SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Acts 18

Do Not Be Afraid; Go On Speaking — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

In a hard city Paul works with his hands, keeps speaking when he is afraid, and stays to make disciples, because the Lord is with him and has many people there. Then two tentmakers show me what it looks like to take a gifted brother aside and help him know Jesus more accurately.

00 The Text

ACTS 18 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth.

2 And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them,

3 and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers.

4 And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

6 But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

7 Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue.

8 Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.

9 And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent;

10 for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city."

11 And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat,

13 saying, "This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law."

14 But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you;

15 but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves;
I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters."

16 And he drove them away from the judgment seat.

17 And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and began beating him in front of the judgment seat. But Gallio was not concerned about any of these things.

18 Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow.

19 They came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent,

21 but taking leave of them and saying, "I will return to you again if God wills," he set sail from Ephesus.

22 When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch.

23 And having spent some time there, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

24 Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.

25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;

26 and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

27 And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace,

28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Marked in the text

- **v2** "because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome" — Time / place / contrast
- **v3** "by trade they were tent-makers" — Time / place / contrast
- **v5** "Paul began devoting himself completely to the word" — Command / instruction
- **v5** "Jesus was the Christ" — God — His character & actions
- **v6** "they resisted and blasphemed" — Sin / warning
- **v6** "Your blood be on your own heads" — Sin / warning
- **v6** "From now on I will go to the Gentiles" — Time / place / contrast
- **v8** "believed in the Lord with all his household" — Promise / blessing
- **v9** "Do not be afraid any longer" — Command / instruction
- **v9** "go on speaking and do not be silent" — Command / instruction
- **v10** "I am with you" — Promise / blessing
- **v10** "I have many people in this city" — Promise / blessing
- **v11** "a year and six months" — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** "teaching the word of God among them" — Command / instruction
- **v13** "contrary to the law" — Sin / warning
- **v15** "I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters" — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** "Gallio was not concerned about any of these things" — Sin / warning
- **v18** "he was keeping a vow" — Time / place / contrast
- **v21** "I will return to you again if God wills" — God — His character & actions
- **v23** "strengthening all the disciples" — Command / instruction
- **v24** "he was mighty in the Scriptures" — Promise / blessing
- **v25** "being fervent in spirit" — Command / instruction
- **v25** "being acquainted only with the baptism of John" — Time / place / contrast
- **v26** "explained to him the way of God more accurately" — Command / instruction
- **v27** "those who had believed through grace" — God — His character & actions
- **v27** "believed through grace" — God — His character & actions
- **v28** "demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" — God — His character & actions
- **v4** "synagogue" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v12** "judgment seat" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

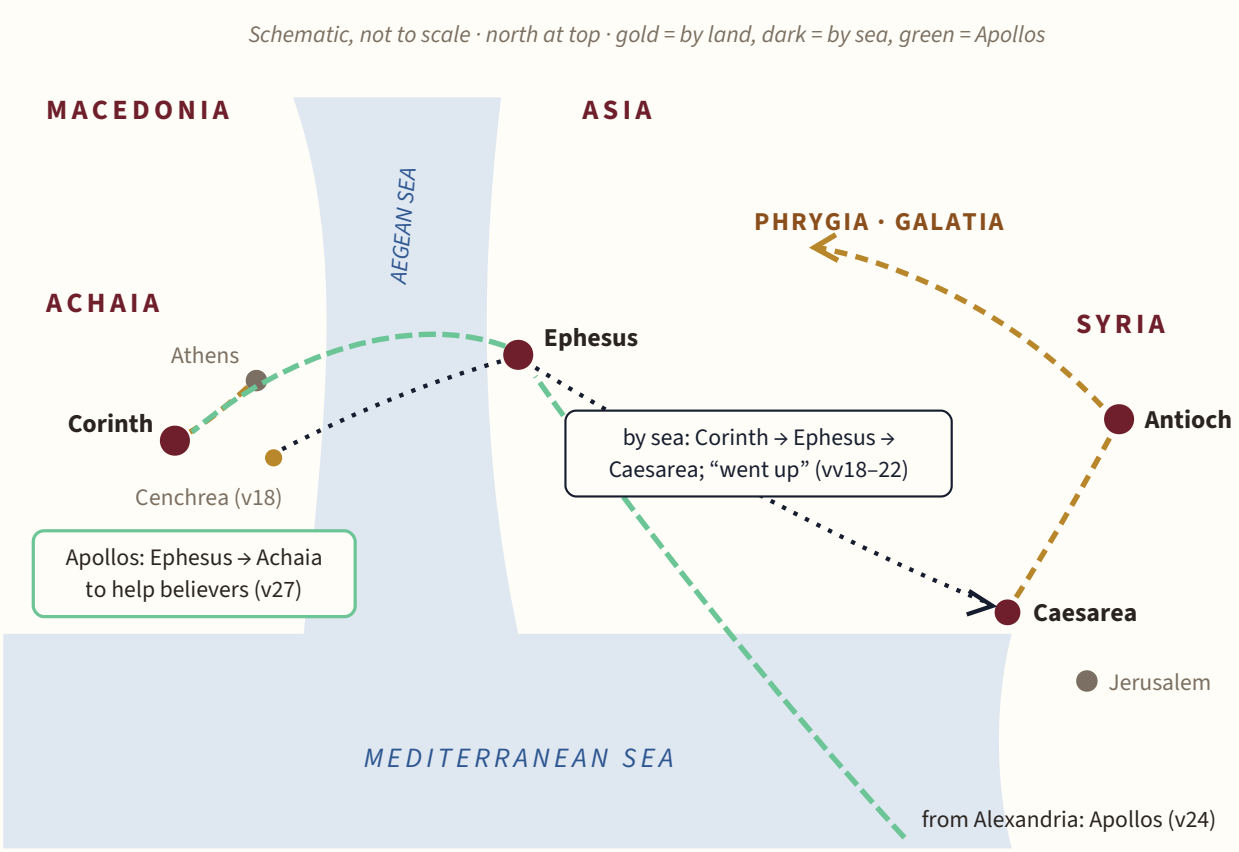
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 18:4

"And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks."

FIGURE · CORINTH TO ANTIOCH AND BACK



Trace Paul from Athens to Corinth, by sea to Ephesus and Caesarea, by land to Antioch and out to Galatia and Phrygia; the green line follows Apollos from Alexandria to Ephesus and on to Achaia.

Setting. Paul leaves Athens for Corinth (v1), finds Aquila and Priscilla, newly expelled from Rome under Claudius, and works with them as a tentmaker (vv2–3). He reasons in the synagogue every Sabbath (v4). After Silas and Timothy arrive from Macedonia, the synagogue resists, and Paul moves next door to the house of Titius Justus (vv5–7). Crispus believes (v8); the Lord speaks in a night vision (vv9–10); Paul stays eighteen months (v11). The Jews bring him before Gallio, who dismisses the case (vv12–17). Paul sails with Priscilla and Aquila to Ephesus, then on to Caesarea and Antioch, and sets out through Galatia and Phrygia (vv18–23). Apollos arrives in Ephesus, is taught by Priscilla and Aquila, and goes to Achaia (vv24–28).

Structure:

- vv1–4 — **tentmakers:** Athens to Corinth (v1); Aquila of Pontus and Priscilla, from Italy — Claudius's edict (v2); the same trade, staying and working together (v3); reasoning every Sabbath, persuading Jews and Greeks (v4).
- vv5–8 — **the break:** Silas and Timothy come; Paul devotes himself to the word, testifying that Jesus was the Christ (v5); they resist and blaspheme — "Your blood be on your own heads! … I will go to the Gentiles" (v6); the house of Titius Justus, next to the synagogue (v7); Crispus and his household believe; many Corinthians believe and are baptized (v8).
- vv9–11 — **the vision:** "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking" (v9); "I am with you … I have many people in this city" (v10); a year and six months, teaching the word of God (v11).
- vv12–17 — **Gallio:** the Jews rise up and bring Paul to the judgment seat (v12); "contrary to the law" (v13); Gallio: not a matter of wrong or crime but of "words and names and your own law" (vv14–15); driven from the judgment seat (v16); Sosthenes beaten; "Gallio was not concerned about any of these things" (v17).
- vv18–23 — **the loop:** many days more; sails for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila; hair cut at Cenchrea, a vow (v18); Ephesus — the synagogue; asked to stay, he declines (vv19–20); "I will return to you again if God wills" (v21); Caesarea, the church, Antioch (v22); Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples (v23).
- vv24–28 — **Apollos:** an Alexandrian Jew, eloquent, mighty in the Scriptures (v24); instructed, fervent, accurate, knowing only John's baptism (v25); bold in the synagogue; Priscilla and Aquila take him aside and explain the way of God more accurately (v26); the brethren write; he greatly helps those who believed through grace (v27); he powerfully refutes the Jews, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (v28).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "Jews / Jew" ×10 — vv2 (×2), 4, 5, 12, 14 (×2), 19, 24, 28.
- "synagogue" ×6 — vv4, 7, 8, 17, 19, 26; "leader of the synagogue" ×2 — vv8, 17.
- "God" ×5 — vv7, 11, 13, 21, 26; "Lord" ×3 — vv8, 9, 25.
- "came / come" ×5 — vv2 (×2), 5, 19, 24; "left" ×4 — vv1, 7, 19, 23; "went" ×4 — vv1, 7, 22 (×2).
- "Paul" ×5 — vv5, 9, 12, 14, 18.
- "judgment seat" ×3 — vv12, 16, 17; "Gallio" ×3 — vv12, 14, 17.
- "Priscilla" ×3 and "Aquila" ×3 — vv2, 18, 26.
- "Ephesus" ×3 — vv19, 21, 24.
- "believed / believing" ×3 — vv8 (×2), 27.
- "Jesus" ×3 — vv5, 25, 28; "Christ" ×2 — vv5, 28 ("Jesus was the Christ" both times).
- "house / household" ×3 — vv7 (×2), 8.
- "speaking / speak" ×3 — vv9, 25, 26.
- "Scriptures" ×2 — vv24, 28; "word" ×2 — vv5, 11; "teaching" ×2 — vv11, 25.
- "accurately" ×2 — vv25, 26; "law" ×2 — vv13, 15; "Achaia" ×2 — vv12, 27; "brethren" ×2 — vv18, 27; "disciples" ×2 — vv23, 27; "persuade(s)" ×2 — vv4, 13.

Contrasts: Rome expelling Jews ⟷ God placing them where Paul needs them (v2). Resisted and blasphemed ⟷ believed with all his household (vv6, 8). Afraid and silent ⟷ go on speaking (v9). No man will harm you ⟷ Sosthenes beaten (vv10, 17). Gallio's judgment seat refusing to judge ⟷ the judgment seat of Christ (vv12–16; 2 Cor 5:10). "Accurately" ⟷ "more accurately" (vv25–26). Eloquent man ⟷ two tentmakers teaching him (vv24, 26).

Shape of the chapter: a long stay (vv1–17) and a quick tour (vv18–23), then a new man on the stage (vv24–28). The center is the Lord's word in the night (vv9–10). Scripture brackets the chapter: Paul reasoning every Sabbath (v4) and Apollos "demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (v28).

Chapter theme (my words): The Lord keeps His frightened servants speaking by His presence and His purpose, protects His word through unlikely means, and spreads it through ordinary people — tentmakers, households, and one teachable preacher.

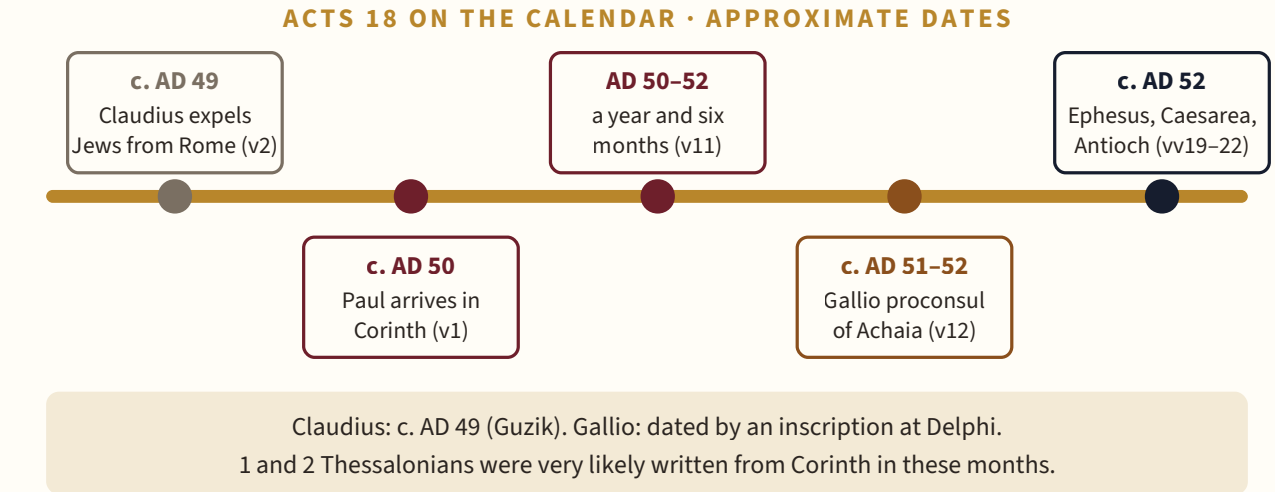
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 18:26

"and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately."

FIGURE · ACTS 18 ON THE CALENDAR



Two outside facts — Claudius's edict and Gallio's term — pin Paul's Corinth years to about AD 50–52; the dates are approximate.

Why did Paul make tents? So no one could say he preached for money (Guzik: "Paul's tentmaking was an important part of his ministry"). Henry: "he therefore maintained himself with his own labour that he might not make the gospel of Christ burdensome." The workbench also gave him Priscilla and Aquila — co-workers for life (Rom 16:3–4).

What changed when Silas and Timothy came? They brought news that the Thessalonians stood firm (Guzik), and very likely gifts from Macedonia (2 Cor 11:9). Paul "began devoting himself completely to the word" (v5). Henry: "more than before pressed in spirit, which made him more than ever pressing in his preaching."

Was "Your blood be on your own heads" harsh? It is Ezekiel's watchman language (Ezek 33:4): Paul had warned them, so he was clean. But it was not hatred. He moved next door, and the synagogue ruler believed (vv7–8). Henry: "Having given them over, yet he does not give over his work." Paul never stopped going "to the Jew first" in the next city (v19; Rom 1:16). God is not finished with Israel.

Why the vision? Because Paul was afraid (1 Cor 2:3). Spurgeon: "Even Paul was not without his tendency to fear." The Lord gave His presence ("I am with you"), His protection ("no man will attack you in order to harm you"), and

His purpose ("I have many people in this city"). Guzik: "This promise was the basis for God's command to not be afraid and to keep preaching."

Does election make evangelism pointless? The opposite. God's "many people" in Corinth were His before they believed, and they would be gathered by Paul's preaching. Spurgeon: "The purpose embraces the means for the carrying out of the purpose." Henry: they "must be called in by degrees, some by one sermon, others by another." The doctrine kept Paul in Corinth eighteen months (v11; Rom 10:14–15).

Was Gallio right or wrong? Both. Guzik: "He correctly saw that the government has no role in attempting to decide religious matters," and his ruling protected the gospel. Henry: he "would not meddle in it" — good; but letting Sosthenes be beaten "carries his indifference too far." Paul later wrote to this city that every man will stand before a judgment seat that is not indifferent (2 Cor 5:10).

What was the vow at Cenchrea? Most likely a Nazirite-type vow (Num 6). Guzik: "By tradition, a Nazirite vow could only be fulfilled in Judea." Paul kept Jewish customs freely; they were not a way of earning grace (compare 21:23–26).

Who was Apollos, and what did he lack? A learned Alexandrian Jew, eloquent and "mighty in the Scriptures," teaching "accurately the things concerning Jesus," but "acquainted only with the baptism of John" (vv24–25). Guzik: Apollos "didn't know much about Jesus, but what he did know genuinely excited him." Henry: "instructed in the gospel of Christ as far as John's ministry would carry him, and no further." What he needed was fuller teaching about what Jesus had finished and sent — compare the disciples in 19:1–7.

How did Priscilla and Aquila correct him? Privately and humbly: "they took him aside" (v26). Henry: Apollos "was glad to receive instructions from them, to be shown by them his defects and mistakes." The result was a stronger church in Corinth (v27; 1 Cor 3:6).

What does "believed through grace" teach? That faith itself is God's gift. Spurgeon: "'Through grace' is the hallmark upon the precious metal of believing," and "Salvation is all of grace from first to last." Henry: "Those who believe in Christ, it is through grace that they believe."

Word study (Greek):

- **tent-makers — *skēnopoios* (G4635):** only here.
- **reasoning — *dialegomai* (G1256):** 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; **persuade — *peithō* (G3982).**
- **devoting himself completely — *synechō* (G4912):** gripped, pressed; Luke 12:50; 2 Cor 5:14.
- **shook out — *ektinassō* (G1621):** Matt 10:14; Acts 13:51; 18:6.
- **do not be afraid — *phobeomai* (G5399):** present imperative, "stop being afraid."
- **people — *laos* (G2992):** "I have many people in this city."
- **proconsul — *anthypatos* (G446):** Acts 13:7; 18:12.
- **judgment seat — *bēma* (G968):** vv12, 16, 17; Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10.
- **vow — *euchē* (G2171):** vow or prayer; Jas 5:15.
- **wills — *thelō* (G2309):** "if God wills" (v21; Jas 4:15).
- **eloquent — *logios* (G3052):** only here; **mighty — *dynatos* (G1415).**
- **fervent — *zeō* (G2204):** to boil; Rom 12:11.
- **accurately — *akribōs* (G199):** vv25, 26.
- **grace — *charis* (G5485):** "believed through grace" (v27).

- **powerfully refuted — *diakatelenchomai* (G1246):** only here.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **God's man had a day job** — tentmaking (Henry).
2. **Encouragement fuels the work** — Timothy's news (v5).
3. **A warned man is responsible for himself** — Ezekiel 33 (v6).
4. **Even Paul was afraid** (Spurgeon; 1 Cor 2:3).
5. **Election is a reason to preach** (v10).
6. **Stay long enough to make disciples** (Guzik; v11).
7. **Gallio's bēma and Christ's** (2 Cor 5:10).
8. **We purpose, but He disposes** (Henry; v21).
9. **Zeal needs accuracy** (vv25–26).
10. **Take him aside** — Priscilla and Aquila (v26).

Cross-references: Num 6:1–21; Isa 43:2; Ezek 33:4; Matt 10:14; Luke 12:50; John 10:16; Acts 13:7, 51; 15:36; 19:1–10; 20:34; 21:23–26; Rom 1:16; 10:14–15; 12:11; 14:10; 16:3–4; 1 Cor 1:12, 14; 2:3; 3:6; 16:19; 2 Cor 5:10, 14; 11:9; Jas 4:15; 5:15; 2 Tim 2:2; 4:19.

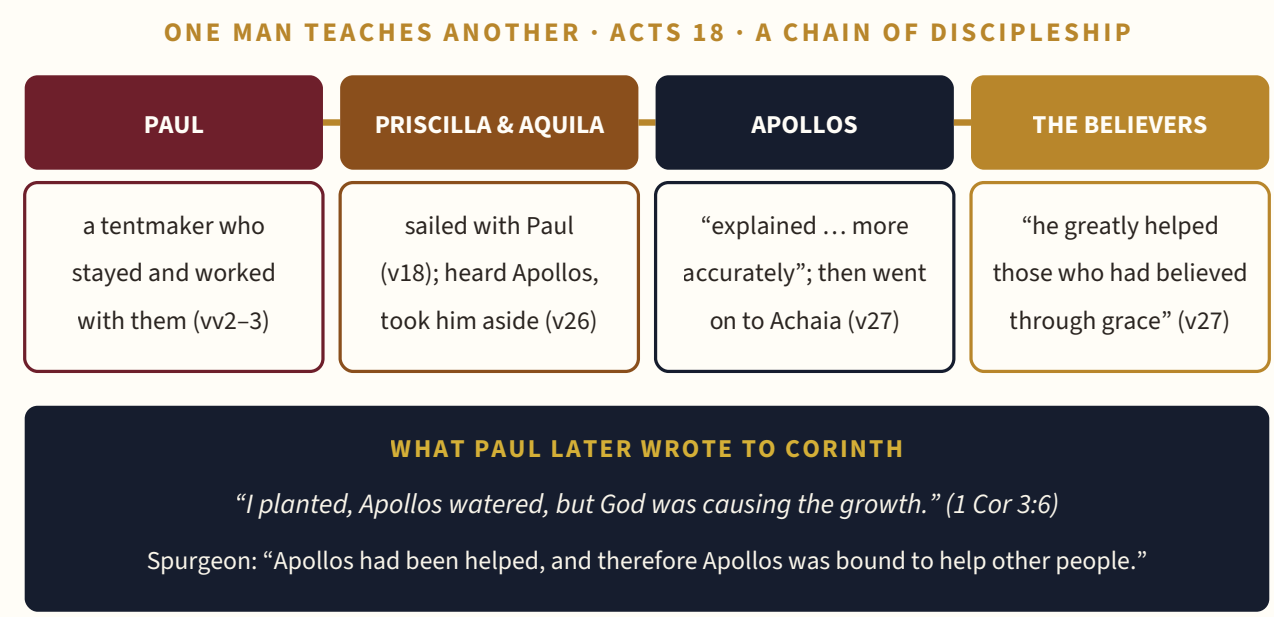
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 18:11

"And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."

FIGURE · ONE MAN TEACHES ANOTHER



Read left to right: Paul worked beside Priscilla and Aquila, they took Apollos aside, and Apollos went on to help the believers Paul had left in Achaia.

Example to follow — Priscilla and Aquila. They worked with their hands, opened their home, traveled with Paul, and when they heard a gifted preacher who was missing something, "they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately" (v26). Not in public. Not to win. Some of the best men I know learned more of Jesus at a kitchen table or across a cell than from a pulpit. This week I want to be that kind of friend to one man.

Sin to confess — silence from fear. The Lord said, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent" (v9). I have kept quiet when I should have spoken — at work, in my family, in the group when a man needed truth. I confess the fear, and I take hold of the promise: "I am with you."

Truth to face — Gallio in me. Gallio was fair and reasonable and "not concerned about any of these things" (v17). I can be polite and indifferent about the very things that will matter at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10). I don't want to be a man who looks the other way while someone gets hurt.

Command to obey — keep working, keep speaking, keep teaching. Paul made tents, reasoned every Sabbath, and stayed "a year and six months, teaching the word of God" (v11). Faithfulness is not flashy. I will show up at my job and my group this week as if both are ministry — because they are.

Promise to trust — "I have many people in this city." God has people in my city, in the facility, on my street, who are His and do not know it yet. That is why I keep speaking. Spurgeon: "If there are so many fish to be taken in the net, I will go and catch some of them." And when I make plans, I make them the way Paul did: "if God wills" (v21).

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul worked a trade and preached on the Sabbath. How does my ordinary job — or my daily routine — become part of my ministry rather than a break from it? (18:1–4; Acts 20:34) *Paul's tentmaking was an important part of his ministry (Guzik).*
2. When the synagogue rejected him, Paul moved next door and kept going. When people reject my witness, do I quit, get bitter, or move next door? (18:5–8; Ezek 33:4) *Having given them over, yet he does not give over his work (Henry).*
3. The Lord told a frightened apostle, "Do not be afraid any longer … I am with you." What fear keeps me silent about Jesus, and what would change if I believed He is with me? (18:9–10; Isa 43:2) *Even Paul was not without his tendency to fear (Spurgeon).*
4. "I have many people in this city." Who in my city, my facility or my family might be one of God's people not yet called — and what is my part in calling him? (18:10; John 10:16; Rom 10:14–15) *The purpose embraces the means (Spurgeon).*
5. Gallio "was not concerned about any of these things." Where am I tempted to be fair-minded but indifferent about the things of God? (18:14–17; 2 Cor 5:10) *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*
6. Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside and taught him. Who has done that for me — and whom could I take aside, humbly and privately, this month? (18:24–28; 2 Tim 2:2) *Apollos had been helped, and therefore Apollos was bound to help other people (Spurgeon).*

Worship. The Lord stood by a tired, frightened tentmaker in the night and said, "I am with you." He had His people in Corinth before they knew His name, and He gathered them one sermon at a time. He used a Roman proconsul to keep the door open, and two humble tentmakers to sharpen a great preacher. Every man who believes, believes through grace.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You are with me. Take away the fear that keeps me quiet, and make me go on speaking. Thank You that You have many people in this city — let me be part of how You call them. Keep me from Gallio's indifference. Make me a Priscilla-and-Aquila kind of man: hard-working, open-handed, and humble enough to take a brother aside and help him know You more accurately. I make my plans this week if You will. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see Acts-18-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.