

**News Story Summary**

On April 18, six new inmates arrived at the East Oregon Correctional Institution. But unlike most of the new arrivals, they seemed genuinely excited to be there. They ran to greet the officers, the inmates, and anyone else that was in the room. They were puppies. These six puppies, mostly retriever breeds, will be trained by inmates to assist people with disabilities. Under the guidance of the Salem-based Joys of Living Assistance Dogs program, the trainers will teach the dogs to perform such tasks as turning off lights, shutting doors, retrieving dropped items, loading and unloading washers and dryers, and keeping their owners from falling.

When the inmates met their puppies face to face, they kept their elation in check until the director of the program gave them some basic guidelines. LeRoy Bussey, convicted of murder, met Shrek, an English cream golden retriever who bounced and wriggled. He admitted to a wave of emotion — something he hadn't felt much since he was incarcerated decades ago. "I've been anticipating this for days and days," he said. He looks forward to learning a valuable skill and "to know I'm doing something to benefit someone else."

For more on this story, enter the phrase "Inmates train dogs to assist people with disabilities" in your search engine.)

**Focus Attention**

Prior to group member's arrival, write on the whiteboard or large sheet of paper, "OBEDIENCE CREATES OPPORTUNITIES." Ask group members to share examples from their own lives where they found this to be true. Share the news story about the dogs being trained by the prison inmates. Comment that while we often think of training a dog when we hear the word obedience, in this case it was actually the inmates who, by their *obedience* to the rules, were given the *opportunity* to train the dogs. Emphasize the one inmate who looked forward to the opportunity to "do something to benefit someone else."

Explain that in today's Scripture passage, we will be reminded of the truth that opportunities to share the gospel message come through obedience.

**Challenge**

Remind the group of the news story. Point out that the inmates may never meet the people who receive the dog they help train. In the same way, we may not always see the results when we obediently share the gospel. Nevertheless, the important thing is to be obedient when those opportunities arise. Close by praying God will give all of you opportunities to share the gospel this week.