



Don't Sweat the Small Stuff | Doug Wekenman | 03.13.22

Weekly Study

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

What's one interesting thing about yourself no one really knows?

SHARE

Welcome back! This week Doug continued our series by addressing the small things that tend to get in the way of the bigger picture. There's a difference between a shipwreck and snake bite in our lives. Shipwrecks are inevitable on this side of eternity and the ship may sink, but God will always get us to shore. Snake bites are also inevitable in this life, and they'll sting, but if left unattended the venom will eventually poison the rest of our body. We don't have to be offended by the offenses because of Jesus and what God says about us. We are free to bandage the snake bite and keep walking forth in our purpose.

What is an example of something small you tend to sweat? What would it look like for you to let that go?

GROW

Read Acts 28:3-5

What's significant about Paul's response to both the snake and the islanders' accusation of him of being a murderer?

Reflect on Doug's message correlating with this passage. What can we learn from Paul's response?

While the islanders were accusing Paul of being a murderer, he was preoccupied with removing a snake off his body. What can we learn from Paul's nonchalant response to this entire scenario? As Doug put it, shake it off. Shake off the offense that's biting you that could eventually lead to poisoning your entire self. Paul was an ex-Christian murderer, so the islanders accusing him of his past should rattle him, right? Why didn't it? Because when we know who's we are, we don't have to depend on the fleeting and fickle opinions of man. The islanders went from accusing Paul of murder to praising him as a god once they saw him rid the snake off himself.

Our identity in Christ sets us free from offense to keep carrying on. The bites will sting, and the accusations will hurt, but when you know who God says you are, you can shake it off. The cross was the greatest offense of all. Murdering Jesus over false accusations, yet Jesus prayed for his accusers as he carried the cross to calvary to die for even those who hated him. Because of the cross, we can live offense free and poison-less, propelling us to see clearer the larger picture over our snake bites.

What's one offense that you need to let go and give to God?

Who's one person in that offense you can be praying for this week?

M O V E

Read John 15:16

What snake bite has been lingering over you that you need to shake off this week?

How different would your life look and be if you left that offense at the cross?

Do you believe that God has a specific plan and purpose for your life? He has gifted you with passions, burdens, skills and more that can be harnessed for the glory of God and the benefit of other people. You did not choose your purpose - God did. And the one who chose you will

be faithful to complete everything He has intended for you. Jesus has given us a mission to take the gospel not only to our city, but to the ends of the earth, and we do not have time to be distracted or derailed by snake bites. We know that Paul faced a lot of persecution during these times, but he is an example to us of what it looks like to remain faithful to the mission that Jesus had for him. He remained faithful to the gospel of Christ regardless of what other people said against him. He didn't allow the sting of the snake bites or the court of public opinion derail him; instead, he used the very thing that was injured and in pain to heal other people.

What sort of healing could God bring about through your life to other people as you shake off the snake bites and keep your focus fixed on Him?

One simple way to shake off the sting of snake bites is through the practice of gratitude. Being thankful changes our minds and hearts, even if our circumstances don't change right away. When we recall the faithfulness of God and how He has never failed us, it helps us trust him with what concerns us about our present and future. With this truth we are given strength and confidence to walk forward in all that God has planned and purposed for our lives.

Reflecting on the first question of this section, take some time to help strengthen each other.

What does God have to say in His word about the situation you are needing to shake off?

Reflect on God's faithfulness in your life. How can remembering those times remind you of what is true?

P R A Y

We need prayer now more than ever. Spend some time-sharing prayer requests. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking off into two separate groups (or calls if you are an online group) to share more freely.

T O G O

“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.” 1 Peter 2:1