

BIOGRAPHIES OF BIBLE SAINTS

VI. Aquila And Priscilla: Biblical, Effective "Lay" Christian Ministers

B. Effectively Serving As "Lay" Ministers By Constructive Nurturing (Acts 18:19b-28)

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 Church body to do the actual work of the ministry.
- B. Thus, it is edifying to study the development of Aquila and Priscilla toward effective "lay" ministries, and we continue by viewing how God used them greatly in the realm of constructive nurturing in Acts 18:19b-28:

II. Effectively Serving As "Lay" Ministers By Constructive Nurturing, Acts 18:18-28.

- A. Having been discipled by Paul at Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla were left by him at Ephesus after the Apostle had left Corinth for Jerusalem and then had stopped along the way at Ephesus, Acts 18:1-19a.
- B. Before leaving Ephesus, Paul had entered the synagogue there to reason with the Jews, obtaining a positive interest in the Christian faith, fertile ground to help Aquila and Priscilla begin a ministry there, Acts 18:19b.
- C. Paul then bade the Ephesian believers farewell to continue toward Jerusalem, confident Aquila and Priscilla would be able to continue an effective ministry there in his absence, Acts 18:20-21.
- D. Luke as the author of Acts presents Paul's third missionary journey in **unusually brief** form in Acts 18:22-23, obviously intending to emphasize Paul's ministry in Ephesus that is picked up again in Acts 19:1-41, Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 408. That ministry at that city importantly marked a shift in Church History where the Christian faith began to be seen as spreading beyond the direct ministrations of the Apostles themselves as the Holy Spirit used Scripture truth to accomplish this, and the "lay" ministry of the **non**-apostles, Aquila and Priscilla reveals as much in Acts 18:24-28 (as follows):
 1. While at Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla saw a Jew named Apollos, a native of cultural Alexandria, Egypt an eloquent speaker who was competent in the Old Testament, come to Ephesus and use his instruction in the Lord fervently to speak and to teach boldly and diligently the truth in the synagogue, Acts 18:24-26a.
 2. However, there was a significant deficit to his ministry -- he knew only the baptism of John, the forerunner of the Messiah, Acts 18:25c. This deficit would have greatly limited Apollos' effectiveness (as follows):
 - a. John's baptism "symbolized cleansing by God because of repentance toward God (cf. Acts 19:4)" where Christian baptism "pictures union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection by means of Spirit baptism (cf. Rom. 6:3-10; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12)," Ibid., p. 409.
 - b. All Apollos could thus achieve in his ministry was to ready hearers for Messiah's arrival, not give them the gospel of salvation to believe unto salvation and the reception of the Holy Spirit, Jn. 3:16; Rom. 8:9b.
 3. Aquila and Priscilla knew the facts that Apollos greatly needed to know to be more effective, but their edifying response to this need in Apollos sets an example for all "lay" ministers in constructive nurturing:
 - a. Had Aquila and Priscilla publicly countered Apollos with their superior knowledge, they would have undermined his public effectiveness before onlookers as they would have humiliated him before them.
 - b. To the contrary, realizing Apollos had wonderful gifts for a very effective public ministry, Aquila and Priscilla "took to themselves; received" (*proslambano*, middle voice; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 491; Moulton & Milligan, The Vocab. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 549-550), namely, they invited Apollos to their home and in private "set forth, explained" (*ektithemi*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 245) to him with "strict exactness" (*akribes*, Ibid., p. 32) the way of God, Acts 18:26 NIV.
 - c. Thus informed, Apollos desired to cross the Aegean Sea west over to Achaia to Corinth (Acts 18:27; 19:1), so the believers at Ephesus, including Aquila and Priscilla who would have been known by the Corinthian believers, wrote to exhort the Corinthian believers to receive him. This resulted in Apollos' arriving at Corinth and conducting a very edifying ministry for the believers there as he mightily showed from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah that men might trust in Him for salvation, Acts 18:27-28.

Lesson: As discipled "lay" ministers, husband-and-wife team, Aquila and Priscilla sensitively protected the future public ministry of the gifted but unformed believer, Apollos, by kindly, privately explaining to him the precise truth of the Christian faith, nurturing Apollos constructively to the great advance of the Church at Corinth!

Application: If God calls and trains us as "lay" ministers to know His Word, may we be careful to use that insight in a way that edifies others instead of using it thoughtlessly to harm their effectiveness and so harm the Church.