

# The Relationship That Changes Everything

## Acts 18:24-28; 19:11-41

### INTRODUCTION:

Last week we saw the Jesus-movement press into Europe as Paul landed in Athens. This week, we see Christianity expand even further into the outer edges of Asia in a town called Ephesus. Here we see the importance of discipleship in the life of a talented young man named Apollos. We also see that it's an authentic relationship with Jesus that leads us to the power and presence of God rather than ritualistic formulas. Finally, we see the beauty in being honest and real with one another, as we find freedom in confession rather than keeping our sins secret. As these early believers lived out their faith, it impacted the culture around them in surprising ways!

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In Acts 18, while in Corinth, we see Paul make the acquaintance of Priscilla and Aquila who, because they were Jews, were ordered to leave Rome. Certainly their teaming up resulted in some quality tutoring from Paul as they accompanied him to Ephesus where they met Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria who was learned in scripture and ***“instructed in the way of the Lord.”*** Though Apollos was passionate for God and eloquent in speech, as a new Christian he was lacking in some fundamental understanding and doctrine which Priscilla and Aquila supplied. **SHARE briefly who was helpful to you in your early spiritual walk and how it benefitted you. (Now here's the challenging part) Now share how you are building into someone to strengthen their foundation or why you have been reluctant to do so.**
2. Unfortunately, though “life on life mentoring” was and probably still is the best manner for believers to gain strength and confidence in their spiritual walk, seeing people step into a role of mentor and also on the receiving end as a disciple remains intimidating for many. **Why is that?**
3. God used Paul in remarkable ways to instruct people in the life of the gospel. He also empowered Paul with a few high profile calling cards, signs and wonders, to assist in the authentication of Paul as God's representative and his message.(19:11+) This didn't go so well with phonies trying to invoke God's power. V. 14-18 is a somewhat humorous story. God still uses signs and wonders where He sees the need. **What do you see, in our culture and your relational circles, as the successful “tool” to authenticate his message through you?**
4. Signs and wonders can also create a fear of God and awe in Him which can be quite positive. (v.17-18) But we also see at work a new transparency and repentance, an openness which by its witness of Christian character caused the *“word of the Lord to spread widely and grow in power.”* **How do you see transparency, confession, honesty and vulnerability within Christian community (and especially small groups like yours) work to advance the cause of Christ and mold a people in keeping with God's desire? How has this risk of vulnerability been of benefit to you?**
5. One of the attributes of New Life that visitors often remark about is that from the parking lot to the lobby to the pulpit to the classroom we have cultivated an environment or being “real” to people, and that there is a sense of safety, security and freedom in this that is attractive. **What have you noticed and, are there areas where you can see our church improve its first impression with the guests God gives us?**
6. **It's the economy, stupid!** That's what it boiled down to for guild craftsman Demetrius and the rank and file Ephesians as they chose the status quo of darkness over life change through the gospel. We see a similar perspective in Mark 5 when Jesus healed the Gerasene demoniac and the herd of pigs took a fatal swim *“the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.”* **How have you evidenced people today entrenched and perhaps comfortable “stiff arming” any introduction of the gospel truths? What is at the root of this rejection?**

**TAKE A STEP:** I'm Not OK and You're Not OK and That's OK. When we realize God is at work making much of our fragile lives, we can risk being who we are knowing God is building our lives for His glory.

