



11.20 Character Revealed

the big idea: Paul Ministers
in Malta

Jerome and Lucas played on their high school basketball team at an inner-city Christian school. Their team was playing for the championship in the city's Thanksgiving Tournament, and the gymnasium was packed.

The opposing team played rough, with lots of pushing and shoving. The referees barely made any calls against them, which frustrated Jerome and Lucas. Some of the players on the opposing team were talking trash and mocking Jerome and Lucas' team for being Christian. Jerome ignored the negativity and played harder, while Lucas tried to control his temper.

In the third quarter, Lucas went up for a rebound and got intentionally knocked to the floor by an opposing player, who also made a derogatory comment to Lucas. The referees didn't make a call, and Lucas snapped. He charged the player and yelled in his face. Jerome pulled him off and the referees called a technical foul on Lucas.

Lucas slammed the ball down and headed toward the bench. Jerome retrieved the ball and handed it to the referee. Later in the game, the same opposing player and Jerome dived for a loose ball. After the refs blew their whistles, Jerome extended a hand to the player and helped him up.

from your Bible

Acts 28:1–10, NIV—Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. ²The islanders showed

us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. ³Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. ⁴When the is-

landers saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live."⁵ But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects.⁶ The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.⁷ There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the

island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days.⁸ **His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him.**⁹ When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.¹⁰ They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

Scripture discussion

In today's passage, Paul finds himself in Malta, where he ends up being bitten by a snake and healing others. The focus is not so much on what Paul does, but on what happens as a result of what he does. He prays for and heals several people. Even while he was still a prisoner, he served others. Actions have consequences. Good actions have good conse-

quences. Through his actions, Paul revealed his character and the awesome God he served. We can tell something about people's characters by observing how they respond in difficult situations. In today's story, were people able to witness something extraordinary in Lucas? How about in Jerome? Our character and our faith are revealed throughout our daily lives by what we say and do. We are representatives of Christ wherever we go.

make it real



check it

1. What sort of example did Lucas set during the game?
2. How should Lucas have acted instead? Were his actions justified?
3. What sort of example did Jerome set during the game?
4. What did Jerome do right and what did Lucas do wrong?
5. What do you think viewers thought when they saw a player from the Christian team lose his cool?



think it

1. How did people first respond to Paul being bitten by a snake? (Acts 27:4)?
2. What did they think after Paul threw the snake into the fire? (v. 6)
3. What happened after Paul prayed for and healed the man and others? (v. 10)



do it

Go to any social media outlets you use and review your content. Challenge yourself evaluate your posts, what you follow and like, and how you interact with others. Find ways to be a better witness to others online.



keep it

"His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him" (Acts 28:8, NIV).

11.27 Keep Sharing

the big idea: Paul Evangelizes in Rome



Angie and Tyler, along with the rest of their youth group, were participating in a community outreach program. Each weekend, the group would do maintenance and chores around the house of someone in need. Often, the people in need were unresponsive to the students when they attempted to share the message of Christ with them, while others were more receptive. Sometimes people were downright rude, which irritated Angie.

"I don't get it," Angie said. "Why are we even here if people won't listen to us?"

"Not everyone we help will come to Christ," Tyler said, "but everyone needs to hear His message."

"It's just frustrating," Angie said. "We know what they need, and they don't realize it. We can shout it and wave it in front of their faces, and they don't care. They don't even understand why we are here to help them."

"Don't give up," Tyler said. "If we quit now, just think of all the people who won't hear about Jesus. And we are planting seeds. Not everyone may come to Christ immediately, but they may later on down the road. We just never know."

from your Bible

Acts 28:23–31, NIV—They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to

the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus.²⁴ Some

were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. ²⁵ They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: ²⁶ “Go to this people and say, “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.” ²⁷ For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears,

understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’ ²⁸ **“Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!”** ²⁹ After he said this, the Jews left, arguing vigorously among themselves. ³⁰ For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. ³¹ He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

Scripture discussion

In today’s Scripture passage, Paul is under house arrest in Rome, even though he did not commit any crimes. Although Paul found himself in a discouraging situation, he continued to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ. People came to visit Paul and hear his teaching. Some people believed what he had to say while others did not. Regardless of the doubters, Paul continued to preach the truth of Jesus Christ.

He did not become discouraged and give up. He was making a real difference, even though not everyone believed what he professed.

Today’s story featured a girl named Angie who was struggling with the fact that not everyone she witnessed to became a follower of Christ. She began to question the purpose of witnessing. Her situation was similar to Paul’s in some regards but different in others. Angie’s life situation was not as difficult as Paul’s, and yet she was discouraged more than Paul.

make it real



check it

1. What was Angie’s problem in today’s story?
2. Why was Angie discouraged?
3. How did Tyler, encourage Angie?



think it

1. What was Paul declaring to the people? (Acts 28:23)
2. What did Paul say to those who did not believe him? (vv. 26–28)
3. How did Paul preach to the people? (v. 31)



do it

As a class, organize a time to go out into the community and witness to others. This may involve raking leaves, shoveling snow, singing Christmas carols, or visiting the elderly. Work with your teacher to pick a date, activity, and location. Remember: don’t get discouraged if not everyone responds positively to your Christian faith.



keep it

“Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” (Acts 28:28, NIV).