I just want to go back very quickly to Aquila and Priscilla. These two are a couple that Paul met when he traveled to Corinth; he ended up ***staying*** with them, ***working*** with them and ultimately taking them with him into ministry. They became as Paul describes them in Romans 16:3, *“Fellow workers in Christ Jesus,”* and ultimately it appears they return to Corinth and plant a church right in their own home.

But **before** all of those things, **they were simply husband and wife.** And this is important. There are so many couples that fight so much within their relationship that they never have the *heart or power* to fight for their relationship! And the weakness of relationship kills any shot of effective ministry. They’re too busy attacking each other…bowing to sin in their own homes…they have nothing left to fight *sin and darkness and cruelty and loss and evil* in the world.

Here’s the perhaps staggering point I want to make…if there are problems in your marriage today…you are at odds with him or with her then listen, the problem is not what she does or doesn’t do or what he does or doesn’t do or how she annoys or he annoys or whatever. ***Plain and simple, the problem is sin.*** One of you, or possibly both of you are not believing God and obeying His Word. Two simple commandments, **that’s it.** God kept it ***ridiculously*** simple…either husband, you are not loving your wife as Christ loves the church and gave Himself for her or wife you are not respecting your husband as the head of you and your home. You are disobeying God, forsaking God’s Word and because of it, sin is running your home…and tents are the ***best you can do…***

We have far too many couples fighting each other instead of fighting for each other. We have far too many husbands and wives that love sin more than they care to love on each other. The way you defeat sin in your home is simple…1 John 5:4, faith is what ***overcomes and overwhelms*** sin…faith in what? Him, her, love, the new dishwasher? NO…1 John 5:5, faith in Jesus.

These two that encounter Paul, and ultimately join him in the battle to ***uncage souls***…before all of that…she held him in the highest respect, and he loved her and put her first always…if that is not you in your home, you have a ***faith*** problem…you have an ***obedience*** problem…and you demand that those you love and those around you remain caged!

Acts Chapter 18 Verses 4 – 8

* Isn’t that interesting…what just happened?! Folks turned on him, rejected him, he walked away…and then the ruler, the **top dog** of the synagogue ends up getting saved? Seems off, seems backwards… Not so much. ***Paul proved that he was selling nothing!*** He wasn’t focused on *“closing the deal.”* ***His focus was on sharing the truth.*** Our responsibility as first-person witnesses to Jesus Christ…the truth and the power of the gospel…our job is to share the gospel of grace and truth.
* We are not the *converters*…we are the ***sharers***… (I know…sharing is hard…I have kids… - *Why wouldn’t the shrimp share his treasure? Because he was a little shellfish!)* We are able to share, we are unable to convert…that is God’s job! And in the Great Commission is a hidden message. Jesus said in Matthew 28:19-20, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* **None of us can do any of those things without Jesus being with us**…oh, except go…that, we can do…well, maybe even not…why go in the first place if you aren’t fueled by the passion of the indwelling presence of God?
* A man or a woman that knows everything there is to know about the Bible can make no one *saved*…all one can do is share the truth. The conversion, the saving, the life entering into a dead spirit is a transaction not between *man and man* but ***between God and man***…and Paul knew that… So when they were not willing, he was like, **fine**…*bye Felicia!* And that ***struck, struck, struck***…many! Paul believed in the power of God and this put on display to those that struggled inwardly all the time with *hope, joy, desire, passion*, this put on display that Paul didn’t rely or care about his own power or *“success”* and thatcrushed them internally!
* So Crispus believed…the ruler of the synagogue…can you imagine what that cost him? In just a couple of verses we will learn that it cost him everything…***a full on life reset***…but *he realized, his heart, his direction, his entire world view*…was all a weight on him and his family…and he transacted with God. He broke through…even if it cost him everything…he, in this scene and forever, **gained everything!**

Acts Chapter 18 Verses 9 – 11

* We often think of Paul as *unstoppable, unbreakable, dominant and powerful*…but this verse set reveals to us that he was **just a man**. Why would God fortify Paul’s heart like this? *“Do not be afraid…”* Paul was terrified for some reason. Perhaps wrestling with it in the night…and God held him close. God is so good to those who are in need AND to those who seek Him….
* *Paul, I’m here with you.* How reassuring is that!? To know that God is with you! You ever have a big mean looking friend? You just walk a little taller with them around, right?! Ok, you’re big powerful protecting friend, is the God who created the universe!! Talk about, *“My dad can beat up your dad!!!”* Paul, don’t stop…keep preaching…**I will send My people.** I love that line! The people of God are so very strengthening and reassuring, aren’t they!?
* Hebrews 12:1-2, knowing that the Lord is with us as evidenced by the surrounding of His people…a HUGE help in running this race well. Thus the ***absolute need*** for each of us to be in fellowship and to **interlock and intertwine** our lives together as the people of God all on the same path, all running the same race. God sent people to love Paul, to encourage him, to be kind to him, to ***tell him his sermon jokes were good***…I love that!!
* And so what did Paul do…he got up and believed God…and he put up revival tents. **Nope.** He crafted entertaining sermon shows with lights and dancing pigeons! **HA.** That would be cool…but no. I love this…**He taught the Word of God.** That is the commandment, ***that is what God was wanting***…isn’t that cool to see?

Acts Chapter 18 Verses 12 – 18

* What is this vow? ***Really*** we don’t know. Perhaps, and some have theorized that Paul took a ***Nazarite Vow*** which was Jewish custom…it was basically a fast of 30 days. No meat, no wine, no hair trimming and then after 30 days you would cut your hair and burn it as an offering to the Lord. And many of you may wonder, why? We don’t really know why. And some of you might be thinking, *but the law is fulfilled, customs fulfilled…why would Paul take a vow?* Simple answer. **Because he wanted to!**
* There are Christians out there that hold to the feasts of the Old Testament, follow certain customs of the law…***whatever.*** I personally have no problem whatsoever with that. **Do what you want to do!** Here’s the thing though and the danger. ***Why*** are you doing it? Are you doing for the purposes of personal devotion. Cool! Great! But if you’re doing it because you believe it makes you more *right* with God…wrong. Nothing can be added or taken away from the propitiation secured by the blood of Jesus. But hey, personal devotion and worship…just to love on the Lord…I say, ***“Mazel tov!!”***

Acts Chapter 18 Verses 19 – 25

* Now this is awesome and I just want you to see this quickly and then we’re through. Apollo was the Greek god of *truth, knowledge and medicine* among other things and here is this **prominent strong** gentile character named after him with **powerful presence** preaching and teaching in the open square. He was **eloquent and mighty** and yet all he had been taught was the baptism of John. Repentance from sin and a return to God Most High…but watch this…

Acts Chapter 18 Verses 26 – 28

* (Notice, they took him aside) He was ***mighty***, he was ***eloquent***, he was ***powerful*** and he was ***bold***…and all of those things were accompanied by him being **absolutely teachable!!** I just want you to see that. I have thrown out some hard truths today…and many here are mighty, many are eloquent, many are bold, many are powerful…***but are you teachable?***
* Someone once said, *“The unteachable person is sentenced to being taught only by experience. The tragedy is that they will reach nothing further than thier own pain.”* If you were ever going to allow yourself to be taught…to become flammable to something…wouldn’t it be wise to be open you heart to taught by God Most High? We have a generation that is choosing the voices of men over the voice of God…what about you?