



Crushing Cynicism

Acts 16:11-40

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A believer in Jesus Christ may go through a season of cynicism, when he or she questions whether God is hearing prayers, and doubts that He will answer them. One clear antidote to such cynicism is to see God's power on display in His Word, doing even more than His children could have imagined. In Acts 16:11-40, we will see no less than five demonstrations of God's power at work in and through His people.

Five Displays of God's Power to Give us Hope and Banish Cynicism

God showed His power to...

1. Lead (16:11-12)

2. Open (16:13-15)

3. Free (16:16-18)

4. Fill (16:19-25)

5. Change (16:25-40)

Questions to Consider

1. Have you had a recent experience of questioning God's timing or wondering if He really cared about your circumstances? What sort of past circumstances have tempted you toward cynicism in your relationship with Him?
2. Be encouraged, and encourage others, by recalling a time when you could clearly see – maybe even in hindsight – how God led you to a place or person or conversation, that increased your opportunity to glorify Him?
3. Read Acts 16:16-18. Why was Paul annoyed/grieved by this girl's shouting?
4. In the story of the slave girl and the arrest and beating of Paul and Silas, what were some of the clear marks of injustice? What was the dominant response of Paul and Silas? Is God calling you to respond differently to recent circumstances?
5. You may not be able to control suffering or difficult circumstances, but, by God's grace and power, what can you control during those times? Can you recall a recent example?
6. How was God's power displayed in the life of the Philippian jailer?
7. What are you praying to God for? How will you trust Him more to answer according to His wise goodness?

For further reading on how cynicism can infect our prayers lives and for wisdom on doing battle with that cynicism: *A Praying Life* (2017) by Paul E. Miller.