

ACTS

Chapter 27

Note from Kathy

*Have you heard the expression, "leading up?" It simply means you are playing a part of leading that you do not have by rank or position. We may not always be the one in charge, but that does not mean we have no influence. John Maxwell says, "Leadership is influence." In his book *Developing the Leader Within You 2.0*, he wrote, "Most leaders want to lead, but not be led. But most leaders also want to have value added to them. If you take the approach of wanting to add value to those above you, you have the best chance of influencing them." Let's think about this as we study Acts 27 and see what we can glean from Paul's "leading up."*

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME ACTS 27:1 - 28:16 AD 59-60

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Observation

1. Paul has been captive for over two years now. He has been questioned by two Roman Governors, Felix and Festus, and by King Agrippa. No witnesses have testified against him, only accusations concerning some religious differences among the Jews. For his own safety, Paul appealed to Caesar. In Acts 27, we see Paul begin his journey to Rome. Paul has now been turned over to a centurion to be transported to Rome. What was this centurion's name? _____
2. Pay close attention to the map as you read the names of the ports where they stop. This journey would be nearly 1,400 miles if you were to fly straight from Caesarea to Rome, but of course that was not an option for travelers at that time. How would these men be traveling? What is one of the most important requirements to make this successful journey for them?
3. According to Acts 27:4,7,8,9, what were the weather conditions as they began the first part of their journey?

■ Acts 27:9-13

*Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement. So Paul warned them,*¹⁰ *“Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.”*¹¹ *But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship.*¹² *Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.*¹³ *When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete.*

■ Acts 27:18-20

*We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard.*¹⁸ *On the third day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands.*²⁰ *When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.*

■ Acts 27:30-33

*In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow.*³¹ *Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.”*³² *So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away.*

■ Acts 27:35-36

*After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.*³⁶ *They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.*

4. What words of warning did Paul offer in verses 9-10?
5. Whose advice did the centurion take?
6. According to verse 13, what happened to motivate them to set out?
7. What did they do in the brief window when they got off the island of Crete?
8. Acts 27:18 told us that the ship took a violent battering from the storm. What was the first, drastic measure taken?
9. As the storm raged on for the third day, what did these experienced sailors do that would seem very foolish apart from the storm?
10. Can you imagine the feeling of hopelessness these men felt as they spent days with no sun or stars to help them navigate? How desperate had they become?
11. Even Paul seemed to feel the end was near. What happened that changed his perspective? Read Acts 27:21-26. What did Paul share with the others on board to restore their hope?
12. How long had these men all been onboard this vessel since they left the dock at Fair Havens?
13. Those experienced sailors sensed land. How they sensed it, I'm not sure, perhaps they heard waves crashing or saw birds flying. What did these seasoned sailors do?
14. In verses 30-33, some sailors wanted to escape in the lifeboats, but Paul warned them not to venture out on their own. Who listened to Paul this time?
15. Paul took some bread and offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God in front of all the men. What was the reaction of the men to this prayer?
16. This was no small vessel or crew. How many men were on board?
17. This is the third time they have attempted to lighten the load. What did they throw overboard this time?

■ Acts 27:40-44

Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach.

⁴¹ But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf. ⁴² The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. ⁴³ But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. ⁴⁴

The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely.

18. For the first time in two weeks the sailors hoisted the main sail. What was their plan, and was it successful?
19. Previously, in other lessons, we have discussed the responsibility placed on a Roman soldier who was given charge of a prisoner. It could cost him his own life if his prisoner escaped. What did the soldiers plan to do to save their own skin?
20. How did Julius save Paul's life?
21. What was the amazing outcome mentioned in Acts 27:44?

Application

1. Acts 27 started off, "it was decided that we would sail for Italy." This was not a good time to venture out on a long, difficult voyage across the Mediterranean Sea. But the decision was not Paul's to make. He offered an opinion and was quickly overruled. Have you ever been quickly overruled and had a decision made for you that you disagreed with? Were you able to defer to the other person and keep quiet after your initial thoughts?

In these situations, do you mostly trust God and his plan and ultimate authority over all things—knowing if this is wrong, he will turn it to your good?

2. Paul is a prisoner on this voyage. He is not even a deck hand. What motivated him to speak a word to those in charge?

There are times when it is best to remain silent, but all too often we miss God-given opportunities to "lead up," to share the wisdom God has given us. Briefly describe a time when you have "led up," and share the experience with your small group.

Did those over you heed your words and benefit or dismiss them and suffer the consequences?

3. The advice of the captain was probably motivated by several factors.

What do you believe was the motivation of the captain of the ship?

Why do you believe he wanted to winter in Phoenix? Have you ever taken advice from a professional without considering the motive behind their advice? How did you fare?

4. When the ship Paul was on neared the island of Claudia (Cauda), they got a brief respite from the storm. The sailors did the few things they could to secure the boat. Storms in our life often have times of respite, even if the storm is far from over, and the situation has not changed. What we do in these times of respite may very well determine our outcome. What should we do during these times to help secure our future?

5. Things did not go well for this vessel. The storm has set them off course. It is too late to talk about what they should have done. It's too late for "I should have known better." Have you ever made a decision, and all too quickly found it led you into a storm of events that you could not change?

What did you do?

6. Acts 27:20 said the storm had raged on so long that the men had given up hope. This is the most desperate of all conditions one can face. When we give up hope we are doomed. In what had these men been placing their trust? The ravages of a storm can cause even seasoned sailors to believe all would be lost. They had done all they could think to do. But this can be a very good place to be. Have you ever been in a situation that was unrelenting and unchanging, so much so that you gave up hope that things were going to work out? What is a believer to do at a time like this? Read Proverbs 3:5-6.

7. God had not abandoned Paul. Paul was never out of God's sight. God sent an angel to comfort him, and what God spoke, Paul believed. This is faith!!! Read Hebrews 11:1. In your own words, apply Hebrews 11:1 to a struggle you are currently experiencing.

8. One disadvantage of experience is our belief that what happened last time will happen again. The sailors believed they would crash on the rocks. They thought it time to venture out on their own in the lifeboat. Paul warned that they would not survive unless all remained in the boat. Our obedience is far more beneficial than any plan we might come up with in times of trouble. Has God ever told you to remain in

■ Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

■ Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

■ Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

■ Psalm 4:5

Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the LORD.

■ Psalm 20:7

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

■ Psalm 37:5

Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.

■ Psalm 91:2

I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

the boat (an uncomfortable or difficult situation)? Have you lived long enough to have seen the outcome of that storm, or are you still waiting on the boat?

9. Our God is not absent. He is not unaware of our circumstances, and he is not uncaring when it comes to our suffering. God is busy working every detail for our good and his glory. Read Jeremiah 29:11. Do you believe this?
10. Paul instructed the men to eat. He led them in a prayer of thanksgiving. Do you lead others in thanksgiving, knowing God is at work even in our suffering? Read and ponder the verses from the Psalms in the sidebar, then write a brief prayer to God.
11. Paul is a powerful and faithful servant of God. What leadership lessons have you learned as we have studied the apostle Paul?

What are some characteristics of a godly leader?

