



Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C
Sunday School

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025
TEACHING GOD'S WORD

SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalm 133:1**

School/Class: But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

Superintendent/Teacher: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

School/Class: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. **Psalm 119:105**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

ALL:

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

2 Peter 3:18

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025

TEACHING GOD'S WORD



- Bible Basis: Acts 18:1-11, 18-21
- Bible Truth: Luke writes of Paul's mission of proclaiming the Good News to Syria and Ephesus.
- Memory Verse: VERSE: "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9-10).
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: REVIEW Paul's zeal for teaching the Gospel to the Gentiles; EXPLORE feelings after making a transition from a vocation, from rejection to praise; and PRAY for the success of those whom God has placed in a new situation.
- Background Scriptures: [Acts 18](#) & [Matthew 28:16-20](#). Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

Acts 18:1-11, 18-21 KJV

- 1** After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;
- 2** And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.
- 3** And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.
- 4** And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.
- 5** And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.
- 6** And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

Acts 18:1-11, 18-21 KJV

- 7** And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.
- 8** And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.
- 9** Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:
- 10** For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.
- 11** And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Acts 18:1-11, 18-21 KJV

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Priscilla and Aquila. Priscilla and Aquila were a Jewish couple and refugees from Rome. After the Jews were banished by the emperor Claudius, they made their way to Corinth. There they met Paul as fellow tentmakers, It is unclear whether they were already Christians or converted during their stay with Paul at Corinth. Later they made their home in Ephesus, where they helped to mentor and teach the young preacher Apollos. Paul also mentions them in other letters ([Romans 16:3](#), [1 Corinthians 16:19](#), [2 Timothy 4:19](#)). They were his fellow helpers in the Gospel and valuable to him in ministry. Priscilla is usually mentioned before Aquila either to indicate her noble upbringing or her more visible gifting in the church. This is unusual, as throughout Scripture the husband's name is usually mentioned first.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Corinth. This ancient city was the capital of the Roman province Achaëa, which included the southern half of modern Greece. It was located around 50 miles southwest of Athens between that city and Sparta. An ancient rival of Athens, by the time of Alexander the Great, Corinth surpassed it in terms of politics and economics. Corinth was also a major religious center and was known for its large temple dedicated to the goddess Aphrodite, which had a thousand prostitutes dedicated to her service. As such, it was a city synonymous with immorality. Paul stayed in Corinth for eighteen months and left a thriving Christian community. Two letters in the New Testament canon were addressed to the Corinthian church.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: We will appreciate that people can be persistent when they really believe what they are doing and saying is the real thing.

INTRODUCTION

Paul's Vision

In this lesson, we see Paul's focus on the mission and the calling he received from God. This focus has taken him further into the Gentile world and more specifically into the country of Greece. Prior to this, Paul and his companions intended to go into the region of Bithynia in the northernmost part of Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey. While on their way, Paul saw a vision of a man from Macedonia saying "Come over to Macedonia and help us." Taking this as the direction of the Holy Spirit, they set sail for the Grecian province of Macedonia. Immediately Paul and his companions Timothy and Silas began to preach in the cities of Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens.

INTRODUCTION

Paul's Vision

In each of these cities, Paul received a different response to the preaching of the Gospel. In Thessalonica, he was persecuted and run out of town. In Berea, many of his hearers listened and investigated the Scriptures to confirm Paul's message. Finally, in Athens, Paul encountered a mixed response - most of his audience rejected the Gospel, but a few requested him to come back again, while a few others believed.

INTRODUCTION

Paul's Vision

Paul traveled southwest to the city of Corinth, which was a major commercial center and the leading city of Greece at the time. Although this was an ideal location to preach and plant a church among the Gentiles, Paul was afraid to preach in such a hostile environment ([1 Corinthians 2:3](#)). With encouragement from God, Paul continued to preach the Gospel and a vibrant church community was formed. Next, Paul would travel to Ephesus. There he would leave his coworkers Priscilla and Aquila and go on to Asia Minor and Syria to teach and encourage the churches he had founded on his first missionary journey with Barnabas. Soon he would return to Ephesus and continue the ministry of the Word.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will know that after experiencing a vision,
Paul, Timothy, and Silas traveled together to various
cities to preach.

I. OCCUPIED WITH THE WORD

Acts 18:1-5

Paul lands in Corinth, and we get a more in-depth view of his usual ministry methods and lifestyle. He is alone in a new city and meets a Jewish couple, Priscilla and Aquila. They are recent immigrants to Corinth after the emperor Claudius banished all Jews from Rome. Since they shared the common occupation of tentmaking, Paul decided to stay and work with them. This was very strategic on Paul's part; his character would be on display as he lived in their home and worked in their workshop, presenting many opportunities to preach the Gospel and share his faith. Luke, the writer of Acts, also records that every Sabbath, Paul "reasoned in the synagogue" and attempted to "persuade Jews and Greeks" (v.4). In the same way, our character is always on display no matter what occupation we have, and God has presented opportunities for us to share His Word no matter where we are.

I. OCCUPIED WITH THE WORD

Acts 18:1-5

During this time, Timothy and Silas come down from Macedonia to join Paul in preaching the Gospel. It says that as soon as they came, Paul was "pressed in the spirit" (v. 5). This phrase means that he was occupied solely with one thing: preaching the Word. The ESV and other contemporary translations read "with the word" rather than "with the spirit" because the oldest Greek manuscripts say word. Either way, the text is telling us that Paul is focused on the Gospel. As he made tents with Priscilla and Aquila, he was also focused on sharing the Gospel and teaching those around him the Word of God.

I. OCCUPIED WITH THE WORD

Acts 18:1-5

Even without help from his companions, he went to the synagogue every Sabbath to convince those in attendance of the truth about Jesus. The difference between then and after Timothy and Silas arrived in Corinth is he can now devote himself exclusively to the task of preaching. Whether we are in full-time ministry or work in a non-church-related occupation, the Lord wants us to be occupied with His Word and how we can share it with others.

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025
TEACHING GOD'S WORD



**I. OCCUPIED WITH THE
WORD**

Acts 18:1-5

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

In the beginning of the chapter, we read that Paul left Athens for the city of Corinth (Gk. Korinthos, KOR-een-thoce), which was named for a grape that was grown abundantly in the area. Located about 50 miles west of Athens, Corinth was the political and economic bedrock of Greece. Its infamy, however, was its reputation of sexual immorality. There were a dozen temples of worship specializing in lewd and lascivious sexual accommodations. Paul's missionary journey preaching the Gospel seems to have taken him from one challenging place of ministry to another.

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025
TEACHING GOD'S WORD



**I. OCCUPIED WITH THE
WORD**

Acts 18:1-5

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

When Paul arrived in Corinth, he again sought out Christian community and co-laborers in Christ. While ministering in Athens alone, Paul had no doubt learned the hard way that companionship in ministry affords increased spiritual and physical strength. Paul's first order of business was to find believers. He soon meets Aquila, along with his wife Priscilla. Eventually, this couple became missionary partners with Paul near the end of this two-year journey. Here at their introduction, they are described as residents of Italy, but it is made clear that they were Jewish by birth and religion.

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025
TEACHING GOD'S WORD



**I. OCCUPIED WITH THE
WORD**

Acts 18:1-5

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

The Roman emperor Claudius had issued an edict banishing Jews from the capital. Other historical sources say he did this because Jews were causing unrest at the instigation of Christ. Likely what happened was that the traditional Jews and Jewish Christians came into religious conflict, and not recognizing a difference between the religions, Claudius banished all the "Jews" who were causing problems. It was from this edict of religious persecution that the Gospel spread wherever converts and disciples dispersed.

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025

TEACHING GOD'S WORD



I. OCCUPIED WITH THE WORD

Acts 18:1-5

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

Priscilla and Aquila modeled for believers an egalitarian paradigm for partnership in vocation and ministry. Emphasizing community and companionship rather than gender competitiveness, they complemented each other as tentmakers and teachers. Priscilla and Aquila opened their homes in Ephesus ([1 Corinthians 16:19](#)) and Rome ([Romans 16:3-5](#)) to found house churches. Within this partnership of marriage and ministry, Paul found companionship and community among Christians, because he was also a tentmaker (Gk. skenopoios, skay-no-poy-OSE), or one who fashions tents from leather or goat hair. The term was also used in general for a leatherworker.

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025
TEACHING GOD'S WORD



**I. OCCUPIED WITH THE
WORD**

Acts 18:1-5

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

Together, the three of them took pride in their craft and enjoyed Christian fellowship as they made tents to house the very Roman soldiers who were their adversaries. This model of bi-vocational ministry is useful even today as it can give someone an avenue to preach the Gospel to those outside the church. It also is helpful as a means of changing the reputation of the clergy as those who are only interested in financial gain.

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025
TEACHING GOD'S WORD



**I. OCCUPIED WITH THE
WORD**

Acts 18:1-5

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

Paul worked throughout the week, but every Sabbath, he headed to the synagogue. Ever diligent to the cause of the Gospel, he "reasoned" (Gk. dialegomai, dee-ah-LEH-go-my), or engaged in lively, thoughtful, passionate discussion, continually and repeatedly with the Jews and Greeks regarding the Christ. Paul's goal was to persuade (Gk. peitho, PAY-tho), that is, to induce others to believe, usually by words or other fair means. Paul taught the Gospel to convert both Jews well-versed in Jewish Scripture and tradition and God-fearing Greeks well-versed in philosophy but who had not converted to Judaism.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

The Holy Spirit and Paul's Ministry

Paul moved as the Spirit led, demonstrating his faithfulness and commitment to spread the Gospel were more important than seeking ease and comfort in ministry. Rather than regarding Corinth as a morally desolate wasteland, Paul seized the opportunity to minister to this city's inhabitants with the very grace and love of God that had compelled him to know and accept Jesus as Lord. In his two letters to the Corinthians, Paul undertakes extensive teaching regarding sexual purity.

II. ENCOURAGED BY THE LORD

Acts 18:6-11

The response from the Jews in the synagogue was hostility and opposition. They formed an organized resistance against Paul and insulted him. This caused Paul to shake his clothes and give a disclaimer of responsibility for their souls. They have heard the Word and now will be accountable to it. This is definitely the course of action we need to take when confronted with those who refuse to hear the Gospel. Next, Paul goes to the house of Titius Justus, a Gentile God-fearer who lived next door to the synagogue. The results of Paul's ministry are remarkable in that the synagogue ruler Crispus believed the Gospel along with his entire household. Additionally, Luke records that many people believed and were baptized.

II. ENCOURAGED BY THE LORD

Acts 18:6-11

In spite of this activity, it seems Paul needed some extra encouragement from the Lord. It may have been because of the opposition of the Jews or the immorality that filled Corinth. In any case, he receives a vision at night from the Lord. In the vision, Paul hears the Lord encourage him not to be afraid and to continue to preach the Gospel. God is with him, no one is going to harm him, and the Lord has many people in the city ready to respond to the message of salvation. Sometimes God is working with us in circumstances that may not seem favorable, but it is our job to continue to preach the Word. There are people who need to hear the message, and God has already prepared their hearts.

II. ENCOURAGED BY THE LORD

Acts 18:6-11

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Paul was making tents and preaching the Gospel whenever he had the opportunity. Once Silas and Timothy arrived, he was "pressed (Gk. sunecho, soon-EK-oh) in spirit." The word is used for being physically held or confined as a prisoner, and for besieging a city. In this context, it is intended metaphorically to mean the narrowing of Paul's focus. Now he is devoted exclusively to preaching the Gospel and testifying that "Jesus was Christ." The King James Version of the passage states that the Jews' reaction to Paul is that they "opposed themselves." In the active voice, it means to "arrange in battle array face to face." In the middle voice, it is translated "opposed yourself" against someone or to set yourself in opposition against someone.

II. ENCOURAGED BY THE LORD

Acts 18:6-11

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Although the militaristic denotation is still in mind in the middle and passive voice, a better rendering of the text is "resisted" (Gk. antitasso, an-tee-TAHS-so). Paul's response was to shake out his garment. This act was a disclaimer of any responsibility. Paul took his preaching of the Gospel seriously, in the same vein as the prophet Ezekiel ([Ezekiel 3:18, 33:4, 8](#)). He was accountable for preaching the message but not whether that message was obeyed. This signals his focus in preaching shifting to the Gentiles of Corinth.

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025

TEACHING GOD'S WORD



II. ENCOURAGED BY THE LORD

Acts 18:6-11

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Next Paul finds himself preaching and teaching in the house of Justus. This man is described as a God-fearer whose house was right next to the synagogue. Through Paul's activity during this time, Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, came to believe in the Lord along with his household. Crispus is a Latin name, so he may have been a Roman citizen. Luke might point this out to paint the Christian faith as favorable to the empire. There were also many others in Corinth who believed and became members of the newly emerging church in the city. This is the beginning of the rift between the Jewish and Christian communities. Until now, the disciples have been regarded as a Jewish sect. Soon they will be considered a different religion, with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 sealing this separation.

II. ENCOURAGED BY THE LORD

Acts 18:6-11

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Paul receives a vision at night. The Lord speaks to him and encourages him to stop being afraid. We know Paul experienced persecution in other Greek cities and from the Jews, especially when preaching in Thessalonica and Berea. He already experienced hostility from the Jews in the synagogue and may have anticipated another even more life-threatening incident. God encourages him to "hold not thy peace." This verb is imperative, which makes God's words to Paul a command to continue habitually doing something. In other words, he must go on speaking.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

God Has a Plan

The Lord assures Paul that He is with the apostle. This echoes Jesus' last words in the Gospel of Matthew: "I am with you always even to the end of the age" (from Matthew 28:20). There is also a specific promise God reveals to Paul in the vision: No one is going to harm him because God has a plan. This plan is not just for Paul, but also the salvation of many people in Corinth. Consequently, Paul obeys the vision and continues to minister there for eighteen months. This is his longest stay in a city so far and will become a pattern for his ministry, as seen when he stays for two whole years in Ephesus.

III. COMPELLED TO RETURN

Acts 18:18-21

Paul stayed in Corinth for about a year and six months. The opposition of the Jews continued until it finally climaxed with a trial before the Roman proconsul Gallio. Gallio sees the trial as a matter of Jewish customs and admonishes them to take care of it themselves. Luke mentions this trial in order to show Christianity as a non-threat to the Roman Empire; it was a Jewish affair, not a subversive cult.

III. COMPELLED TO RETURN

Acts 18:18-21

After this, Paul continues a few days in Corinth after the trial and then heads off for Syria. When they reach Cenchreae, a city on the coast, Paul shaves his head to fulfill a vow. This was in fulfillment of the Nazarite vow (Numbers 6:1-21), which indicated that Paul had consecrated himself to the Lord for a period of time. The vow included avoiding alcoholic drinks and letting one's hair grow, so shaving his head indicates his period of consecration is complete. Accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila, he stops at Ephesus, where he goes into the synagogue and begins to reason with the Jews. This seems to be a test or experiment to investigate the kind of reception the Gospel would obtain in the city.

III. COMPELLED TO RETURN

Acts 18:18-21

The Jews in the synagogue at Ephesus seem to be curious and hungry for the Gospel as they ask him to stay for a longer period of time. Paul declines their request; he must go onto encourage and teach the churches he formed in Asia Minor. He lets them know his desire is to return, but it is ultimately up to God. Paul sets sail from Ephesus because he also believes in strengthening the churches he left behind. It is not an either/or thing with Paul. His goal, as well as ours, is to see people built up in Christ and this includes encouraging and teaching God's Word to those who are already followers of Christ. He does this in order for them to mature in the faith.

III. COMPELLED TO RETURN

Acts 18:18-21

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will.

While teaching many of those gathering in the synagogue weekly, Paul "tarried" (Gk. *prosmeno*, *pros-MEN-oh*), meaning "to continue" or "to remain with" them for an unspecified length of time, but for what is understood to be a considerable number of days. Paul stayed put, preaching and teaching among them, even after a plot to kill him had failed ([18:12-17](#)). Because the people were receptive, the Word effectively convinced them that Jesus is the Christ. Note that in the previous verse, those gathered were called Jews and Greeks.

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025
TEACHING GOD'S WORD



III. COMPELLED TO RETURN

Acts 18:18-21

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will.

After Paul's effective and persuasive ministry to them, he now calls them "brethren" (Gk. adelphos, ah-del-FOSE), which can refer to a brother by birth, national origin, or friendship. However within the Christian context, in its plural form of adelphoi (Gk. ah-del-FOY), the term became all-inclusive to refer to all who believed, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free.

III. COMPELLED TO RETURN

Acts 18:18-21

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will.

The "vow" (Gk. euche, ew-KHAY) that Paul made earlier was most likely a 7-day Nazarite vow when he did not shave or drink wine (cf. [Acts 21:23](#)). Shaving his head was simply an outward Jewish expression of his inward sincerity when this period of consecration had ended.

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025

TEACHING GOD'S WORD



III. COMPELLED TO RETURN

Acts 18:18-21

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will.

The Roman city Ephesus was located on the coast of what is today western Turkey, about 55 miles north from Miletus - the place from which Paul would call the elders of the church ([Acts 20:17](#)). While in port at Ephesus, Paul left his companions, Priscilla and Aquila, and went directly to the synagogue to again debate with the Jewish religious and philosophical leaders assembled there. Paul was ever ready and seeking to persuade, convince, debate, and prove that Jesus Christ is the Messiah to all who would listen. The Greek word sunagoge (soo-naw-go-GAY) is a building and also the formal assembly of Jews who gathered in such a building to pray, read, and discuss Scripture. Synagogue services were held weekly on the Sabbath and on special feast days. The synagogue could also be used for trials. Every town with at least ten Jewish males free to practice their religion could have a synagogue.

Lesson 13 November 30, 2025
TEACHING GOD'S WORD



III. COMPELLED TO RETURN

Acts 18:18-21

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will.

Paul's teaching was so efficacious that Jewish religious leaders asked him to tarry (Gk.meno, MEH-no), or stay with them, a while longer. Even though Paul hastened from the port of Ephesus to meet with those in the synagogue, he was compelled by the Holy Spirit to decline their persistence that he extend his stay. The text says he did not consent (Gk. epineuo, eh-pee-NEW-oh). The original word means to nod and implies assent. Here, Paul demonstrates that his calling and ministry is to do God's will, not mans desire. The good work to be done among these new believers paled in comparison to the ministry before Paulas he journeyed to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Thank You for Your Hospitality

As he sailed from Ephesus, Paul gave the local believers an explanation for resisting their hospitality: he had to go to the place of worship. Paul held fast to his conviction to move on; however, he did leave them with a provision. He promised to come back and continue in ministry and fellowship only if God needed him more there. "God willing" had a shared understanding among Jews and Greeks as a way to express a lack of presumption concerning the future. We must take care to use it, not as doubting God's will for our lives or buffeting a weak promise, but as a faithful declaration to do God's will, in His time, at His appointed place.

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will know that God can place us in a situation where our knowledge and skills are embraced so that He is glorified.

BIBLE APPLICATION

Preaching the Gospel is often seen as annoying and offensive, or as someone imposing their beliefs on another. Far from it. As Paul preached and taught, he appealed to the reason of his audience while also acknowledging their freedom of choice and personal responsibility. He was a man with a single-minded focus because he believed God was at work in the hearts of those around him. This ought to encourage us to pray and ask God to give us eyes to see Him at work and assurance that He is with us to equip and protect us. Whether at work or a softball game, we may be presented with opportunities to share our faith. We can also pray for others in new and challenging situations. We can pray for them to keep their eyes open and their hearts focused on the one thing that matters: the Good News of Jesus Christ.

STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: We will know that believers can pray and praise
God for sustaining our work or vocations.

STUDENT RESPONSES

Sometimes opportunities to share our faith can be right under our noses. There may be someone at your work or in your neighborhood whom God may be highlighting to you. One of the best contexts to get to know someone and share our lives is mealtime. Make a plan to sit down in the coming week and eat with at least three people who do not know Christ. Pray for an opportunity to share the Gospel and watch what God does.

Prayer

Thank you for sending missionaries to spread the Good News of Christ.

Thank you for missionaries who share the Good News in the local
community and globally.

In the Name of Jesus, we pray.

Amen.

Next Sunday
December 7, 2025
Lesson 1
The Sabbath Day
Exodus 20:8-11, 31:12-16