

Protect The Vessel

Conversation Starters

You're sailing to an island, but your ship goes down. Before you're rescued, would you rather have to: tread water for an hour; be on a piece of floating wood for a day; or be in a full-sized lifeboat with food and water for two days?

How long could you go without a phone case before breaking/cracking your phone?

You have to spend 24 hours with one of your hands stuck in the position of either a finger pointing or open-handed (all fingers completely extended). Which hand and which position do you choose?

Review

Ask eGroup members to share their favorite points from the sermon, what spoke to them, a phrase or moment from the sermon they related to the most, or questions they have. If members have a hard time recalling the sermon, talk through your notes and share your favorite points.

Make It Personal

- What's something you own or something about yourself that you're really protective of? (*e.g., phone, car, reputation, house, your preferences, health, etc.*) Why?
- Read Acts 27:21-26. Paul's boat broke, but what Paul was carrying was far more important than what was carrying him. We often spend more time protecting things that can be replaced than protecting the things that really matter. Talk about some ways you see that playing out in your own life and why we might let this happen.

(What important things are you carrying with you? What vessels do you need to protect and be more careful about? How do you need to let go of the boat?)

- Pointing kills, but hands heal. What are some areas of your life where it's easy for you to point a finger? *(Or areas where you're tempted to point a finger?)* How have you been pointing a finger lately? *(At others? At yourself? At God? Is there a situation you're in that you're blaming someone for?)*
- **Go deeper.** Read Acts 28:7-9. Because Paul prayed before he put his hands on Publius' father, it's clear that God did the healing — Paul was simply making himself ready and available for God to work through him. How does Paul's attitude and approach challenge you? *(Example: If you've been pointing a finger by blaming someone, could you pray like Paul and ask for God's presence and healing before you deal with them?)*
- Where in your life are you able to be a healing hand? Share about a recent way you were able to "take someone's hand" and help bring healing, or talk about how you want to extend a healing hand to someone after hearing this message.
- Paul healed with both hands — his good one AND the hurt one. How can you use your hurts *(or your struggles)* to help heal someone else? *(What can God do through what was done to you? How has someone used their hurts to help you?)*
- What does "protect the vessel" mean to you? Talk about how "the vessel" is impacted when you point fingers or focus on having healing hands.
- Read Acts 28:1-5. Paul shook the snake off instead of holding onto what was hurting him. What do you need to shake off in this season? *(Are you holding on to something unhealthy? Think about how pointing a finger might be affecting you — has it caused things like arrogance, anger, bitterness, or self-pity? How can shaking that thing off help you protect the vessel?)*

Act On It

We protect our vessel through prayer. Challenge your prayer life this week and ask God to help you put this message into practice. You could select people to have the whole group pray for each day, split into smaller groups or pairs to pray for each other through the week, or do a devotional on prayer together.

Prayer Requests And Prayer

Ask eGroup members to share any prayer requests they have. Record any notes or prayer requests to pray for members during the week.

Father, thank You for always choosing to offer Your hand rather than point a finger. Help us show that same grace and love to everyone — including ourselves — so we can be the hands of healing You designed us to be. Let living with healing hands keep us constantly reminded to protect what matters. In Jesus' name, amen.