**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Believe Boldly**

Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love. ([1 Corinthians 16:13–14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co16.13-14))

*The gospel message is shocking to many, shocking because of its implications. God has made himself known to us and promised to place His Spirit into our heart. We have been given direct access to Him. The Bible encourages us to come to Him with boldness. Our boldness in approaching Him is not from our words or our achievements. Instead, it’s based on God’s promises. So we ask, remembering His power and faithfulness. And we encourage those around us to do the same. Believe boldly.*

**Session Overview**

**Declare His Promise**

**Biblical Encounter:** Paul Proclaims God’s Protection through a Storm ([Acts 27:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac27.1), [7–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac27.7-11), [20–26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac27.20-26), [30–44](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac27.30-44))

**Outcome:** Trust God’s truth in spite of the difficulty or uncertainty of your situation.

*As Paul was transported by ship, he and everyone aboard encountered terrible weather on the sea. Paul tried to warn the ship’s officers about it, but they chose to ignore him. The storm they were caught in continued to get worse—eventually blocking out any hope they may have had to survive. Luckily, Paul was there to encourage them with a message from God. Perhaps students are in the middle of their own difficult situations with many uncertainties. The challenge for all of us is to trust God no matter how difficult or uncertain our situations are. If we can do that, He will make sure we make it through our storms.*

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Large open space* *•* ***Group Activity Page******Getting Ready*** *• Print the* ***Group Activity Page*** *for the game.* *•* ***First time leading* Live *for Youth? Look here for the*** [**Facilitator Guide**](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)**.** |

*To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:* [***BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads***](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

**Welcome**

*Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming. Your friendliness here can create a comfort level that encourages student participation later.*

**Opening Prayer**

*Prayer thoughts: Ask the Lord to open students’ minds to understand how important it is to trust in what He says when we are in our own personal storm. Pray that every heart would surrender to Him and everyone’s trust would continuously grow—even in uncertainty.*

**Introduction**

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| **QUESTION**Think about the worst storm or crisis you’ve ever been in. What kind of storm was it, and what feelings did you experience during it? |

As we read through the Bible, we see over and over how God used people to help others through crisis. Everyone experiences different things, but sooner or later, we all will walk through a crisis. It helps when we have people in our life who love us and will always be there for us. The best news is that in every moment, God will be there for us. The challenge for us today is to decide if we have the same trust in God as Paul, the man in our Bible reading. Putting our total trust in God is how we will get through any difficult or uncertain time.

**Group Activity**

**Captain’s Orders**

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Large open space* *•* ***Group Activity Page******Getting Ready*** *• Print the* ***Group Activity Page*** *for the game.* |

We’re going to play a game called Captain’s Orders. The captain will stand at the front of our designated area, facing the rest of the group, who are called the crew. The crew will need to spread out and face the captain. The captain will call out a basic command, and the crew then must do the action associated with the command. The last individual to perform the captain’s command action is out. But watch out! The faster the actions are called and performed, the trickier and funnier the game becomes. We’ll keep playing until there is only one crew member left.

Here are the basic commands. Let’s practice them together, so you can remember the actions.

• ***Scrub the deck****—Crouch down and make a scrubbing motion with your hands.*

• ***Hit the deck****—Lie down on your stomach.*

• ***Clear the deck****—All feet off the floor.*

• ***Up periscope!****—Lie down with one arm raised straight in the air. Twist the raised arm as if a scanning periscope.*

• ***Captain’s coming****—Stand to attention and salute.*

• ***To the island****—Run to the left side of the room.*

• ***Abandon Ship****—Sit down and pretend to row a lifeboat.*

Let’s play.

• *Choose someone to start as captain and give that person the* ***Group Activity Page****.*

• *Optional: Have a couple of volunteers watch the crew to determine who should be eliminated each round.*

• *Switch captains as time allows.*

It’s a lot of work to be a part of a crew on a ship, isn’t it? Today, we’ll read a Bible story about a ship’s crew and passengers who had to endure a terrible storm. Thankfully, there was a man onboard named Paul who heard from God. He encouraged the crew that God would protect them during their incredibly difficult situation.

Maybe there is a time when you’ve been in an incredibly difficult situation as well. You may have faced so many uncertainties that you had no idea what was going to happen. As we continue, you’ll see that we can learn a lot from the story we’ll read today. Just before we dive into it, let’s watch today’s video.

**Watch**

**Consider What the Bible Says**

*Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.*

Today we’re looking at a story in the New Testament. This story involves the apostle Paul, other prisoners, a Roman officer, and the crew of a ship. Prior to this, Paul had been on trial, persecuted, and in jail for preaching about Jesus. This time, though, he was being sent to the highest court in Rome. On his way there, the ship entered a terrifying storm that scared even the sailors. In this story, we see that trusting in God means we can endure whatever kind of storm we may face in life.

**Paul Gave a Warning**

Read [Acts 27:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac27.1), [7–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac27.7-11).

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| **QUESTION**How did the people on the ship respond when Paul, a prisoner, tried to warn them about the storm? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think you would have done if you were Paul and no one was listening to you as you were trying to give a lifesaving warning? |

Paul was one of several prisoners on the ship. He noticed the obvious storm and how severe it was becoming. Yet when he warned the sailors and ship’s officers about what to do, they refused to listen. It’s interesting to think that a man like Paul seemed to be more in tune with the weather on the sea than these sailors were. Maybe they ignored him because he was a prisoner. Maybe their own pride or sailing expertise prevented them from having an open ear. Regardless, they would soon regret not listening to Paul’s warning.

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| **QUESTION**How would you compare people today with those on the ship who ignored Paul’s warning? |

If it was not for what Paul did next, those men might not have made it out alive.

**Did You Know?**

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| Traveling by boat in the days of the New Testament was an increasingly popular form of transport. Boat travel was a result of both the unification of the Roman Empire as well as the near-eradication of piracy in the Mediterranean only a few decades before the birth of Jesus. How ships operated, however, would have been different from what we might be familiar with today. Since most boats were more primitive and there were no true early weather detection instruments, they avoided open water whenever they could. Instead, they usually traveled along the coasts so that if storms arose, they had a safe option. |

**God Promised Their Safety**

Read [Acts 27:20–26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac27.20-26).

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| **QUESTION**What do you think the men on the ship thought when Paul promised them that no one on the ship would lose their life? |

The men on the ship were very quickly losing hope and the will to push forward to survive the storm. It was getting so bad that they were refusing to eat. Paul then gave them an encouraging word that came from God by an angel. His message was meant to uplift their spirits and inspire them to have hope. Paul knew God was in control of that whole situation, and He had not left them. There will be times when you may need to give an encouraging word to those around you. This requires that we learn to listen to what God is saying. For us today, this usually comes through reading the Bible. It also can come through the Holy Spirit speaking to us or even an angel, as in Paul’s case.

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| **QUESTION**Do you think Paul expected them to listen to him after he heard from God by an angel? Why or why not? |

One can only imagine the pushback from some of the men onboard the ship. They were in a life-and-death situation, and Paul said that an angel told him that everyone would survive the storm. Just being there to witness the back-and-forth conversation would have been interesting.

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever tried to persuade others to do something you felt God was telling you? What happened? |

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| **QUESTION**How does Paul’s trust in the Lord inspire you to be more encouraging to those who may be struggling with difficulties and uncertainties? |

Just picture the looks on the men’s faces when Paul encouraged them to trust in God, while also saying, “We will be shipwrecked.” This combination of statements tells us that God is not always going to make things easy for us. He will not keep us from walking through storms. It’s through difficult and uncertain situations, like the storm, that we learn to trust God more.

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| **QUESTION**If you’re comfortable, tell us about a time you were in a difficult situation, and someone had to encourage you. Did you listen or shrug them off? Why? |

**Everyone on Board Survived**

Read [Acts 27:30–38](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac27.30-38).

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| **QUESTION**How would you describe the mindset and attitudes of the men onboard the ship after Paul’s encouragement? |

With more encouragement, Paul was able to get the men to eat some food and build up their strength—physically and mentally. Losing hope in difficult situations can be very exhausting mentally. But, because of Paul, all 276 men on the boat were encouraged and prepared to face the storm head-on, doing whatever it took to survive.

After the crew listened to Paul and began to eat, they were inspired to do the work it would take to get them through the storm, like lightening the ship by throwing cargo overboard. Sometimes, God wants us to take action after looking to Him for a solution.

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| **QUESTION**Would you have had enough faith to throw things overboard? Why or why not? |

Sometimes, our human nature gets the better of us. We may lean more toward fears and uncertainties rather than listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and trusting that God will help get us through the storm.

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| **QUESTION**How might the Holy Spirit have been at work in Paul’s situation in this passage of Scripture? |

**Everyone Reached Land Safely**

Read [Acts 27:39–44](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac27.39-44).

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| **QUESTION**How would you respond if you were standing on the shore when the men from the boat arrived and told you what they had just been through? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think this experience did for those who were on the ship? |

At the end of this story, we see that everyone made it safely to land. The problem we face is that not every challenge we experience turns out like we want. Sometimes, things work out well, and other times, that’s not the case. Regardless, we can learn to grow and trust in God despite the outcomes in our life. Our story is not so different from that of Paul’s. When we are in a storm, we do our best to hear from God, and then, we encourage others to follow.

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| **QUESTION**Think about your life today. How can you keep your trust in Jesus even when you’re experiencing terrifying storms in your personal life? |

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| **QUESTION**How does this example of Paul’s unwavering trust in God during the storm inspire you? |

**Reflect**

**Trust God’s truth in spite of the difficulty or uncertainty of your situation.**

This powerful story shows us how challenging life can be—even when we follow Jesus. Just because you love Jesus doesn’t mean you won’t experience hardships. You will still go through difficult situations in your life. There will be certain parts of life that have a sense of uncertainty about them. We just need to be like Paul and trust that God knows what He is doing. If we put our trust in God, He will be there to walk us through any storm we are in. Surviving our storms can be powerful reminders for us in the future and testimonies for others.

**Listen to God**

Let’s take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in God and His Word. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

• *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection after reading the questions. Then ask students if they want to share. Sharing your personal response may also be helpful to the students.*

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| **QUESTION**Are you facing a difficult or uncertain situation in your life right now? |

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| **QUESTION**In the past or in a current situation, have you looked to God for direction? If not, why? |

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| **QUESTION**How can other Christians encourage you while you’re in this situation? |

**Activate**

God wants us to be like Paul—listening to what He tells us and then encouraging those around us. Why don’t we take a few minutes to pray on our own? Ask God to speak to you about how you can encourage someone. Then, listen to what God is speaking to you. If you feel God is giving you a word of encouragement to share with someone in our group, don’t hesitate. Do it right away!

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| **Salvation Opportunity***Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.*Perhaps you read this Bible story with us today even though you don’t have a relationship with God. Receiving encouragement from God as He walks with us through the storms in our life starts with putting your trust and faith in Jesus.**Is anyone here that we can pray for who doesn’t have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?***Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as you close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.* |

**Conclusion**

The story of Paul and the others facing shipwreck and death is such an impactful example of trusting God. His Word is full of promises and truth. Sometimes in our darkest storms is when we need to depend on God the most. Every single one of us will walk through some difficult situations. We may be uncertain of how things will end up, like the crew and other prisoners were, but we can be certain God will be with us.

Do you relate more to Paul or the others? Are you the one who has a word from the Lord to encourage those close to you to keep pushing on? Or do you relate more to those facing shipwrecks who need some extra encouragement? We’ll be in both situations at some point in our life. We must make sure we’re ready to trust in God when we are!

**Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You for never leaving us to face storms on our own. As difficult situations and uncertainties come our way, I pray we’ll be as close to You as Paul was and listen for Your voice when You speak. Amen.

**Dismissal**

If you haven’t done so, you really need to check out the Bible Engagement Project app this week. I’m challenging everyone here to do at least two devotions by our next group time. See you then.