



11.6 Taking a Stand

the big idea:
Paul before
King Agrippa

Henry had a great deal of “head knowledge” about the Bible. He’d been in church practically since the day he was born. He could quote several Scriptures. He knew every single Bible story. He could even name all the books of the Bible in order.

However, when Henry had the opportunity to go to youth camp one summer, his “head knowledge” was transformed into “heart knowledge.” He couldn’t wait to get back to school. He wanted to tell his friends about the changes that had taken place.

Henry’s excitement quickly gave way to fear. When he reported to the school for two-a-days, there was a new lineman on the team. This guy

was a little different than everyone else. He was very open about his faith, directing every conversation back to God. The other boys started calling him “Rev,” and though he seemed honored by his new moniker, Henry knew the other guys were really just making fun.

Henry wasn’t sure what to do. He wanted to stand up for Rev since they shared the same faith. However, because he didn’t want to risk being made fun of too, Henry kept his mouth closed.

It didn’t take long for Rev to realize the other guys on the team weren’t his friends. Henry felt bad about that. Even though he never joined the rest of the guys in making fun of Rev, he never did anything to stop them.

from your Bible

Acts 26:19–32, NIV—“So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.²⁰ First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds.²¹ That is why some Jews seized me in the

temple courts and tried to kill me.²² But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—²³ that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”²⁴ At this point Festus interrupted Paul’s defense. “You are out of your mind, Paul!” he shouted.

"Your great learning is driving you insane."²⁵ **"I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable."**²⁶ The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."²⁸ Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"²⁹ Paul replied, "Short

time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."³⁰ The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them.³¹ After they left the room, they began saying to one another, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment."³² Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

Scripture discussion

The Apostle Paul had an interesting faith journey. He started out persecuting the church, but after an encounter with God, Paul was an outspoken leader for Christ. Because he'd been on both sides of the debate, Paul had no doubt been called a great deal of things. However, this passage of Scripture records possibly the first time Paul was referred to as crazy (out of his mind). Some were offended by Paul's message and had him arrested. None of that mat-

tered to Paul. He still chose to stand for what he believed, even if it cost him his very life.

It is difficult to stand by our convictions when other people think we are crazy. Paul was confident that he spoke the truth, so he did not back down from sharing the story of his faith in Christ. Henry's response was the exact opposite of Paul's response. Though Henry was initially excited about sharing the story of his faith in Christ, the fact that his friends did not respond kindly to a stranger's profession of faith caused Henry to hide rather than take a stand.

make it real



check it

1. How do you think Henry would describe the difference between "head knowledge" and "heart knowledge?"
2. Why was Henry excited about going back to school?
3. What caused Henry to change his mind?



think it

1. Why did some of the Jews try to kill Paul? (Acts 26:20-21)
2. Explain why Festus thought Paul was out of his mind. (vv. 23-24)
3. What was Paul's prayer for his audience? (v. 29)



do it

It is time for you to have courage to stand for truth. Write a letter, thanking God for the opportunity to be a witness for truth.



keep it

"I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable" (Acts 26:25, NIV).

11.13 Action vs. Reaction

the big idea: Paul Sails for Rome



Melody came home from cheerleading practice to find her twin sister, Marissa, crying and pacing back and forth.

"I don't know what to do!" Marissa yelled, pacing back and forth. "Mom and Dad are gonna kill me!"

Melody refrained from rolling her eyes. "Hold up. Mom and Dad aren't going to kill anyone ... I think. What happened?"

"I can't find Buster!"

Buster was the family dog—an energetic beagle. The girls' parents gave Buster to them as a present in hopes of teaching them responsibility.

"When did you last see him?" Melody asked.

"I don't remember!" Marissa snapped. She clutched her head and groaned. "He's probably been dognapped! I bet that cranky Mrs. McCluskey on the corner took him. She hates anything with fur. I'm gonna march right over there and give her a piece of my mind!"

"Wait a minute," Marissa said. "Before you go off, I suggest you calm down. You can't just brand Mrs. McCluskey as Cruella de Vil. Buster probably got out through the backyard somehow. I'll call the neighbors and ask if anyone has seen him. Grab your cell phone and walk around the block in case he's nearby. Meet back here and we'll take it from there."

from your Bible

Acts 27:1–2, 33–44, NIV—When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment.² We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.³³ Just

before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything."³⁴ Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head."³⁵ 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.³⁷ Altogether there were 276 of us on

board.³⁸ When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.³⁹ When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could.⁴⁰ 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.**

Scripture discussion

Today's Scripture passage finds Paul being held captive with many other prisoners. They are being sent to Rome on a ship. Many of the captives were so discouraged they refused to eat. They didn't see the point. Paul urged them to eat and keep the faith. He gave thanks to God for the food—even in their dire situation—and the others followed his example. Turns out, God was protecting them all along. When the soldiers eventually decided to kill Paul and

the prisoners, a centurion prevented them and allowed the prisoners to swim to shore safely. Even in the darkest situations, God is with His children. Never lose hope; never lose faith.

During times of crisis, our panic can lead us to behave irrationally. Paul's confidence in God's faithfulness enabled him to act calmly and assure all the ship's passengers they would survive the storm. In today's story, Marissa did not act calmly. Instead of taking action, she reacted—even overreacted. Melody, on the other hand, kept her wits and approached the situation differently.

make it real



check it

1. Why was Marissa in a panic?
2. What was Melody's reaction to the situation?
3. How did Marissa's reaction make the situation worse?



think it

1. What is the significance of Paul urging everyone to eat? (Acts 27:33–34)?
2. What effect did it have on the others when Paul gave thanks to God for the bread and then ate it? (vv. 35–36)
3. Why did the centurion want to spare Paul's life? (v. 43)



do it

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keep it

"The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely" (Acts 27:44, NIV).