

# Shake it Off



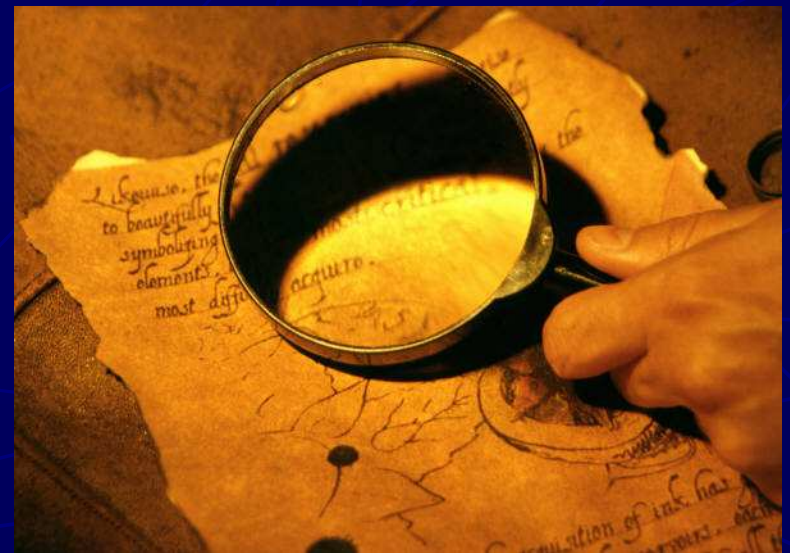
# Apostle Paul on the Island of Malta

- ▶ Possibly unfamiliar but reflective of VBS
  - Adventurous
  - Clearly shows the power of God
- ▶ Clarity of message may cause us to miss the deeper meaning



# But We Need to Look Closer

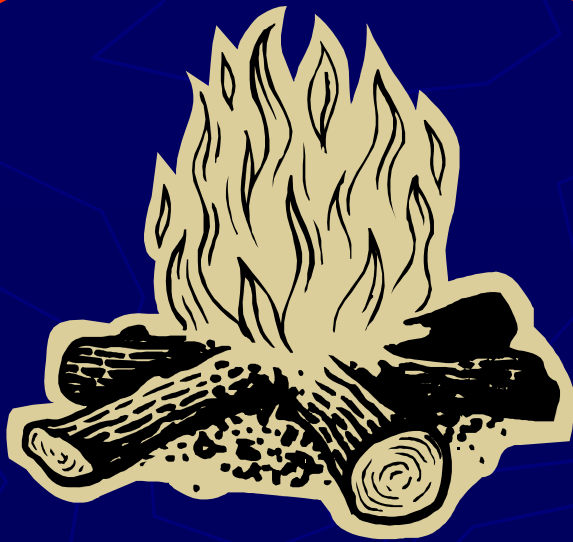
- ▶ Multilayered review helps us to
  - Identify personal meaning
  - Consider personal application for our lives
  - Recognize that the word is for us



# Deeper Meaning of Fire



# Power Predicated on Proximity



# Too Far From the Fire

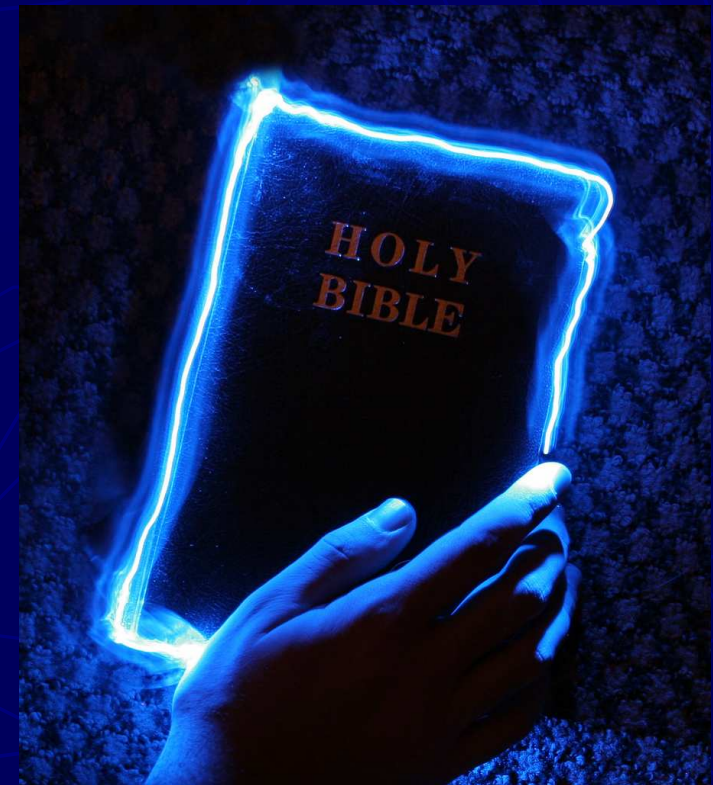
- ▶ If you are too far removed from God, our source
  - We are not warmed by His fire
  - We do not feel the benefits first hand
  - We become spectators



# Too Far from the Fire

## ▶ But there is another drawback

- If we are too far from the fire, we cannot draw from the power source for ministry
- We minister instead from our own resources
- We set ourselves up for burnout



# Draw from the Source

- ▶ You have to draw from the source and supply that never runs dry
- ▶ So you've got to get close to the source



# Flame Out

- ▶ Over time, our flame will wane
  - God hasn't changed – He remains the same
  - But what used to move us, is no longer effective
  - We need more to stir up the gift within us



# We Need a Little Wood

- ▶ When Paul saw the fire burning down, he reached for more wood.
- ▶ Maybe we need to reach for a little more wood
  - More study
  - More prayer
  - More meditation
  - More service



# Conspiring Forces

- ▶ No sooner than you add a little wood, forces conspire to keep you separated from God's power
- ▶ As Paul reaches to add more wood, a viper attaches to his wrist



# Snake Bites

- ▶ You offer your services only to be told, “We want to use someone else”.
- ▶ Your replacement on a Board or Committee is better appreciated.
- ▶ You feel like what you offered wasn't good enough.
- ▶ You do your best, but your best isn't recognized.



# Paul's Response

- ▶ When Paul was bitten by the snake, it was thought that it was a judgment
- ▶ The people intently watched Paul and expected him to
  - Swell
  - Turn purple
  - Die



# People Are Watching Us Too

- ▶ If your offering is not accepted, will you throw a tantrum?
- ▶ If someone else is perceived as doing a better job, will you quit?
- ▶ If you don't get your way, will you take your ball and go home?



# Not Just for VBS

## ▶ This word is for us

- We need to come close to the fire that has been kindled and extended for us.
- We need to be near the fire to access its power
- We need to recognize that the fire will burn down
- But as we add wood to the fire, "snake bites" will conspire to thwart our efforts
- So we have to shake it off because people are watching

# God is watching and asking...

- ▶ Can you shake it off?
  - So that I count on you for the long haul?
  - So that I count on you for the battle?
  - So that I can use you for my purposes?



# Shake It Off

- ▶ Paul shook off the snake and was used as an instrument of healing
- ▶ What about you?
  - Maybe God has a greater work for you
  - But only if you can shake off that which tries to hold you back and persevere for God's purposes

