

BIOGRAPHIES OF BIBLE SAINTS

VI. Aquilla And Priscilla: Biblical, Effective "Lay" Christian Ministers **A. Becoming Effective "Lay" Ministers By Learning From God's Starter Gifts** **(Acts 18:1-19a)**

I. Introduction

- A. Ephesians 4:11-12 teaches that God uses the "starter" gifts of [today's] evangelists and pastor-teachers to equip the rest of the body to do the actual work of the ministry.
- B. Thus, it is edifying to study the development of Aquilla and Priscilla toward effective "lay" ministries, and we begin by viewing how God positioned them to become prepared to perform such ministries in Acts 18:1-19a:

II. Becoming Effective "Lay" Ministers By Learning From God's Starter Gifts, Acts 18:1-19a.

- A. A married couple, Aquilla and Priscilla, were positioned of God by events and trials to meet Paul, Acts 18:1-3:
 - 1. When the Apostle Paul arrived at Corinth, he met there a Jew named Aquilla who had been born in Pontus south of the Black Sea but ended up in Rome only to face expulsion from there by Emperor Claudius since he was a Jew, and he had gone to Corinth, Acts 18:1-2; Zon. Pict. Ency. Bible, v. Four, p. 817.
 - 2. Aquilla and his wife Priscilla were tentmakers, the same occupation as Paul, so he stayed with them and they lived and worked together, all by the obvious sovereign assignment of God, Acts 18:2-3.
- B. Living and working together with Paul, this couple were greatly discipled by the Lord, Acts 18:4-17:
 - 1. Aquilla and Priscilla witnessed Paul reason every Sabbath in the synagogue, persuading Jews and Greeks, and saw him be pressed in spirit by the Lord to testify to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, Acts 18:4-5.
 - 2. This couple watched Paul react to slander to his ministry by turning from rebellious Jews to evangelize Gentiles in the house of Justus who lived next to the synagogue, and there to lead the chief ruler of the synagogue next door to Christ along with many other Corinthians so that they were baptized, Acts 18:6-8.
 - 3. Aquilla and Priscilla noted how Christ had then appeared to Paul in a night vision to encourage him to continue to minister amid threatening opposition, for the Lord had many people there, Acts 18:9-10.
 - 4. Accordingly, this couple witnessed Paul continue to minister there for 18 more months until the Jews made an insurrection against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat with the charge that Paul was teaching people to worship God contrary to their Jewish law, Acts 18:11-13.
 - 5. Aquilla and Priscilla witnessed how the Lord had kept His word to Paul that he would remain unharmed in that city as Gallio, the administrator on the judgment seat, refused to deal with the charge against Paul as he stated it was a matter of the Jewish law and not of civil disobedience on Paul's part, Acts 18:14-15.
 - 6. When Gallio even drove the Jews away from his judgment seat, the Greeks with their pent-up anti-Jewish feelings took the opportunity to beat Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, but Gallio ignored the incident as he resolutely refused to get involved in a religion that was protected by Rome, Acts 18:16-17. If Sosthenes is the same Sosthenes mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:1, the beating likely helped him to become a Christian! (Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Acts 18:17) Aquilla and Priscilla witnessed all of this maneuvering of events and people by the Lord to keep His word in protecting Paul so that the Apostle could continue to minister at Corinth, what would have made a great impression on the couple!
- C. Having been discipled by Paul, Aquilla and Priscilla, now devout believers in Christ willing and prepared to serve Him, decided to move their place of business and follow Paul as he left Corinth for Jerusalem, but Paul left them in Ephesus to lay a groundwork for his later ministry there, Acts 18:18-19a; *Ibid*, v. One, p. 232.

Lesson: (1) *In preparation for an effective "lay" ministry, God arranged for Aquilla and Priscilla through events and trials to end up in Corinth where they would meet Paul who was of their same trade as tentmakers. (2) There they witnessed Paul's teaching and life, and God's great help and provision so he could minister there, exemplifying for this couple a life of effective ministry by faith in the truth of Scripture and reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit. (3) Impacted by all of this, Aquilla and Priscilla followed Paul only to be assigned by him to stay in Ephesus as he went to Jerusalem that they might serve the Lord there laying a foundational work toward evangelization.*

Application: *To prepare to be used of the Lord for an effective "lay" ministry, (1) we need to accept God's assigned realms of current employment and geographical location, for He wants us to be discipled in these contexts to become effective servants wherever He may then lead us. (2) When God then puts us in contact with His "starter" gifted servants, we "lay" people should learn from their teaching and exemplifying to live and minister by interacting with the Lord in a life of faith as a pattern for our own future ministries!*