

STUDY 5 || ACTS 18 & 1 CORINTHIANS

GOSPEL TEAMWORK

In Acts 18, Paul comes to the cosmopolitan Greek city of Corinth. Everything we read about his visit sounds terrific. He builds a team, preaches effectively, and even develops some next-generation 'talent.' It all sounds so promising. What could possibly go wrong?

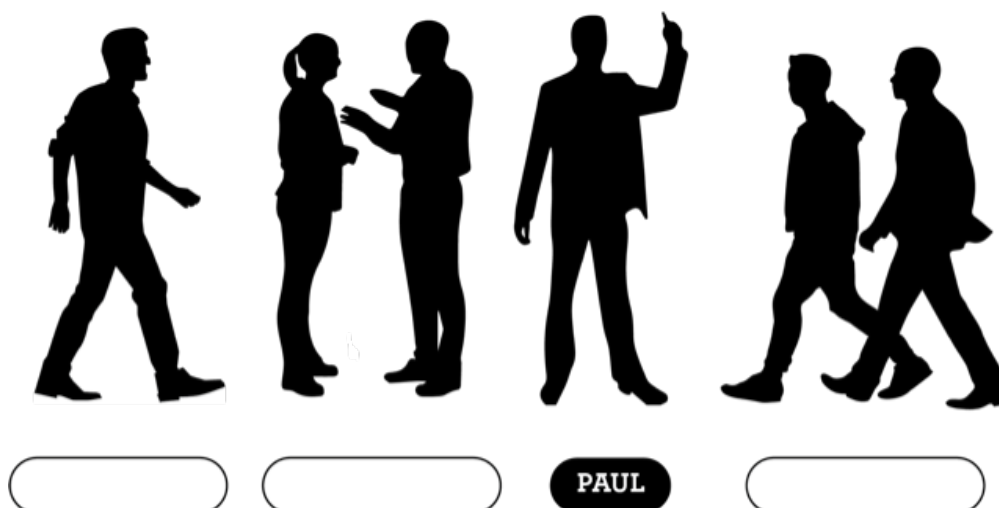
People love to form tribes or teams around competitive rivalries. Which sports teams do you follow? What makes your team better than the others?



MISSION PRACTICALITIES

Read Acts 18.

1. On first arriving in Corinth, how is Paul supported? How does that change with the arrival of Silas and Timothy?
2. From verses 1- 5 and 24-28, add names to all the members of Paul's "Corinthian team" in the diagram below. How would you describe the different roles of the members?



Meet the Team - Paul's Gospel Strategy Network

3. What's Paul's strategy in Corinth in v4, then in Ephesus in v19?

How does this play out in Corinth?

4. In the midst of the opposition, what astonishing result do you see in v7-8?

5. Time after time when Paul preaches to “the Jew first” he’s met with opposition and abuse. And yet God gives him a word of reassurance in v9-10. What’s our temptation in times of opposition? What reassurance can we have?

Notice the official legal position of Roman Proconsul Gallio in v12-16. (Achaia is the name of the province surrounding Corinth.) Remember, in the Roman empire Judaism is a protected religion. By declaring the debate about Paul’s ‘gospel preaching’ to be a squabble among Jews, Gallio is effectively giving Christianity the same legal status as Judaism. In fact, the crowd seem to be in favour of Paul - unfortunately for the replacement synagogue ruler, Sosthenes.

THE TEAM ON TOUR

Verses 18 to 28 see part of the team travelling across the Aegean, and a new member added.



6. On the map, trace (roughly) the movements of:
 - Paul (v18, 19, 22, 23)
 - Priscilla & Aquila (v19, 26)
 - Apollos (v.24, 27)



Strategic Church

“I’ve noticed over the last 20 years or so MPC has been a bit like an ‘Antioch church.’ We’ve quietly trained people, sent them out, planted new churches and shared resources, without making much fuss about it. I think it’s important that we keep doing that ... and it’s only really possible because we keep building the team...”

Dave Brock

7. Note that Paul’s ‘sending church’ is in Antioch. This church is the hub of Gentile mission - the place where the term “Christian” was first used (11:26). It must have been great to come home and report on progress. But Paul doesn’t stay long. What’s his strategy regarding the churches he previously planted? (v23)

Priscilla and Aquila are talent scouts. They like what they hear as they listen to Apollos talking about Jesus in the synagogue. But like a number of the scattered former disciples of John the Baptist, Apollos hasn’t heard yet about the coming of the Holy Spirit. After a bit of ‘catch-up-training’, they send him back to the church in Corinth (ie Achaia) to help them.

8. How is his preaching received?

STRATEGIC MEMO

9. Some time later, Paul has to write to the church in Corinth to address some brewing problems. What’s the issue according to 1 Corinthians 1:10-12?

10. Paul spells out a better way to look at leadership in 1 Cor 3:5-9. What’s his advice?

What dangers are there in this area for us at MPC? How can we avoid them?

How is this a sign of our spiritual maturity or otherwise (1 Cor 3:1)?