

Memory Verse

“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts 20:24)

Knowledge of God's Will [God's Word]	Knowledge of God [God's Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
1. The gospel is for all, Jews and Gentiles alike. 2. The church has been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ.	1. God is truth. 2. God is Spirit, and He guides the ministries of His holy workers.	1. Serve with humility. 2. Submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos' Ministry (Acts 18:24–28)
- B. Paul's Ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19)
- C. Paul's Ministry in Greece (Acts 20)
- D. Paul Returns to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1–17)

Life Application: Lessons from Paul

Memory Verse

Conclusion: We will face many challenges as we minister to God's church and preach the good news of salvation to others. Despite this, we must remain holy and steadfast in the Spirit.

Introduction

Following his second missionary journey, Paul returned to Jerusalem and then went down to Antioch, the home base of his overseas missions. After spending some time in Antioch, he began his third missionary journey (A.D. 53–57), during which he traveled to Galatia, Phrygia, and Ephesus, to both strengthen the believers and preach about Jesus Christ.

Paul had many more coworkers on this journey. They include: Priscilla and Aquila, Timothy, Luke, Titus, Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus, Apollos, Tychicus, Trophimus, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater, Phoebe, and Tertius (partial journey).

Journey (*See Figure 1*): Antioch in Syria, Galatia, Phrygia (Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch of Pisidia), Ephesus, Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea), Greece (Athens, Corinth), Macedonia (Berea, Thessalonica, Philippi), Troas, Miletus, Tyre, Caesarea, Jerusalem

A. Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos' Ministry (Acts 18:24–28)

1. Apollos

In Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila met Apollos, an eloquent speaker. Well versed in the Scriptures and fervent in spirit, he spoke boldly, taught faithfully, and learned eagerly. However, up to that point, he had only heard of the baptism of John. Seeing this, Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside and taught him the truth more accurately. As a result, Apollos became a powerful teacher (Acts 18:24–28; 1 Cor 3:4–5).

Lessons from Apollos

- **He was mighty in the Scriptures (Acts 18:24):** God's word, the sword of the Spirit, is living and powerful (Heb 4:12; Eph 6:17). We must be well equipped with the knowledge of the Scriptures to effectively persuade the unbelieving, convince the wavering, refute the critics, nourish the needy, strengthen the weak, and guide the lost.
- **He was fervent in spirit (Acts 18:25):** Fervency, both in our love for others and dedication to the Lord, should be the driving force behind our service and preaching.
- **He spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord (Acts 18:25):** We need to study the Scriptures diligently. Only then can we lead others on the correct path to salvation and present every believer perfect in Christ Jesus (Col 1:28).
- **He was willing to receive instruction (Acts 18:25):** Despite his eloquence and knowledge of the Scriptures, he humbly accepted the teachings of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:26). The humble and those who are meek will receive the word (Jas 1:21; Mt 11:25). Unless we are humble enough to accept correction, we will not grow in the knowledge of God.
- **He spoke boldly (Acts 18:26):** If we are timid or are afraid of rejection or persecution, we will not be able to tell others about God. But courage enables us to declare God's word freely and faithfully.

2. Priscilla and Aquila

It is clear that Priscilla and Aquila were well versed in the Scriptures, as they were able to accurately instruct someone as knowledgeable as Apollos. They paid close attention to the teachings of God's word and were able to discern when someone taught the word accurately. They were a loving couple who cared about God's work, as well as fellow workers like Paul and Apollos. That is why when they saw Apollos' errors, they made an effort to invite him to their

home and explain to him the way of God.

Lessons from Priscilla and Aquila

- Priscilla and Aquila were not preachers and likely did not teach people in public. They served the Lord quietly, behind the scenes. Our Lord desires this type of servitude (Mt 6:3–4).
- They taught Apollos not because they wanted to humiliate him in public, but because they truly wanted what was best for him. When preaching to other Christians, we must share our understanding of the truth with humility and love. Our main purpose is not to prove others wrong or impose our will upon them but to bring others to the truth for their salvation.

B. Paul’s Ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19)

1. True Baptism and Receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1–10)

When Paul arrived at Ephesus, the first thing he asked the disciples was if they had received the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2). Paul was interested to know whether they also shared the same experience as Paul in receiving the Holy Spirit. However, these believers had never received or heard of the Holy Spirit. When questioned further regarding baptism, the disciples replied that they had only been baptized into John’s baptism. Paul realized that their understanding of the truth was incomplete, so he educated them regarding true baptism.

After being taught more about Jesus Christ, they were baptized again, but this time, they received the complete cleansing effect of Jesus’ blood from baptism performed in the correct mode. Only after they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus were they able to receive the Holy Spirit. After this, Paul continued to preach there daily for two years, bringing the word of God to both Jews and Greeks in all Asia and speaking boldly in the synagogue.

2. Miracles of God (Acts 19:11–20)

Paul’s preaching was not just in speech, but also in deeds with God’s power (1 Cor 2:4; 4:20; 1 Thess 1:5). God performed marvelous miracles through Paul “so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them” (Acts 19:11–12). Even exorcists tried to do the same miracle. In one instance, seven sons of a Jewish chief priest named Sceva tried to cast out an evil spirit in the name of Jesus, only for the evil spirit to question their identity. “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” (Acts 19:15). As a result, the evil spirit caused the man to leap on and overpower them, and they fled the house naked and wounded.

Though the seven sons of Sceva called upon the name of Jesus Christ, they were unable to cast out the evil spirit. In a turn of irony, the evil spirit cast them out instead. This incident caused great fear in all the Ephesians and many who practiced magic came to the Lord. They even gathered their books and burned them for all to see. This further allowed the word of the Lord to prevail and grow in might (Acts 19:20).

What can we learn from the incident with the seven sons of Sceva?

- They likely had an ulterior motive in trying to exorcise the evil spirit, whether it was for financial gain or to win people’s respect.
- They did not believe in Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, for they called Jesus “the Jesus whom Paul preaches” (Acts 19:13). They simply invoked the name of Jesus as if the words themselves would produce power.
- They used God’s name for personal gain and not for God’s glory. Knowing that God was not

with these self-proclaimed exorcists, the evil spirit had no fear of them.

- The name of Jesus Christ is to be honored.
- Believers must lead God-fearing lives and true faith. A believer cannot possibly call on the name of Jesus Christ while continuing to live in sin, as if God is not aware. If even an evil spirit could discern false believers from true, how can any hide their secret sins from God?

3. The Riot at Ephesus (Acts 19:21–41)

Did You Know?

The temple of Diana was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, and those from all over the Roman Empire would visit the temple. The Ephesians worshiped false gods like Diana, and believed their job was to guard the temple of Diana. The temple was large: 420 feet by 250 feet. It was also a treasure house, as they made and sold shrines of Diana within.

Demetrius, a silversmith, crafted silver statues of the goddess Diana to make money. He gathered other craftsmen and told them that Paul preached a message that could bring ruin to their business. Cleverly, he also said, “The temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed” (v. 27). He used the name of their goddess to stir up their emotions, filling them with wrath. Soon, a riot broke out.

Most of the crowd that had gathered had no idea why they had gathered; they were simply confused. After they spent two hours crying out, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians,” the city clerk quieted the crowd and reassured them that the goddess Diana’s reputation was not in danger, and that the two men were neither robbers nor blasphemers. He advised the crowd not to act rashly and reminded them of the proper judicial channels to pursue if they had a case. He then dismissed the crowd.

- **What can we learn from this riot?**
 - Satan does not want the gospel to spread and will launch attacks to prevent it from growing. The more the gospel advances, the more Satan will oppose it.
 - God is sovereign, and He will protect His workers against the opposition.

C. Paul’s Ministry in Greece (Acts 20)

After the riot in Ephesus, Paul continued on his journey and traveled to Macedonia, Greece, then Macedonia again, before ministering in Asia and joining others at Troas. While in Troas, Paul spoke to the gathered disciples the day before his departure. Paul loved the disciples dearly, so he wanted to spend as much time with them as he could to encourage them for the last time. However, his message continued “until midnight” (v. 7), causing a young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in a window, to be “overcome by sleep [and fall] down from the third story” (v. 9). He was taken up dead, but Paul went down and embraced him, reassuring the others that “his life is in him” (v. 10). Paul returned and they broke bread, ate, and continued to talk until dawn, when Paul departed.

Paul continued on his journey, both on land and on sea, and when he had arrived at a place called Miletus, he called for the church elders in Ephesus. Paul had sailed past Ephesus in a hurry to reach Jerusalem in time for the Day of Pentecost. Paul, knowing that he was leaving to face chains and tribulation in Jerusalem, encouraged the elders to take care of the flock in the church of God, which God purchased with His own blood (v. 28). Soon, the church would face persecution from the outside and apostasy from the inside (vv. 29–30). He wanted them to be fully aware of the danger that lay ahead, to

guard the believers and remember the examples left by him.

After Paul's encouragement, he knelt down and prayed with all of them. As he was readying to leave, they embraced him and kissed him, shedding tears for his farewell, knowing that they would not see him again.

D. Paul Returns to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1–17)

As Paul was on his way to Jerusalem, God made it clear to him that suffering and imprisonment awaited him in Jerusalem. But Paul's decision is clear:

And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

(Acts 20:22–24)

Paul's traveling companions and the disciples that he met on his return to Jerusalem warned him not to continue. Even a prophet came before Paul and bound his own hands and feet, prophesying that Paul would be bound in the same way (Acts 21:11). However, Paul resolutely stated, "I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).

Paul's resolve to go to Jerusalem was by the movement of the Spirit, not of his own will (Acts 19:21; 20:22). Paul knew that the suffering that awaited him was for the name of the Lord Jesus and understood that the Lord had a good purpose for him. His service to Christ was one of complete loyalty.

Check for Understanding

- 1. Why are Apollos' qualities important for the workers of God?** It is important for workers of God to understand and believe in the Scriptures fully, for only then can they preach with conviction and accuracy. Furthermore, when preaching, we must speak boldly, yet humbly, not allowing our personal emotions to cloud our judgment. We must also know when to receive instruction and accept it with humility.
- 2. Why happened when the sons of Sceva misused the name of Jesus Christ?** The evil spirit caused the possessed man to leap on the sons and overpower them, which led them to flee the house naked and wounded. This incident caused fear to fall upon all the Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus, and "many who believed came confessing and telling their deeds" (Acts 19:18). Many even brought their books on sorcery to be burned in public.
- 3. What happened during the riot in Ephesus, and what does it teach us?** Because of Demetrius' words, an angry crowd gathered and detained two of Paul's companions. However, a city clerk came to dismiss the crowd and Paul's companions were released. This teaches us that Satan does not want the gospel to spread. He will launch an attack when the gospel advances. But God is sovereign, and He will protect His workers against the opposition.
- 4. What was Paul's encouragement to the elders at Ephesus?** He encouraged them "to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).
- 5. What was Paul's attitude as he traveled to Jerusalem?** He was not swayed by warnings of suffering, nor did he count his life dear to himself, in order to finish the race with joy and testify to the gospel of the grace of God. He said, "I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the

name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).

Life Application

Lessons from Paul

What can we learn from Paul's conduct on his third missionary journey? Let's look at some of the ways he served God, and his attitude towards his faith and the church in general.

1. Paul served the Lord with humility
 - a. He endured the trials that came from the Jews (Acts 20:19)
 - b. He kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed to the believers the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20, 27)
2. Paul sincerely cared about the well-being of the believers
 - a. Paul diligently encouraged the believers (Acts 20:2, 7–11)
 - b. He often toiled for the believers and taught them in tears (Acts 20:18, 31)
 - c. He cared about the believers' faith in the future, when he could no longer be with them, and earnestly exhorted the elders to shepherd the church of God (Acts 20:28–31)
3. Paul preached to all, Jews and Greeks alike (Acts 20:21)
 - a. He taught in public and from house to house, catering to the general as well as the specific needs of each believer (Acts 20:20)
 - b. He preached and taught through speech and personal conduct (Acts 16:25; 20:18, 33–35)
4. Paul submitted to the guidance of the Spirit
 - a. He submitted to the guidance of the Spirit, even when he did not know what would happen, other than that chains and tribulations awaited him (Acts 20:22–23)
 - b. He was faithful to God and had a clear conscience (Acts 20:26)

Have you served the Lord with humility, sincerely cared for your brothers and sisters in church, spread the gospel, and submitted to the Spirit's guidance? Share with the class any recent experiences that you have had as a way to encourage yourself and each other to follow Paul's example.

Testimony

In December of 2016, a brother went to Zambia to serve the Lord. Despite the long journey and jetlag, the brother kept asking God to give him the strength to care for the Zambian brethren. Not every member or truth-seeker was focused on learning. Some had a hard time studying the Bible. Some youth and children had a hard time maintaining a reverent heart to seek after God. But he kept on asking God for grace and wisdom and toward the end, the members were able to focus and internalize the teachings. It was very satisfying to see them learning and growing.

In the Tagagun region, the truth seekers were ready to be baptized. There were about thirty to thirty-five truth-seekers who decided to get baptized that day. The walk is about forty-five to seventy minutes one way to get to the baptism site, yet the members sang the whole way there. Three people saw blood in the water when they were baptized and afterward, they had footwashing and Holy Communion.

During one evening prayer, an African brother came to him and shared how he saw a vision during prayer. He saw something like a shooting star, coming across the sky from the right to the left (east to west) and then stopping in front of him. The star then shone with a great brightness, moved down, and then moved back, and the vision ended with the clap that ended the prayer.

During another evening prayer, a few sisters were very moved and touched, so much that they did not want to stop praying after the prayer had ended and even continued trying to speak in tongues when seated.

In another prayer, one of the sisters experienced an attack from Satan. She was hysterical and scared. But the preacher explained to her that she needed to calm down first and accept Jesus as her personal Savior, and then he commanded Satan to leave her in the name of Jesus Christ.

For the other sisters, it seemed like they had experienced something in their prayer that they enjoyed so much that they did not want to stop; one sister said that she had seen heaven open and there was a choir singing a hymn. It was a very edifying moment.

After serving in Tagagan, he went to serve in the Mpika region, where about twenty truth seekers were baptized. After the baptism, they held footwashing and Holy Communion. Before he and other workers left the next day, one of the sisters who had been baptized received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. Once again, the brother experienced the work of the Holy Spirit just as what was mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.

During his missionary trip, not every moment was smooth sailing. Sometimes, the power was cut in the middle of service. At one location, it rained so much that on the drive back, the road had basically turned into a river, which was quite an experience to drive through. He and other workers ended up getting some bricks to put under the back wheels and they pushed from the front, and eventually, the van was able to reverse out of the mud and drive around it. At one point, he felt ill due a stomach bug. With some rest and with lots of prayer, he completely recovered within a few days by the amazing grace of God.

Looking back at this missionary trip, he is filled with thanks and gratitude! God has called us to serve Him and not be passive spectators. And indeed, he experienced what it is like to be a servant. “Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality” (Rom 12:11–13).

All glory belongs to God. Amen.

– Anonymous

Memory Verse

“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts 20:24)

Meaning

1. To Paul, his life was less important than the commission that had been given to him by God.
2. His purpose was to preach the gospel of the grace of God.
3. His goal was to finish the race God had set for him.

When we truly adopt God’s will as our own, we learn to value the opportunity to share God’s salvation, even above our own comforts and our very life. “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared

to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age” (Tit 2:11–12). By looking beyond what is physical and temporary, we can take hold of the spiritual and eternal with the help of God.

Conclusion

We will face many challenges as we minister to God’s church and preach the good news of salvation to others. We must share the truth with love and serve the Lord with willing hearts. To do so, we must be steadfast in staying holy, and in being rooted in and led by the Holy Spirit.

Lesson 10 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What happens when we truly adopt God's will as our own?
We learn to value the opportunity to share God's salvation, even above our own comforts and our very life. To Paul, his life was less important than the commission given by God.
2. What kind of a person was Apollos, and how did he meet Priscilla and Aquila?
He was a man mighty in the Scriptures who spoke boldly of God's word. He met Priscilla and Aquila when they realized his understanding was incomplete and took him aside to instruct him.
3. What can we learn from Priscilla and Aquila?
They shared a deep understanding of the truth and served quietly with humility and love. Their aim was not to prove others wrong, but to instruct out of love for the sake of the truth.
4. What are the reasons the sons of Sceva failed to cast out the evil spirit?
They lacked belief, had ulterior motives, misused Jesus' name, and did not live God-fearing lives.
5. In what ways do some people today resist or oppose the gospel?
For example, they may resist through bullying, calling Christians intolerant, misquoting or misinterpreting Bible verses, pointing to suffering as evidence of an unloving or powerless God, or by using worldly temptations to distract believers.
6. Write down one lesson you learned from Paul's conduct on his journey. How can you emulate this?
See Life Application. Personal answers.

Figure 1: Paul's Third Missionary Journey

