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Dear Partners in Ministry:

You have just finished dinner on a week night. You hear the gate on your veranda clank as it slams shut and a young man comes to your kitchen window with the news that one of your co-workers has just been bitten by a highly venomous snake. You drop what you're doing, grab your "zapper" and head outside. You find your co-worker sitting on a bench with a piece of vine tied around his leg cursing and crying and praying. He's visibly upset not just because he has been bitten by a sub-species of death adder (it is called a "death adder" for a reason), but also that he's the fourth person this week to be bitten. The Garia mind immediately is drawn to the "why" of the situation, not the what. The Western mind is drawn to the "what" and how to fix it. Your co-worker starts talking to you about his fears. You quickly assess that there are five possibilities as he rattles off a few of them:

1. "God sent this snake to kill me because I've had a bad attitude about meeting in the evening and haven't sorted out the matter with the other guys."
2. "Satan hates us for translating God's Word, because he's jealous, and wants the program to be destroyed."
3. (From the Western Mind): It was just a coincidence—you were at the wrong place at the wrong time.
4. (From the Christian Western Mind): God allowed this to happen so that his name might be glorified before the eyes of all the Garia people.
5. All of the above.

At one place or another in the testimony of Scripture, one can find examples of each of these scenarios. But, not to worry at the moment, your mind is drawn to the situation at hand. You know that if you see swelling begin, if you can't stop it, it will reach your co-worker's heart and he will die in front of you. So, you maybe don't curse, but you certainly pray, pray, pray. You speak calmly to him, "Jesus knows you've been bitten. Jesus loves you and has not left you. These spirits your people worship—they are jealous for you and they are watching to see what will happen—Ephesians teaches us that. They want you, but God wants you more. Hold still, I'm going to zap you with electricity. It will hurt a bit, but it will help dissolve the poison. . . It didn't hurt that much! The Father loves you. He teaches us to pray for healing. He teaches us to anoint the sick with oil and call the elders of the church to pray for healing. Another zap, brother, there now, that wasn't so bad? Take the ice off . . . This oil represents the Holy Spirit, God is the healer, not these other spirits that lie to you. They serve the one whom the book of John talks about who only wants to steal and kill and destroy." You go on interspersing prayer with Scripture reading, other Christians lay hands on the co-worker.

In the end, the co-worker suffers no affects of the venom. No swelling. No unconsciousness. No heart attack. He survives, completely unaffected. He doesn't even have a limp.

This was our week last week. The co-worker lives at Garia village and his name is Stanley. God did something remarkable before the eyes of the folks here. There were a lot of folks in church that do not normally come the following Sunday. *Pray that God will use this event to change Stanley's heart to reflect God's character and that he will use it to transform the hearts of many other Somau Garia people as they reflect on God's power, love, and desire to help them in their daily life.*

Offer up praise to God that he is working well beyond what we could ask or imagine.

Serving You for Jesus' Sake,

Todd, Angela & kids