

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: Too Soon to Quit **Acts 18:1-22**

When God opens doors, the enemy tries to close them, and we get discouraged and quit. As Paul ministered in Corinth, the Lord encouraged him to keep him going, and these same encouragements are available to us today.

Corinth's reputation for wickedness was known all over the Roman Empire. Thanks to its location, the city was a center for both trade and travel. Money and vice, philosophies, and religions all found a home in Corinth.

DEVOTED HELPERS vv. 1-5

Paul came to Corinth following his ministry to the philosophers in Greece, and there were many philosophers and false teachers in Corinth, preying on the ignorant and superstitious population.

Paul separated himself from the "religious hucksters" by supporting himself as a tentmaker. By the providence of God, he met a Jewish couple, Aquila and Priscilla, who were leather workers, as was Paul.

Paul's Christian friends, new and old, encouraged him at a time when he needed it the most. Aquila and Priscilla proved to be an essential part of Paul's ministry. They are an excellent example of how "lay ministers" can help further the Lord's work.

OPPOSITION vv. 6-8

Jewish opposition had forced Paul to leave Thessalonica and Berea, but it only made him determined to stay and get the job done in Corinth.

Two Old Testament images are found in Acts 18:6. Shaking out one's garments and blood on their own hands are statements of judgment that said, "You have had your opportunity, but now it's over because you rejected God's truth." While Paul never ceased witnessing to the Jews, his primary calling was to evangelize the Gentiles.

God brought another friend into Paul's life, Titus Justus. Paul began using the house of Titus Justus as his preaching location, right next to the synagogue! This gave him continued contact with the Jews and Gentile proselytes, and as a result, even the chief ruler of the synagogue was converted. Here is another instance of an entire family turning to the Lord.

There never was an easy place to serve God; Paul did not allow adversity to keep him from serving God.

THE WORD OF ASSURANCE vv. 9-17

The Jewish community in Corinth was no doubt furious at Paul's success and did everything possible to silence him and get rid of him. Paul may have been thinking about leaving the city when the Lord came to him and gave him the assurance that he needed. Jesus assured Paul that no one would hurt him and that he would bring many sinners to the Savior. It was too soon to quit!

The next time you feel alone and defeated, claim the presence of the Lord by faith. He is with you!

A New Proconsul; Same Old Tactics vv. 12-17

The arrival of a new proconsul gave the unbelieving Jews hope that Rome might declare this new "Christian sect" illegal. Gallio ended up doing just the opposite. By refusing to try the case, Gallio made it clear that Paul and his disciples had as much right as the Jews to practice their religion and share it with others.

But that was not the end of the matter. The Greeks who were witnessing the scene lay hold of Sosthenes, the man who replaced Crispus as ruler of the synagogue and beat him right before the eyes of the proconsul! It was a flagrant display of anti-Semitism, but Gallio looked the other way. In time, Sosthenes became a believer, and the Jews had to find another ruler for their synagogue!

CONCLUSION: God's Will vv. 18-22

"If God will" was more than a religious slogan with Paul; it was one of the strengths and encouragements of his life and ministry. At a critical time in his life and ministry, Paul found courage in affirming, "The will of the Lord be done!"

After eighteen months of ministry, Paul decided that it was God's will for him to leave Corinth and return to his home church in Antioch. His friends Priscilla and Aquila accompanied him to Ephesus. They remained there when he departed for Caesarea, Jerusalem, and finally, Antioch, where he reported to his home church concerning the second missionary journey.

It's always too soon to quit! Paul does not quit for the Lord's will is for Paul to start his third and final missionary trip.

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