



Topeka Bible Church
The Life of Paul, Episode 51:
"Snakes, Shipwrecks, and Knowing God's Will"
Community Group Study Questions
Acts 28:1-10 and selected passages

1. Do you believe that your circumstances are dictated by "God's will?" If so, how many of them? All of them, great and small, good and bad (cf. *Romans 8:28-29*)? Just the big events and decisions? How can you determine what God dictates and what He doesn't (*Job 42:1-2*)?

2. How did God provide for the shipwrecked people (*Acts 28:2*)? Why is it easier to see "God's will" when we're provided with comfort (*Acts 28:10; Psalm 23:1; Philippians 4:19*) versus when we're not (*Ruth 1:21; 1 Samuel 2:6-7; 1 Timothy 6:7-8*)?

3. Was it God's will that Paul be bitten by a poisonous viper (*Acts 28:3*)? Have you been "snake bitten" (not literally) in life with afflictions that God placed in your life? What happened and how did you know that God was ordaining your circumstances (cf. *John 9:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:12*)?

4. Why did the inhabitants of Malta believe Paul had been bitten by this viper (*Acts 28:4*)? Do you adopt a similar perspective, that bad things happen to those to whom punishment is deserved? How might this perspective be dangerous?

5. Why was Paul able to shake the snake off of his hand without any harm (*Acts 28:5; Luke 10:19; Mark 16:17-18*)? Have you ever seen God supernaturally protect someone? Did you become more enamored with the individual or with God, who spared that individual?

6. What is the connection between God's will and evangelism (*Acts 28:7-9; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9*)? While we are not told that Paul shared the gospel, do you think that he did share that message on Malta (*Romans 1:16*)? Are you prepared to share this message should circumstances allow for an opportunity (*1 Peter 3:15*)?

7. Is God allowing for you to experience trials and challenges right now? Do you see these trials as God's will for your life? How might you need to change your perspective (*Job 1:21*)? Who can encourage you to accept God's will for better or worse? What insights might *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18* give us into "God's will?"

Memory Verse:

**"Be joyful always; (17) pray continually; (18) give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NIV)**