

5 Day Devotional

Day 1: When God Captures Your Heart

Devotional

After a brutal shipwreck, Paul had every reason to sit down and wait for someone else to step up. He had lost everything. He was exhausted, soaked, and stranded on a foreign island. But that is not what he did. Acts 28:2 tells us the islanders showed unusual kindness, and Paul matched it. He got up, gathered sticks, and started a fire. No one asked him to. No one appointed him. He just served.

That is what happens when God truly gets hold of your heart. Service stops feeling like an obligation and starts feeling like a natural response to everything God has done for you. You stop waiting for the perfect moment or the perfect circumstances. You just look around, find a need, and meet it.

Maybe you have been waiting to serve until life settles down, until you feel more qualified, or until someone officially invites you in. But Paul did not wait. He was shipwrecked and still showed up for others.

God is not looking for people with perfect circumstances. He is looking for willing hearts. And when your heart is captured by His grace, serving others becomes less of a duty and more of a delight. You serve because you have seen what He has done, and you simply cannot help yourself.

Start where you are. Use what you have. Show up for the people around you today.

Bible Verse

"After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold." - Acts 28:1-2

Reflection Question

Is there an area of your life where you have been waiting for better circumstances before you start serving others?

Quote

"When God captures your heart, you don't have to force service. It naturally just happens because you see all that God did."

Prayer

Lord, capture my heart so fully with Your grace that serving others becomes my natural response. Help me to show up today, right where I am, with what I have. Amen.

Day 2: Bitten While Serving

Devotional

Paul was not bitten before he started serving. He was not bitten after he finished. He was bitten right in the middle of it, while he was doing exactly what God had called Him to do.

That detail matters more than we might think. We often assume that faithfulness is a kind of protection, that if we are doing the right thing, life will go smoothly. But Acts 28 tells a different story. The viper came out of the very bundle of sticks Paul had gathered to help others stay warm.

Maybe you know what that feels like. You stepped up to volunteer and got criticized. You opened your home and got taken advantage of. You poured yourself into someone and they walked away. The bite came not from standing on the sidelines but from being fully in the game.

Here is the encouragement: being bitten while serving does not mean you did something wrong. It means you were close enough to the work to be in the line of fire. That is actually a sign you are in the right place.

Jesus washed feet and got kicked in the face for it. He kept going anyway. Hardship during service is not a signal to stop. It is often a sign that what you are doing actually matters.

Bible Verse

"When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand." - Acts 28:3

Reflection Question

Has a painful experience during a season of serving made you hesitant to step up again, and what would it look like to trust God with that hurt?

Quote

"It's often while serving others that you're going to be bitten. Paul wasn't bitten before serving, he wasn't bitten after he was serving. He was bitten while he was serving."

Prayer

Father, when the bites come in the middle of serving, remind me that You are still with me. Give me the courage to keep going even when it hurts. Amen.

Day 3: Don't Let the Bite Become Your Identity

Devotional

After the viper latched onto Paul's hand, the people of Malta watched closely. They assumed he was a murderer getting what he deserved. Then, when he did not swell up and die, they swung to the other extreme and called him a God. Two completely wrong conclusions, back to back.

People will misjudge you. They will assign motives to you that are not yours. They will put you on a pedestal one moment and tear you down the next. And if you are not careful, you will start building your sense of worth on their applause or shrinking under their criticism.

The real danger after a bite is not the wound itself. It is letting the wound become the thing that defines you. When we hold onto the hurt, rehearse the offense, and let it shape how we see ourselves and others, we are still carrying the snake long after it has let go.

Paul shook it off. Not because the bite did not hurt, but because he knew where God was leading Him and He refused to let a snake have the final word.

Your identity is not found in what people say about you, good or bad. It is found in what God says about you. And He says you are His, you are called, and you are not finished yet.

Bible Verse

"When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, 'No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.'" - Acts 28:4

Reflection Question

Is there a wound or a label someone placed on you that you have been carrying as part of your identity instead of releasing it to God?

Quote

"Don't let the bite become your identity. You must shake off the bites."

Prayer

God, help me to shake off the words and wounds that have tried to define me. Remind me that my identity is rooted in You alone. Amen.

Day 4: The Cross Is the Antivenom

Devotional

A snakebite left untreated does not stay the same. The poison spreads. What starts as a wound in one place eventually affects everything. Bitterness works the same way. A hurt that is not brought to the cross has a way of quietly poisoning your relationships, your joy, and your willingness to keep serving.

In Numbers 21, the Israelites were dying from snake bites in the wilderness. God told Moses to lift up a bronze serpent on a pole. Anyone who looked at it would live. It was a strange remedy, but it worked. Centuries later, Jesus pointed back to that moment and said He would be lifted up in the same way, so that everyone who trusts in Him would not perish.

The cross is not just the starting point of your faith. It is the place you return to when the poison of hurt, betrayal, or bitterness starts to spread. You do not need new circumstances to heal. You do not need the person who hurt you to apologize. You need the cross.

The scars you carry can stop being reminders of what was done to you and start becoming reminders of how God heals. That is not a small thing. That is the Gospel doing its deepest work in you.

Bible Verse

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." - John 3:14-15

Reflection Question

Is there a specific hurt or bitterness in your life that you have been trying to heal on your own instead of bringing it to the cross?

Quote

"The cross becomes the anti venom for sin's poison in your life."

Prayer

Jesus, I bring the poison of my hurt and bitterness to You today. Heal what I cannot heal on my own, and let my scars become a testimony of Your grace. Amen.

Day 5: The Gospel Keeps Going

Devotional

Three months after washing up on Malta with nothing, Paul and the other survivors left the island with provisions, friendships, and restored hope. What looked like a catastrophic ending turned out to be a doorway to one of the most fruitful seasons of ministry in Paul's life.

The shipwreck was not the end. The snakebite was not the end. The false accusations were not the end. At every point where it looked like the story was over, God was simply turning the page.

Paul could have quit after the storm. He could have quit after the bite. He could have let the opinions of the crowd, whether they called him a murderer or a God, pull Him off course. But he kept his eyes on the mission, and because he did, an entire island experienced healing and heard the Gospel.

You may be in a season that feels like a shipwreck. The circumstances may look like a disaster. But what if this is not the end of your story? What if God is using this moment to redirect you toward something you could not have reached any other way?

Do not bow out. Do not quit because of a bite. The Gospel kept going in Paul's life, and it can keep going in yours too. God is not done with you.

Bible Verse

"He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance." - Acts 28:30

Reflection Question

What would it look like to stop viewing your current hardship as the end of your story and start asking God how He might be redirecting you toward something greater?

Quote

"God is not done with me. What you see as a disaster may just be God's direction in my life toward a new opportunity of ministry."

Prayer

Lord, help me to trust that You are not finished with me. Give me the courage to keep going, and use every hard season to advance Your purposes in my life. Amen.