand. "We're all here," Paul called out from the darkness. After lights had been brought and the jailer confirmed this was true, he fell trembling before the two men of God. Then he asked the most important question in all of life, "What must I do to be saved?"

The answer Paul gave is critical, for it sets the foundation for our life with Jesus. In the spirit of "faith in action," Paul might have said, "Well, my man, you need to do this good thing and that good thing—whatever you can to catch God's attention with your fine works." Paul said nothing of the kind. He offered up only one verb: "Believe."

Our primary relationship with Jesus Christ is as believers. We must recognize who is he and what he has done for us. We must see the cross and Christ's resurrection not just as moments in history but as the effective work of Christ that still today can move us from darkness to light, and from death to life. It is from such belief that an increasing faith is formed, and from that faith comes the fruit we call action, the faith that shines forth and sparks others to give glory to God.

Opening questions At this stage of your golf "career," do you prefer playing, watching, or a balance of both? What was the most recent thing you learned about playing the game?

READING Mark 4:13-20; John 3:16-18; John 1:12-13; John 4:28-42

Hindrances to belief (Mark 4)

In Jesus' parable, what are some of the things that get in the way of one's faith taking hold? Do certain forces challenge your belief?

The rewards of belief (John 3)

What great importance is given to belief in these verses?

Beyond belief (John 1)

What other relationship with God is given to those who believe? How does it change a person's life to be "born of God"?

Believing for ourselves (John 4)

Consider the closing line of this account. Why is it so important that we come to believe in Jesus for ourselves?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/MzFESwiTdb4>