

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Acts Chapter 18 — The Gospel in Corinth and Beyond

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Acts Chapter 18 follows Paul from Athens into Corinth and then onward through Ephesus, Caesarea, Antioch, Galatia, and Phrygia.

The chapter is filled with important lessons about:

Ministry partnership.

Perseverance under opposition.

God's encouragement.

Work and ministry.

Church strengthening.

Discipleship.

Humility.

Scripture-centered preaching.

Paul arrives in Corinth after preaching in Athens.

Corinth was a major commercial city, known for wealth, trade, immorality, and religious diversity.

There Paul meets:

Aquila and Priscilla.

They become important ministry partners.

They share Paul's trade as tentmakers.

Paul works with them while continuing to preach.

Every Sabbath:

He reasons in the synagogue.

When Silas and Timothy arrive from Macedonia, Paul gives himself more fully to gospel preaching and testifies that:

Jesus is the Messiah.

Opposition follows.

Paul is insulted and rejected.

He announces that he will increasingly turn toward the Gentiles.

Yet even as some reject the message:

Others believe.

Crispus, the synagogue leader, believes with his household.

Many Corinthians also hear, believe, and are baptized.

Then the Lord speaks to Paul in a vision:

“Do not be afraid. Keep on speaking. Do not be silent.”

Why?

Because:

“I am with you.”

And:

“I have many people in this city.”

Paul therefore remains in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching God’s Word.

Opposition later brings him before Gallio, the Roman proconsul.

Yet Gallio refuses to treat the controversy as a criminal matter.

The accusations fail.

Paul continues his ministry.

The chapter then shifts toward travel and transition.

Paul visits Ephesus.

He promises to return:

“If God wills.”

He eventually travels through Galatia and Phrygia:

Strengthening the disciples.

Then another important servant appears:

Apollos.

Apollos is:

Eloquent.

Powerful in Scripture.

Enthusiastic.

Bold.

Accurate in much of what he teaches.

Yet his understanding is incomplete.

Priscilla and Aquila hear him.

They do not publicly humiliate him.

They invite him into their home.

They explain:

“The way of God more fully.”

Apollos receives that instruction.

Then he becomes even more useful.

He travels to Achaia and:

“Greatly helped those who believed through grace.”

Acts 18 therefore teaches us that effective ministry requires more than talent.

It requires:

Faithfulness.

Partnership.

Humility.

Teachability.

Courage.

Dependence upon God.

And continual growth in biblical understanding.

The central truth of Acts 18 is:

God strengthens His servants through faithful partners, sustains them through opposition, encourages them to keep speaking, and uses teachable believers who continue growing in Scripture to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I. PAUL LEAVES ATHENS FOR CORINTH

Acts 18:1

“After leaving Athens, Paul traveled to Corinth.”

Paul moves from one major cultural center to another.

Cross References

Acts 17:16

Paul had been deeply troubled in Athens because the city was filled with idols.

1 Corinthians 2:1

Paul later reminded the Corinthians that when he came to them, he did not depend upon impressive speech or human wisdom to proclaim God’s truth.

2 Corinthians 1:19

Paul later reminded the Corinthians that Jesus Christ had been preached among them by Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

Spiritual Principle

Different cities may require different ministry approaches, but the gospel message remains centered upon Christ.

II. PAUL MEETS AQUILA AND PRISCILLA

Acts 18:2

“There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Emperor Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul stayed with them.”

A political decision by Claudius brought Aquila and Priscilla to Corinth.

Yet God used that displacement to create a ministry partnership.

Cross References

Romans 16:3

Paul later called Priscilla and Aquila his coworkers in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 16:19

A church later met in the home of Aquila and Priscilla.

2 Timothy 4:19

Near the end of Paul's life, he still remembered Priscilla and Aquila with affection.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

What looks like unwanted displacement may become part of God's providential preparation.

Claudius forced them from Rome.

God brought them into Paul's life.

III. PAUL WORKS AS A TENTMAKER

Acts 18:3

"Since they were tentmakers by trade, Paul worked with them while ministering."

Paul was willing to work with his hands.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 4:12

Paul said that he and his coworkers labored with their own hands.

1 Thessalonians 2:9

Paul reminded the Thessalonians that he worked night and day so he would not unnecessarily burden them.

2 Thessalonians 3:8

Paul said he worked hard so he would not become a financial burden to others.

Spiritual Principle

Secular work and spiritual ministry do not have to compete with each other.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

There is no shame in working with your hands while serving God with your heart.

IV. PAUL REASONS IN THE SYNAGOGUE

Acts 18:4

"Every Sabbath, he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks."

Again Paul uses reasoned biblical persuasion.

Cross References

Acts 17:2

Paul regularly reasoned with people from the Scriptures.

Acts 13:14

Paul had previously preached in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch.

Acts 19:8

Paul later continued reasoning persuasively about the kingdom of God in Ephesus.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful evangelism involves both proclamation and careful explanation.

V. PAUL DEVOTES HIMSELF TO PREACHING

Acts 18:5

“When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself fully to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.”

Their arrival appears to free Paul for fuller ministry.

Cross References

Acts 17:14

Silas and Timothy had remained behind temporarily while Paul traveled onward.

2 Corinthians 1:19

Jesus Christ was proclaimed in Corinth through Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

1 Thessalonians 3:6

Timothy had returned with encouraging news concerning the Thessalonian believers.

Spiritual Principle

Healthy ministry partnerships make it possible for different servants to strengthen the mission together.

VI. OPPOSITION LEADS PAUL TO THE GENTILES

Acts 18:6

“But when they opposed him and insulted him, he shook out his clothes in protest and said, ‘Your blood is on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.’”

Paul has preached faithfully.

The rejection is deliberate.

Cross References

Acts 13:46

Paul and Barnabas had previously turned toward the Gentiles after persistent rejection.

Ezekiel 33:4

The watchman who gives warning is not responsible when people deliberately refuse to listen.

Matthew 10:14

Jesus told His disciples that when people reject the message, there are times to move on.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The messenger is responsible to proclaim the truth faithfully; the hearer is responsible for what he does with it.

VII. PAUL MOVES NEXT DOOR

Acts 18:7

“He then went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a Gentile worshiper of God.”

The mission shifts location.

But not very far.

Cross References

Acts 18:4

Paul had already been reasoning with Jews and Greeks in the synagogue.

Romans 16:23

A believer named Gaius later provided hospitality for Paul and the church in Corinth.

Acts 10:2

Cornelius was another Gentile who worshiped God and was spiritually receptive.

Spiritual Principle

When one door closes, the next open door may be closer than expected.

VIII. CRISPUS AND MANY CORINTHIANS BELIEVE

Acts 18:8

“Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord. Many Corinthians who heard Paul also believed and were baptized.”

The synagogue leader himself believes.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 1:14

Paul later specifically remembered baptizing Crispus.

Acts 16:15

Lydia and her household had also responded to the gospel and baptism.

Acts 16:33

The Philippian jailer and his household had likewise believed and been baptized.

Spiritual Principle

One person’s rejection does not determine another person’s response.

Some reject.

Crispus believes.

Many Corinthians believe.

IX. THE LORD ENCOURAGES PAUL

Acts 18:9

“One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid. Keep on speaking. Do not be silent.’”

This reveals something important.

Paul needed encouragement.

Cross References

Acts 23:11

The Lord later stood near Paul and encouraged him to take courage.

Acts 27:24

During a dangerous storm, Paul received assurance not to be afraid.

Isaiah 41:10

God tells His people not to fear because He is with them and will strengthen them.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Courage does not mean never feeling fear; courage means obeying God even when fear is present.

X. “I AM WITH YOU”

Acts 18:10

“For I am with you, and no one will harm you, because I have many people in this city.”

God gives Paul three assurances.

God’s Presence

“I am with you.”

God’s Protection

“No one will harm you.”

God’s Purpose

“I have many people in this city.”

Cross References

Matthew 28:20

Jesus promised His followers that He would be with them always.

Isaiah 41:10

God promises strength, help, and sustaining presence.

Romans 8:31

If God is for us, no enemy can ultimately overturn His purpose.

Spiritual Principle

The greatest encouragement in ministry is not the absence of opposition but the presence of Christ.

XI. PAUL STAYS EIGHTEEN MONTHS

Acts 18:11

“So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching the word of God.”

The vision changes Paul’s actions.

He stays.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 3:6

Paul later said he planted while others watered, but God produced the growth.

Acts 20:31

Paul later reminded believers of another long period of persistent teaching.

1 Corinthians 2:1

Paul remembered his time preaching among the Corinthians.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Sometimes the answer to fear is not leaving—it is staying because God told you to remain.

XII. PAUL IS BROUGHT BEFORE GALLIO

Acts 18:12

“While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews united against Paul and brought him to court.”

Opposition becomes legal.

Cross References

Acts 17:5

Opponents in Thessalonica had also organized collective action against Paul.

Acts 21:27

Paul later faced another coordinated public attack.

2 Corinthians 11:24

Paul endured repeated persecution from opponents throughout his ministry.

Spiritual Principle

Organized opposition may escalate, but it still operates under God's sovereignty.

XIII. THE ACCUSATION AGAINST PAUL

Acts 18:13

"This man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are against our law."

The charge is religious.

Cross References

Acts 16:21

Paul and Silas had previously been accused of promoting unlawful customs.

Acts 25:8

Paul later defended himself against accusations that he violated Jewish law.

Acts 6:13

Stephen had likewise faced accusations concerning law and religious practice.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful teaching is often falsely represented by those who oppose it.

XIV. GALLIO INTERRUPTS BEFORE PAUL SPEAKS

Acts 18:14

"As Paul was about to defend himself, Gallio said, 'If this were a matter of crime or wrongdoing, I would listen.'"

Paul is prepared to defend himself.

But he does not even have to.

Cross References

Acts 23:29

Roman authorities later recognized that accusations against Paul concerned religious disputes rather than crimes deserving punishment.

Acts 25:18

Paul's accusers repeatedly failed to establish the serious charges expected against him.

Acts 26:31

Officials later concluded that Paul had done nothing deserving death or imprisonment.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Sometimes God answers before His servant has the opportunity to defend himself.

XV. GALLIO REFUSES THE RELIGIOUS DISPUTE

Acts 18:15

"But since it is about words, names, and your own law, handle it yourselves. I will not judge such matters."

Gallio refuses to criminalize the dispute.

Cross References

Acts 23:29

Roman officials later similarly identified religious controversy rather than criminal behavior.

Acts 25:19

Festus described disputes surrounding Jewish religion and Jesus.

John 18:31

Pilate had earlier told Jewish leaders to handle certain religious matters according to their own law.

Spiritual Principle

Civil government has limits; not every theological disagreement belongs in a criminal courtroom.

XVI. THEY ARE DRIVEN FROM THE COURT

Acts 18:16

"And he drove them out of the court."

The case collapses.

Cross References

Matthew 27:24

Pilate attempted to distance himself from a religiously charged controversy concerning Jesus.

Acts 25:12

Roman legal procedures later again shaped Paul's ministry journey.

Luke 23:4

Pilate had declared that he found no basis for charges against Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Accusation does not equal guilt.

XVII. SOSTHENES IS BEATEN

Acts 18:17

“Then the crowd turned on Sosthenes, the synagogue leader, and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio paid no attention.”

Violence breaks out.

Gallio ignores it.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 1:1

A man named Sosthenes later appears with Paul as a Christian brother, possibly the same person.

Acts 18:8

Crispus had earlier been synagogue leader and had believed in Christ.

Matthew 5:11

Jesus said His followers would sometimes suffer insults and persecution because of Him.

Important Note

If the Sosthenes of 1 Corinthians 1:1 is the same man, then this chapter may hint at another remarkable transformation.

The text itself does not explicitly confirm the identification.

Spiritual Principle

Human courts may fail to protect people perfectly, but God's purposes remain larger than human injustice.

XVIII. PAUL LEAVES CORINTH

Acts 18:18

"Paul stayed in Corinth for some time, then left with Priscilla and Aquila for Syria. At Cenchrea, he had his head shaved because of a vow he had taken."

Paul eventually moves on.

Cross References

Numbers 6:2

The Old Testament describes special vows involving periods of separation to God.

Numbers 6:18

At the completion of a Nazirite vow, the hair could be shaved.

Acts 21:23

Paul later participated in another setting involving vows among Jewish believers.

Important Truth

The exact nature of Paul's vow is not fully explained.

It likely reflects a voluntary Jewish devotional practice.

It was not presented as a requirement for salvation.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Voluntary devotional practices may be meaningful, but they must never become conditions for justification.

XIX. PAUL REASONS IN EPHESUS

Acts 18:19

"They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue."

Paul immediately returns to his normal pattern.

Cross References

Acts 18:4

Paul regularly reasoned in synagogues.

Acts 19:1

Paul later returned to Ephesus for extensive ministry.

Acts 17:2

Reasoned biblical explanation remained central to his evangelism.

Spiritual Principle

A faithful ministry method can remain consistent even as geography changes.

XX. THEY ASK PAUL TO STAY

Acts 18:20

“When they asked him to stay longer, he declined.”

This is different from many previous cities.

Here:

People want him to remain.

Yet Paul leaves.

Cross References

Acts 18:21

Paul promises to return if God wills.

Acts 20:16

Paul’s later travel schedule was shaped by broader ministry priorities.

1 Corinthians 16:8

Paul eventually spent significant time ministering in Ephesus.

Spiritual Principle

An open opportunity does not always mean God wants us to stay indefinitely.

XXI. “IF GOD WILLS”

Acts 18:21

“He said goodbye, telling them, ‘I must go to Jerusalem for the coming feast, but I will return if God wills.’ Then he sailed away.”

Paul submits his plans to God.

Cross References

Acts 20:16

Paul later arranged travel according to specific ministry priorities and timing.

Acts 21:4

Paul’s travels continued under serious spiritual discernment.

James 4:15

Believers are taught to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Make Plans, But Hold Them With Open Hands.”

Faith does not reject planning.

Faith submits planning to God.

XXII. PAUL RETURNS TO ANTIOCH

Acts 18:22

“He landed at Caesarea, greeted the church there, and then went down to Antioch.”

Paul returns to the missionary base.

Cross References

Acts 11:19

Antioch had become an important center of Gentile Christian ministry.

Acts 13:1

Paul had originally been sent from the Antioch church.

Acts 14:26

Paul and Barnabas had previously returned to Antioch after missionary work.

Spiritual Principle

Mission should remain connected to the local church and Christian fellowship.

XXIII. PAUL STRENGTHENS THE DISCIPLES

Acts 18:23

“After spending some time there, Paul traveled through Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening the disciples.”

Paul continues his shepherding ministry.

Cross References

Acts 16:6

Paul had previously traveled through these regions.

Galatians 4:13

Paul had earlier preached the gospel among the Galatians.

Acts 15:41

Strengthening churches was already a central part of Paul’s ministry.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Evangelism reaches people; discipleship strengthens them.

XXIV. APOLLOS ARRIVES IN EPHEBUS

Acts 18:24

“Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, from Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was eloquent and powerful in the Scriptures.”

Apollos is gifted.

Eloquent

He communicates well.

Powerful in Scripture

He knows the Bible.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 1:12

Apollos later became so influential that some Corinthians identified strongly with his ministry.

1 Corinthians 3:6

Paul later said, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”

Titus 3:13

Apollos continued to be regarded as a valuable ministry worker.

Spiritual Principle

Natural ability becomes especially useful when joined with deep knowledge of Scripture.

XXV. APOLLOS IS ENTHUSIASTIC BUT INCOMPLETE

Acts 18:25

“He had been taught about the Lord and was enthusiastic, speaking accurately about Jesus, though he only knew about John’s baptism.”

Apollos knew much.

But not everything.

Cross References

Acts 19:3

Paul later encountered others whose understanding was similarly limited to John’s baptism.

Romans 12:11

Believers are encouraged to remain spiritually fervent while serving the Lord.

Luke 3:16

John himself pointed beyond his own baptism to the greater One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Sincerity, passion, and knowledge are valuable, but every believer still has more to learn.

XXVI. PRISCILLA AND AQUILA DISCIPLE APOLLOS

Acts 18:26

“He began speaking boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained the way of God more fully.”

This is a beautiful model of correction.

They do not:

Embarrass him publicly.

Attack his character.

Dismiss his gifts.

Instead:

They invite him home.

Then:

They teach him more fully.

Cross References

Romans 16:3

Paul called Priscilla and Aquila his coworkers in Christ.

2 Timothy 4:19

Their ministry remained valued years later.

1 Corinthians 16:19

Their home became a gathering place for believers.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Correct What Is Incomplete Without Crushing the Person God Is Developing.”

XXVII. APOLLOS GOES TO ACHAIA

Acts 18:27

“When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the believers encouraged him and wrote letters urging the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who believed through grace.”

Apollos becomes more useful after receiving instruction.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 3:1

Early Christians sometimes used letters of recommendation when ministry workers traveled.

1 Corinthians 3:6

Paul later described Apollos as the one who watered what Paul had planted.

Romans 16:1

Phoebe likewise received formal commendation from Paul.

Spiritual Principle

Teachability increases usefulness.

XXVIII. APOLLOS PROVES JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

Acts 18:28

“He vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.”

Now Apollos uses his gifts with fuller understanding.

Cross References

Acts 17:2

Paul similarly reasoned from Scripture concerning Jesus.

1 Corinthians 3:6

Apollos became an important teacher who strengthened believers.

Isaiah 53:5

Old Testament prophecy concerning the suffering Servant helped demonstrate the messianic identity of Jesus.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The strongest Christian argument is not merely eloquence; it is truth demonstrated from Scripture.

XXIX. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM ACTS 18

1. God Provides Ministry Partners

Principle:

God often strengthens His servants through faithful people like Aquila and Priscilla.

2. Work and Ministry Can Coexist

Principle:

Ordinary employment can support extraordinary service.

3. Opposition Does Not Mean God Has Left

Principle:

Christ may tell us to keep speaking precisely when we feel tempted to stop.

4. God Has People We Cannot Yet See

Principle:

Do not judge a city only by its visible resistance.

5. Plans Must Remain Submitted to God

Principle:

“If God wills” should shape the believer’s attitude toward the future.

6. Discipleship Includes Correction

Principle:

Even gifted believers may need fuller understanding.

7. Scripture Must Remain Central

Principle:

Paul reasoned from Scripture, and Apollos proved from Scripture that Jesus is the Messiah.

XXX. WHAT AQUILA AND PRISCILLA TEACH US

They appear repeatedly as faithful servants.

They:

Work.

Host Paul.

Travel.

Open their home.

Disciple Apollos.

Host a church.

Remain faithful for years.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Some of the most influential ministries are built around faithful people whose names may never appear on a platform.

XXXI. TENTMAKING AND MINISTRY

Paul worked.

This did not make him less spiritual.

Spiritual Principle

God can use a trade, profession, or ordinary job as part of ministry provision and witness.

There is no biblical divide that says:

Paid ministry is sacred.

All other work is secular.

Faithfulness to God can shape both.

XXXII. WHEN PEOPLE REJECT THE MESSAGE

Paul reaches a point where continued argument is no longer useful.

He says:

“From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Faithfulness does not require spending every hour arguing with people who have deliberately decided not to listen.

There are other people who need to hear.

XXXIII. GOD HAS MANY PEOPLE IN THE CITY

The Lord says:

“I have many people in this city.”

Paul could not yet see them all.

God could.

Spiritual Principle

Never assume a difficult mission field is spiritually empty simply because resistance is visible.

XXXIV. “DO NOT BE AFRAID”

God did not shame Paul for fear.

He encouraged him.

Keep Speaking

Do Not Be Silent

I Am With You

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God's answer to fear is often not explanation but presence.

XXXV. THE VALUE OF LONG-TERM TEACHING

Paul remained:

A year and a half.

Why?

Because converts need teaching.

Spiritual Principle

Church planting requires more than evangelistic decisions; believers need sustained instruction in God's Word.

XXXVI. WHEN GOD FIGHTS THE BATTLE DIFFERENTLY

Paul goes before Gallio.

He prepares to speak.

Gallio interrupts and dismisses the complaint.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not assume every battle requires your defense; sometimes God removes the accusation before you answer it.

XXXVII. THE LIMITS OF CIVIL AUTHORITY

Gallio refuses to decide a religious controversy.

This provides an important principle.

Spiritual Principle

Civil rulers have legitimate authority, but theological truth is not created by government decree.

The state can rule on crimes.

It cannot determine:

Who Jesus is.

What the gospel means.

What Scripture teaches.

XXXVIII. HUMAN JUSTICE CAN STILL FAIL

Gallio may correctly refuse to criminalize a theological dispute.

But when Sosthenes is beaten:

He ignores it.

Spiritual Principle

A ruler can be correct in one judgment and unjust in another.

Therefore:

Human government is never the final standard of righteousness.

God is.

XXXIX. THE “IF GOD WILLS” PRINCIPLE

Paul makes plans.

But he says:

“If God wills.”

This is not meaningless religious language.

It reflects theology.

God controls:

Time.

Travel.

Opportunity.

Life.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Planning is wise; presumption is not.

XL. STRENGTHENING THE DISCIPLES

Acts repeatedly emphasizes strengthening.

Paul is not satisfied with:

People believing once.

He wants:

Stable disciples.

Spiritual Principle

Healthy ministry asks not only, “How many responded?” but, “How are the believers growing?”

XLI. APOLLOS — GIFTED BUT STILL LEARNING

Apollos was:

Eloquent.

Powerful in Scripture.

Enthusiastic.

Accurate.

Yet incomplete.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Being Gifted Does Not Mean You Have Finished Growing.”

The most gifted teacher still needs:

Study.

Correction.

Humility.

Growth.

XLII. HOW TO CORRECT A GIFTED BELIEVER

Priscilla and Aquila give us an excellent pattern.

They Listened First

They understood what Apollos knew.

They Recognized His Strengths

They did not dismiss him.

They Corrected Privately

They invited him home.

They Explained More Fully

They filled the gap.

They Did Not Destroy His Ministry

They strengthened it.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Correction should aim at restoration and greater usefulness, not humiliation.

XLIII. APOLLOS WAS TEACHABLE

The text does not record defensiveness.

The result shows growth.

He becomes even more effective.

Spiritual Principle

A gifted person who cannot be corrected will eventually become less useful than a humble person willing to learn.

XLIV. PAUL PLANTS, APOLLOS WATERS

Later Paul says:

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”

This is an important ministry principle.

Different servants have different roles.

One Plants

Another Waters

God Gives Growth

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not turn different servants into competitors when God designed them to be coworkers.

XLV. JESUS REMAINS THE CENTER

Paul preached:

Jesus is the Messiah.

Apollos proved:

Jesus is the Messiah.

Different men.

Different personalities.

Same center.

Spiritual Principle

Healthy ministry does not build around personalities; it builds around Jesus Christ.

XLVI. WHAT ACTS 18 TEACHES ABOUT PARTNERSHIP

Paul had:

Aquila.

Priscilla.

Silas.

Timothy.

Titius Justus.

Crispus.

Later:

Apollos.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God's work is usually bigger than one person's calling.

Ministry flourishes through:

Partnership.

Hospitality.

Teaching.

Giving.

Prayer.

Travel.

Encouragement.

XLVII. WHAT ACTS 18 TEACHES ABOUT COURAGE

Paul receives direct encouragement:

“Do not be afraid.”

Then:

“Keep speaking.”

Spiritual Principle

Fear becomes dangerous when it silences what God commanded us to speak.

XLVIII. WHAT ACTS 18 TEACHES ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP

Apollos already knew much.

Still:

He needed more.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Discipleship is not merely teaching unbelievers how to believe; it is helping believers understand God's truth more fully.

XLIX. WHAT ACTS 18 TEACHES ABOUT GRACE

Acts 18:27 says believers had:

“Believed through grace.”

Their faith itself existed within the saving work of God.

Spiritual Principle

Grace is not merely God overlooking sin; grace brings sinners into saving faith and builds them into useful disciples.

L. WHAT ACTS 18 TEACHES ABOUT SCRIPTURE

The chapter begins with Paul:

Reasoning.

It ends with Apollos:

Proving.

Both use:

Scripture.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A ministry that becomes detached from Scripture eventually becomes detached from apostolic Christianity.

LI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Where did Paul go after Athens?

Paul traveled to Corinth, where he began a significant period of ministry.

Question 2

Who were Aquila and Priscilla?

They were a Jewish Christian couple who had left Rome because of Claudius' order.

They became Paul's coworkers and later helped disciple Apollos.

Question 3

How did Paul support himself in Corinth?

He worked as a tentmaker alongside Aquila and Priscilla while continuing his ministry.

Question 4

What was Paul's main message in the synagogue?

He testified that:

Jesus is the Messiah.

Question 5

What did Paul do when some persistently rejected his message?

He declared that he had faithfully delivered the warning and would increasingly take the gospel to the Gentiles.

Question 6

Who believed in Corinth?

Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his household believed.

Many other Corinthians also heard, believed, and were baptized.

Question 7

What did the Lord tell Paul in the vision?

The Lord told him:

Do not be afraid.

Keep speaking.

Do not be silent.

I am with you.

And:

I have many people in this city.

Question 8

How long did Paul stay in Corinth?

He stayed for a year and a half teaching God's Word.

Question 9

What happened when Paul was brought before Gallio?

Gallio refused to treat the theological dispute as a criminal case and dismissed the accusers.

Question 10

What does Paul's statement "if God wills" teach?

Believers may make plans, but they should submit all future plans to God's sovereign will.

Question 11

Who was Apollos?

Apollos was an eloquent Jewish teacher from Alexandria who was powerful in Scripture and enthusiastic about Jesus, though his understanding was incomplete.

Question 12

How did Priscilla and Aquila help Apollos?

They invited him privately into their home and explained the way of God more fully.

Their correction strengthened rather than destroyed his ministry.

LII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Acts 18 asks us several important questions.

Do I Value Godly Partnerships?

Paul did.

Am I Willing to Work Hard While Serving Christ?

Paul was.

Do I Keep Speaking When Opposition Comes?

God told Paul to.

Do I Remember That Christ Is With Me?

Paul needed that reminder.

Do I Believe God May Have People in Places That Look Resistant?

He did in Corinth.

Do I Hold My Plans Under God's Will?

Paul said:

“If God wills.”

Am I Strengthening Believers After They Come to faith?

Paul did.

Am I Teachable Like Apollos?

Gifted people still need correction.

Can I Correct Others Like Priscilla and Aquila?

Privately.

Graciously.

Biblically.

Is Scripture central in my teaching?

It was for Paul and Apollos.

LIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Do Not Be Silent Just Because You Are Afraid”

The Lord did not tell Paul:

There will be no opposition.

He said:

“I am with you.”

Principle

God’s presence gives courage when circumstances do not.

LIV. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“God May Already Have People in the Place You Are Ready to Leave”

Paul saw opposition.

God saw:

Crispus.

His household.

Many Corinthians.

Future believers.

Principle

Do not judge God’s harvest only by today’s resistance.

LV. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Never Become Too Gifted to Be Taught”

Apollos was:

Eloquent.

Powerful.

Passionate.

Accurate.

Yet:

He still needed instruction.

Principle

Spiritual maturity is demonstrated not by needing no correction, but by receiving correction well.

LVI. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Correct Privately When Possible, Strengthen Publicly Afterwards”

Priscilla and Aquila corrected Apollos privately.

Then his public usefulness expanded.

Principle

Godly correction should build servants rather than unnecessarily embarrass them.

LVII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Plant, Water, and Let God Give the Growth”

Paul planted.

Apollos watered.

God gave the growth.

Principle

The church does not need competing personalities; it needs cooperating servants.

LVIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Acts Chapter 18 shows ministry from several angles.

Paul enters Corinth:

Alone at first.

Working with his hands.

Preaching every Sabbath.

Then God brings:

Aquila.

Priscilla.

Silas.

Timothy.

Titius Justus.

Crispus.

Other believers.

Paul was not meant to do everything alone.

Neither are we.

Acts 18 also shows us that faithful ministry can become discouraging.

Paul had already experienced:

Beatings.

Imprisonment.

Riots.

Rejection.

Mockery.

Constant travel.

Now in Corinth:

Opposition rises again.

Then Jesus speaks.

“Do not be afraid.”

That statement tells us Paul probably had reason to feel fear.

The Lord does not condemn him.

He strengthens him.

“Keep on speaking.”

“Do not be silent.”

“I am with you.”

That is the foundation of courage.

Not:

I am naturally brave.

But:

Christ is with me.

Then the Lord says:

“I have many people in this city.”

Paul could not see them yet.

God could.

That should encourage every servant laboring in a difficult field.

You do not know:

Whose heart God is preparing.

Who may believe next.

What family may change.

What future leader may be converted.

What church may be born.

Keep speaking.

Acts 18 also teaches us something important through Apollos.

Apollos had tremendous ability.

He was:

Eloquent.

Passionate.

Biblically knowledgeable.

Bold.

Yet incomplete.

And God sent him:

Priscilla and Aquila.

He needed instruction.

And apparently:

He received it.

That made him stronger.

There is a lesson for every believer:

Never reach a point where you think:
I already know enough.
No one can teach me.
No one can correct me.
I am too experienced to listen.
That attitude eventually destroys usefulness.
Apollos became more useful because he remained teachable.
Acts 18 therefore calls us to:
Work faithfully.
Build partnerships.
Speak boldly.
Trust God in opposition.
Remember Christ's presence.
Submit plans to God's will.
Strengthen believers.
Receive correction.
Correct others graciously.
Keep Scripture central.
And give God the growth.
The chapter begins with Paul arriving in Corinth.
It ends with Apollos proving from Scripture that:
Jesus is the Messiah.
The servants change.
The mission continues.
The message remains:
Jesus Christ.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Acts Chapter 18.

Thank You for showing us how You provide people for Your servants.

Thank You for Aquila and Priscilla.

Give us faithful friendships and ministry partnerships.

Help us be willing to work hard.

Help us honor You in both our occupation and our ministry.

Give us courage when opposition comes.

When fear begins to silence us, remind us of Your words:

“Do not be afraid.”

“Keep on speaking.”

“Do not be silent.”

Remind us:

You are with us.

Help us trust that You are already working in hearts we cannot see.

Give us patience when ministry appears difficult.

Give us endurance to teach Your Word faithfully.

Thank You for every open door.

And when plans change, teach us to say sincerely:

“If God wills.”

Keep us from presumption.

Help us submit our future to You.

Thank You for Apollos.

Give us his enthusiasm.

Give us his love for Scripture.

Give us his courage.

But also give us his teachability.

Keep us from becoming too proud to learn.

Give us the wisdom of Priscilla and Aquila.

Teach us how to correct others graciously.

Help us strengthen rather than crush.

Help our churches produce teachers who know Scripture deeply and proclaim Jesus clearly.

Keep us from competing with other servants.

One may plant.

Another may water.

But:

You give the growth.

May Jesus remain the center of everything we preach, teach, write, and do.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid. Keep on speaking. Do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will harm you, because I have many people in this city.’” — Acts 18:9–10

Central Truth

God strengthens His servants through faithful partnerships, encourages them to keep speaking in the face of opposition, remains sovereign over legal and social conflict, and uses humble, teachable, Scripture-centered believers to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Acts 18 in One Sentence

Paul establishes a fruitful ministry in Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla, receives Christ's encouragement to keep speaking despite opposition, continues strengthening believers across the region, and sees Apollos become a more effective Scripture-centered preacher after humbly receiving fuller instruction in the way of God.