

# Riding the Storm

## Week 1 | Seize the Moment

### BOTTOM LINE

Have you ever found yourself in a dark season of pain? Where is God? When will this season pass? The Apostle Paul Experienced more than his fair share of hard times and yet he lived an incredible life for God in spite of much danger and discouragement. We can look at stories about Paul's life in the book of Acts and be encouraged and challenged to trust God even in the hard times.

### GOAL OF THE GROUP

To create meaningful conversation that stretches our faith and draws us closer to the heart of God. This guide is a suggestion. Adjust the questions as appropriate for your group.

### SCRIPTURE

Acts 27-28

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever found yourself in the middle of a storm in your life that is so severe, so unrelenting, that you have truly lost hope? Where did you turn for help? Where do you think God was when you hit rock bottom?
2. **Read Acts 27:9-12.** The back story: The Apostle Paul found himself in an absolute nightmare in Acts 27. He was arrested, imprisoned, and was about to be transported to Rome to make an appeal before Caesar himself. He was shackled along with the other prisoners and soldiers and put on a grain freighter heading to Rome.
  - a. How would you have responded to Paul's statement of doom?
  - b. Would you have believed Paul in this same situation? Why or why not?
3. **Read Acts 27:13.** Notice that even Paul gives up all hope of rescue. The author of nearly half of the New Testament is discouraged when a big storm hit his life.
  - a. Have you ever felt like you're in a storm and can't find a way out? How did you respond in that situation?
4. **Read Acts 27:21-25.** When all hope was lost, when the ship was being battered and crushed by the storm, God sent an angel to encourage Paul and the other passengers.
  - a. If you were on that ship with Paul, how would you have responded?
  - b. What do you think about the fact that God was going to save ALL of them? Even the unbelievers?
5. **Read Acts 27: 26-44.** Paul and the men are encouraged but their rescue is not going to be easy or pain free. Things had to get much worse before they got better. Their rescue came after a shipwreck! It's probably safe to assume this isn't how they thought it would go down once they were told God was going to intervene.
  - a. Can you think of a time when you thought that God was going to intervene in a situation one way and it didn't happen that way? How did you feel towards God in that moment?
6. **Read Acts 28:3-6.** It gets even worse for Paul. The people of Malta go from thinking he is murder to a god. Why do you think God allowed this to happen in this way?
7. **Read Acts 28:7-10.** God used Paul's painful journey to bring healing to the people of Malta. Can you draw any parallels between your life and Paul's?
8. Read the quote in the box below. If you're doubtful about the God that intervened in this real event in history and think it was good fortune, consider author Ben Witherington's take on this journey. Remember scripture says the journey took 14 days. How does this make you feel about this true story in the Bible and whether you believe the same kind of hope in God is also available to you?

"One of the most convincing portions of Smith's detailed study of Paul's journey is the calculation of how long it would have taken a ship of the sort Paul was on, in the face of a northeaster, to drift from Cauda to near the mouth of Saint Paul's Bay at Malta at the point called Koura. The distance was some 475 miles, and Smith's detailed comparison of nautical accounts from this region showed it was likely to take right at fourteen days to drift this far. This is a rather striking confirmation of the accuracy of Luke's account."

- Ben Witherington in "The Acts of the Apostles"



## TRY THIS

*Think of something in your life that feels hopeless. Pray and ask God: What do you want me to know about this situation and ask Him to give you a different truth to believe. He is with you. He loves you. You are not alone in your pain.*