

Becoming A Person Of Influence **Acts 28:1-10**

Introduction:

1. The apostle Paul was on his way to Rome to stand trial before Caesar. In chapter 27, we learned how Paul and over 200 other passengers encountered a terrible storm at sea. Although the ship was completely torn apart, all the people made it safely to land. 27:44
2. They ended up on the island of Melita (modern-day Malta). One of the northern inlets of the island is called St. Paul's Bay, because tradition says that this is where the shipwreck occurred. They remained there for three months. 28:1, 11
3. Although Paul had never met these people previously, in only three months Paul became quite an influence on these island people. This is clear from the text, but also history.
 - Supposedly Christianity abounded on this island for a number of centuries after Paul's visit.
4. There are people of influence in government, politics, business, sports, and entertainment. But a Christian should influence people towards Jesus Christ. Paul did so and so should we. This is God's plan. Wherever you are and in whatever you do.
 - We do influence people whether we realize it or not, but is it for Jesus?
5. Do we wield much influence with those around us for Jesus Christ? Was there a person who influenced you for Christ? You can do the same! How can you become a person of influence for Jesus Christ? Let's look into this text and learn from the apostle Paul.

First, by possessing a servant's heart – vs. 1-3

1. These island people were very kind and gracious to Paul and the others. vs. 2
2. In verse 3, we see Paul gathering a bundle of sticks for the fire.
 - Though Paul had become very prominent on the ship, he still was humble enough to do the lowly task of gathering sticks.
 - He didn't expect the people of Melita to do it, or some of the other prisoners from the ship. He possessed the heart of a servant.
3. This principle contradicts the thinking of many people. Some believe that you must flex your own muscles, toot your own horn, and build yourself up in the eyes of others if you are to possess great influence.
4. But this is not the way of Christ. Jesus Christ has exercised more influence over this earth than any other man who ever lived, yet notice the instruction He gives to His disciples in Matthew 20:26-28.

Second, by understanding that trials often increase our influence – vs. 3

1. While Paul is performing a good deed, a tragic incident occurs. A venomous snake, which must have been in his bundle of wood, attacks Paul and strikes him on the hand.
2. There is no record that Paul became distraught or distressed. He simply flings the beast into the fire. vs. 5
3. Paul was doing a good deed, yet he was attacked and bitten by a poisonous snake. Many Christians have a difficult time understanding why they encounter affliction while trying to do good. This is life. This is the earth we live on that is under the curse of sin.
4. But, as was the case here, trials (coupled with our godly response) often increase our influence for Jesus Christ.
 - When Paul didn't die from this deadly snake bite, the people realized there was something special about Paul. What an open door to influence these people for Jesus.
 - Paul went from being a prisoner (a nobody) to being the most notable man on the island **because** of this trial. He now had a platform to speak for Christ!
5. How often God can use our afflictions to enlarge our work for Him, to open up doors that otherwise would have remained closed, and to reach more people for Christ!