


 What experience do you have with (a) building projects and (b) foreign languages? What most frustrated you about (a) and (b)?

-  1. Why do they build this tower? Why is such unity wrong?
 2. In light of God's early history with mankind, why would the Lord be concerned that "nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them"?
 3. What do you learn about God's judgment and mercy?

 1. What's the lesson here for empire-building? For church-building? For human ambition? 2. How is unity "in Christ" different from the unity at Babel? 3. Where are you feeling scattered or confused? Why might that be? Have you ever built a "tower" for yourself only to get "scattered" by God? What happened?

 1. Who of your relatives has lived the longest? What do you know or what have you been told about this person? 2. Are you the firstborn of your parents? Or are you among their "other sons and daughters"? What difference did birth order make in how you were raised?

The Tower of Babel

11 Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. ²As men moved eastward,^a they found a plain in Shinar^b and settled there.

³They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. ⁴Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

⁵But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. ⁶The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

⁸So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹That is why it was called Babel^c—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

From Shem to Abram

¹⁰This is the account of Shem.

Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father^d of Arphaxad. ¹¹And after he became the father of Arphaxad, Shem lived 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

^{a2} Or from the east; or in the east ^{b2} That is, Babylonia ^{c9} That is, Babylon; Babel sounds like the Hebrew for confused. ^{d10} Father may mean ancestor; also in verses 11-25.



Genesis 11:1–9

For Lite Study

THE TOWER OF BABEL

It was common in the ancient world to build towers which were seen as staircases from earth to heaven. In this story, the human race attempts to take destiny into its own hands. The people want their human kingdom to replace and exclude the kingdom of God. If they were allowed to continue, there would be no limit to their rebellion against God.

Optional Ice-Breaker Questions:

- What did you love to climb when you were a kid?
- What foreign languages can you either speak or understand?

1. What do you think the desire to build a tower demonstrated?
- ambition
 - pride
 - self-sufficiency
 - rebellion
 - other: _____

2. Why was God so concerned about this building project?
- because of the pride behind it
 - because of the human disobedience to his plan
 - because their unity would lead to increased rebellion
 - other: _____
3. What do you think was God's primary purpose in confusing their language?
- to populate the whole earth
 - to punish the people
 - to protect them from their destructive path
 - to restore them to obedience
 - other: _____

4. How do you typically react when God scatters your plans?
- pound my fists
 - give up
 - try to understand why

- pick up the pieces and keep going
 - start another plan
 - ask for instructions
 - other: _____
5. Which best describes the activity in your community?
- building towers to heaven
 - speaking different languages
 - doing things for God
 - other: _____
6. How much change has your world undergone in the last few years? How have you dealt with the stress that came from those changes?
7. What is the "Babel" (confusion) in your life now?
8. How can this group pray for you today and in the coming week?

¹²When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Shelah. ¹³And after he became the father of Shelah, Arphaxad lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.^a

¹⁴When Shelah had lived 30 years, he became the father of Eber. ¹⁵And after he became the father of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg. ¹⁷And after he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu. ¹⁹And after he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug. ²¹And after he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug had lived 30 years, he became the father of Nahor. ²³And after he became the father of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When Nahor had lived 29 years, he became the father of Terah. ²⁵And after he became the father of Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

²⁷This is the account of Terah.

Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. ²⁸While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth. ²⁹Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰Now Sarai was barren; she had no children.

³¹Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.

³²Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Haran.


The Call of Abram


12 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.


²⁴"I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
³¹I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."


⁴So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. ⁵He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had


^a 12,13 Hebrew; Septuagint (see also Luke 3:35, 36 and note at Gen. 10:24) 35 years, he became the father of Cainan. ¹³And after he became the father of Cainan, Arphaxad lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan had lived 130 years, he became the father of Shelah. And after he became the father of Shelah, Cainan lived 330 years and had other sons and daughters

 **1.** What do you learn about Abram, his family and his roots from this passage? Why might Abram migrate with his father and not Nahor? **2.** Why might they settle in Haran instead of Canaan, their intended destination: (a) They were tired? (Haran was 600 miles from Ur, and Canaan 400 miles further still.) (b) They were attracted to Haran's moon worship, which reminded them of Ur? (c) They simply lacked the vision and will to "go all the way"? (d) Abram was waiting on God's timing before proceeding further (see Ac 7:2ff)? **3.** How does Genesis 11 interlock with the table of nations (ch. 10)? With God's covenant with Noah (ch. 9)? With the genealogy of Adam (ch. 5)? **4.** Why would these historical connections be important to Israelites? To you?

 **1.** At this junction between primeval history (ch. 1–11) and patriarchal history (ch. 12–50), a review is in order. What have you learned thus far about: (a) God's original intention for his people and how this paradise was lost? (b) The degeneration of the human race, as well as its generation, since the Fall? (c) The everyday, as well as redemptive, history of God's people? (d) God's covenant with us, which involves judgment, as well as mercy? **2.** What new things about God have impacted you in Genesis?

 **1.** Where is "home" for you? When did you first leave there? What for? Who or what did you take with you? And leave behind? **2.** What do (or did) you hope to be doing at age 75?

 **1.** What command and promises does God give Abram? With what qualifications? What do you make of their unconditional nature? Their universal scope? Means of fulfillment (v. 7; see 11:30)? **2.** Why does God promise Abram a great name (v. 2), when God foiled the name-building efforts of others (see 6:4ff; 11:4ff)? **3.** "Actions reveal character": so who is Abram?

 **1.** Describe a time when you made a significant, personal sacrifice in response to God's directive? **2.** Of the promises to Abram, which appeal to you and

8. What is the purpose of the judgment awaiting those who forsake the Lord (vv. 24–31)? What is the future for those who are penitent? How will it be different from their present situation?

♥ 1. Was there a time in your life when religion was meaningless? What changed your mind, or does it tend to be that way now? Why? 2. Is mere sincerity what counts with God (see Ro 2:17–24, 28–29)? What could make your worship more meaningful? 3. Karl Marx said that religion is “the opiate of the masses” to numb them to the evils going on around them. In what sense is Isaiah saying something similar? What should be the result of worshiping God? 4. Some define spirituality in personal moral terms, while others see it as a matter of working for social justice. Which better reflects your background? Your present church affiliation? How are both these concerns interrelated in this chapter? 5. How is your church seeking justice and encouraging the oppressed in your community? What situations ought it to address? What risks would that entail? 6. Someone has said, “Justice is finding out what belongs to whom and returning it to them.” Another, “Justice is the act of instituting love for those people you don’t know.” How do you respond to these statements? How would you define justice? 7. Why is Isaiah so hard-hitting in his message? How do you know when to use *shock treatment* as he does, or a *gentle word* without skirting the main issue, as does Jesus with the Samaritan woman (see Jn 4)?

- I have no pleasure
in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.
- ¹²When you come to appear before me,
who has asked this of you,
this trampling of my courts?
¹³Stop bringing meaningless offerings!
Your incense is detestable to me.
New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—
I cannot bear your evil assemblies.
- ¹⁴Your New Moon festivals and your appointed
feasts
my soul hates.
They have become a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them.
- ¹⁵When you spread out your hands in prayer,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even if you offer many prayers,
I will not listen.
Your hands are full of blood;
¹⁶ wash and make yourselves clean.
Take your evil deeds
out of my sight!
Stop doing wrong,
¹⁷ learn to do right!
Seek justice,
encourage the oppressed.^a
Defend the cause of the fatherless,
plead the case of the widow.
- ¹⁸“Come now, let us reason together,”
says the LORD.
“Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.
- ¹⁹If you are willing and obedient,
you will eat the best from the land;
²⁰but if you resist and rebel,
you will be devoured by the sword.”
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.
- ²¹See how the faithful city
has become a harlot!
She once was full of justice;
righteousness used to dwell in her—
but now murderers!
²²Your silver has become dross,
your choice wine is diluted with water.
- ²³Your rulers are rebels,
companions of thieves;
they all love bribes
and chase after gifts.
They do not defend the cause of the fatherless;
the widow’s case does not come before them.
- ²⁴Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty,
the Mighty One of Israel, declares:
“Ah, I will get relief from my foes
and avenge myself on my enemies.

^a17 Or / rebuke the oppressor

- ²⁵I will turn my hand against you;
I will thoroughly purge away your dross
and remove all your impurities.
- ²⁶I will restore your judges as in days of old,
your counselors as at the beginning.
Afterward you will be called
the City of Righteousness,
the Faithful City.”
- ²⁷Zion will be redeemed with justice,
her penitent ones with righteousness.
- ²⁸But rebels and sinners will both be broken,
and those who forsake the LORD will perish.
- ²⁹“You will be ashamed because of the sacred oaks
in which you have delighted;
you will be disgraced because of the gardens
that you have chosen.
- ³⁰You will be like an oak with fading leaves,
like a garden without water.
- ³¹The mighty man will become tinder
and his work a spark;
both will burn together,
with no one to quench the fire.”

The Mountain of the LORD

2 This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

²In the last days

the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be
established
as chief among the mountains;
it will be raised above the hills,
and all nations will stream to it.

³Many peoples will come and say,


“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths.”
The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.


⁴He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.


⁵Come, O house of Jacob,
let us walk in the light of the LORD.


The Day of the LORD


- ⁶You have abandoned your people,
the house of Jacob.
They are full of superstitions from the East;
they practice divination like the Philistines
and clasp hands with pagans.
- ⁷Their land is full of silver and gold;
there is no end to their treasures.


 In your family, who is the explorer? The warrior? Peacemaker? Idealist? Realist?


 **1.** “The mountain of the Lord” refers to the site upon which the temple in Jerusalem was built (11:9; 24:23; 27:13; 56:6–7). What picture does Isaiah envision? **2.** Why are so many coming to the temple? What will God do for them? **3.** What is meant by “the last days” (v. 2; see Ac 2:17; Heb 1:2)? Why does Isaiah call Judah to come to the temple *at this time*?


 **1.** Which of your *swords and spears* (i.e., mean streak? angry outbursts? cutting tongue?) has God transformed into *tools for peace*? **2.** What does the New Testament make of Isaiah’s vision? Did, or will, Jesus inaugurate this era of peace? If so, when will it be fulfilled? Why do you think so? **3.** How might this vision of God’s kingdom shape your hope? Prayers? Values?

 **1.** Of what “all by myself” project were you most proud as a child? Of what trophies are you most proud? Which ones are still on display? **2.** Did you have a favorite hiding place in the house you grew up in? Or a getaway place now? Under what circumstances would you go there?

 What is the longest you ever went without eating? How does hunger affect you?

 1. If you were to fast for 40 days, what food would you miss the most? 2. Under what kind of circumstances was Jesus tempted? 3. For each of the three temptations: (a) What is its nature? (b) What potentially might appeal to Jesus? (c) What price would there be were he to yield? 4. How did Jesus overcome the temptations of the devil?

 1. In what area are you most likely to be tempted? What have you found helpful in overcoming temptation? 2. What is your greatest temptation right now? How can others help?

 1. When did you leave home to be on your own for the first time? 2. Have you ever been fishing? Tell a story about your adventures.

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

4Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”^a

5Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6“If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”^b”

7Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”^c”

8Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

10Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”^d”

11Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Jesus Begins to Preach

12When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. 13Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum.

^a4 Deut. 8:3 ^b6 Psalm 91:11,12 ^c7 Deut. 6:16 ^d10 Deut. 6:13



Mt 3:13–4:11

BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS

For Lite Study

Matthew begins his account of Jesus' public ministry with his baptism and temptation. At his baptism, he is affirmed as God's beloved Son. Through the temptation he is portrayed as the true servant of God.

Optional Ice-Breaker Questions:

- When was the last time someone told you they were “well pleased” with something you did?
- What are you tempted by that is either fattening or expensive?

1. Do you think Jesus needed this affirmation from God (3:16–17) when he began his ministry?
 - No—it was for the crowd.
 - Maybe—because of the skeptics.
 - Yes—just like anyone else.
2. How vulnerable to temptation was Jesus?
 - He was as vulnerable to temptation as I am.
 - He was vulnerable, but in a different way.

- He wasn't vulnerable to temptation at all.
- other: _____

3. What event in your life helps define when you “grew up”?
 - graduation
 - leaving home
 - starting a real job
 - marriage
 - other: _____
4. When have you been alone in the “desert”? How can it help to know Jesus has been there? What is the difference between being *lonely* and being *alone*?
5. If the devil were to target you for temptation, which area of your life would he focus on?
 - physical temptations
 - financial temptations
 - ambition / power
 - my self-identity
 - my relationships
 - other: _____

6. When do you find yourself most vulnerable to the tempter?
 - when I'm tired or under stress
 - when I'm alone
 - after a spiritual high
 - when I'm not expecting it
 - when I let my mind dwell on certain things
7. How do you deal with temptation?
 - give in to it
 - fight it off
 - ask for God's help
 - beat myself up with guilt
 - get my mind off it
 - talk to someone about it
8. What has helped you overcome temptation when it comes?
 - Scripture
 - telling someone about it
 - talking myself out of it
 - prayer
 - running away
9. How can the group pray for you, especially in the area of temptation?

naum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— ¹⁴to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

- ¹⁵“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the way to the sea, along the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles—
¹⁶the people living in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.”^a

¹⁷From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

The Calling of the First Disciples

¹⁸As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²²and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.


Jesus Heals the Sick


²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. ²⁴News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. ²⁵Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis,^b Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.


The Beatitudes


5 Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ²and he began to teach them, saying:

- ³“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
⁴Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
⁵Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,
for they will be filled.
⁷Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
⁸Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
⁹Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.
¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of
righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

 1. How does Jesus react to John’s imprisonment? 2. How had they been living in darkness (v. 16)? What was Jesus’ message? What is the relation between repentance, the kingdom of heaven, and the light? 3. What invitations does Jesus give to these fishermen? What seems unusual about their response? What prior knowledge of Jesus do you think they had (vv. 13,17)? How might Zebedee have felt (v. 22)? 4. From how far away are the crowds coming (vv. 23–25; see map in the Introduction to Matthew)? What needs do they have? What are they learning about God’s kingdom?

 1. How has coming to know Jesus been like moving from darkness to light for you? 2. In what ways does God’s kingdom seem present now for you? In what ways does it seem “not yet”? 3. Spiritually, are you still preparing the nets? Leaving the boat? Following hard after Jesus? Feeling left behind? 4. If you were in the crowds (vv. 23–25), what would you ask Jesus to heal for you? Why not pray about that as a group?


 1. When you want to get away from people, where do you go and what do you do? 2. What saying or bumper sticker do you keep on your desk or car?


 1. How would a modern-day psychologist (and society in general) evaluate Jesus’ teachings on the Beatitudes? 2. How do the eight Beatitudes relate to the promises that follow them? How would you describe the opposite of each quality? 3. Is Jesus *describing* who his followers *are*? Or *prescribing* what they must *do*? Why do you think so? 4. What kind of mourning do you feel Jesus is talking about in verse 4? What causes you to mourn? 5. Who do you admire as a good example of meekness? How do they model humility? 6. Where are you a “peacemaker”: In your home? At church? At work? In your neighborhood? In what ways do you try to make peace? 7. How are these Beatitudes related to being salt and light (vv. 13–16)?


^a16 Isaiah 9:1,2

^b25 That is, the Ten Cities

¹⁴Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, “If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. ¹⁵But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.” ¹⁶So he had them ejected from the court. ¹⁷Then they all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever.

 1. What do you like best about returning home after a long trip? What do you dread the most? 2. What is the worst haircut you ever had?

 1. What do you make of his companions Priscilla and Aquila? What type of person was Apollos (vv. 24–26)? 2. What influence did Apollos have in Achaia, specifically Corinth (vv. 27–28; see 1Co 3:4–6)? How did Priscilla and Aquila assist him? What does this tell you about the role of women in the New Testament?

 1. Who was very helpful to you when you were young and enthusiastic about the faith? How did this person help? Who could you help now? How? 2. Where do you sense God has equipped you to serve? 3. What

Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos

¹⁸Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken. ¹⁹They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. ²¹But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God’s will.” Then he set sail from Ephesus. ²²When he landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.

²³After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

²⁴Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor^a and taught about Jesus accurately,

^{a25} Or with fervor in the Spirit



Acts 18:5–17

For Lite Study

PAUL’S VISION IN CORINTH

In Acts 18 the apostle Paul comes to Corinth. As usual, his missionary work begins in the Jewish synagogue. This results in conflict between Paul and the Jews, who eventually press charges against Paul before a Roman official. Though Paul faces some very tense moments as he continues his preaching, he also receives an encouraging vision from the Lord.

Optional Ice-Breaker Questions:

- When you were a kid, would people say you talked too much or too little?
- What’s the strangest dream you can remember?

1. What was Paul’s attitude toward the Jews when they rejected his message and became abusive?
 - “I’ve had it with you people.”
 - “If you go to hell, don’t blame me.”
 - “If you won’t listen, what happens to you isn’t my fault.”
 - “You’ve had your chance—I’m going where the fish are biting.”

2. What effect do you suppose Paul’s vision of Christ had on him?
 - It renewed his courage.
 - It took away all his problems.
 - It kept him going.
 - It gave him confidence he was doing what God had called him to do.
 - It reminded him that the Lord and other people were with him.
3. How did Paul handle his emotions under pressure?
 - He got mad and gave up on people.
 - He dealt with conflict directly.
 - He showed flexibility by shifting his focus to the Gentiles.
 - He let the Lord calm his fears.
 - He found peace in Christ.

4. The Lord spoke to Paul in a vision. In what ways does God speak to you?
 - through Scripture
 - in visions
 - through others

- in prayer
 - through worship
 - other: _____
5. What does this story say to you about difficult relationships?
 - I still need to share my faith in those situations.
 - I can only do so much, and then it’s in God’s hands.
 - God will be with me and help me to do his will.
 - Some people may oppose me, but others will give me support.
 - The most important thing is to let God guide me.
 6. What might the Lord be saying to you right now?
 - “Do not be afraid.”
 - “Keep on speaking (or doing what you are called to do).”
 - “Do not be silent (about Christ).”
 - “I am with you.”
 - “I have many people in this city (to help you).”
 7. How can this group pray for you?

though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

²⁷When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed.

²⁸For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Paul in Ephesus

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ²and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when^a you believed?”

They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

³So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”


“John’s baptism,” they replied.


⁴Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized into^b the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy

^{a2} Or after

^{b5} Or in

role do women have in your church? How do you feel about that? **4.** How does your church balance evangelism with the strengthening and equipping of believers?

 What experiences have you had with religious counterfeits (relics, forgeries, hoaxes, cults and the like)? Any that have really scared you?

 **1.** Why do you think Paul went to Ephesus on his next trip (see 18:19–21)? **2.** Apollos was from Egypt (18:24–25), and these disciples were about 800 miles from Jerusalem. What does the fact that they were followers of John the Baptist tell you about the extent of his influence? How would their awareness of John be good preparation for them to hear the Gospel (see Jn 1:19–34)? **3.** Since



Acts 18:1–4, 18–28 PRISCILLA, AQUILA AND APOLLOS

For Lite Study

The clearest example in the New Testament of a husband and wife serving together are Priscilla and Aquila. Besides working together as tentmakers, they traveled with the apostle Paul and helped start the church at Ephesus. Their home was a meeting place for others who wanted to grow in Christ. It was there they taught Apollos (a learned Jew from Alexandria) the foundations of the Christian faith.

Optional Ice-Breaker Questions:

- Who was your best friend when you were growing up? When did you last see each other?
- What have you spent the most volunteer hours doing at your church?

1. What surprises you most in this passage?
 - that the apostle Paul supported himself by making tents
 - that Paul had his hair cut off because of a vow
 - that Priscilla, a woman, was so active in ministry
 - that Apollos with all his fervor and knowledge needed to be taught

2. What impresses you most about Aquila and Priscilla?
 - their tentmaking business partnership with Paul
 - their invitation and willingness to travel with Paul
 - Paul’s leaving them in Ephesus to start a new church there
 - their ability to teach Apollos
 - their hospitality toward Paul and Apollos
 - other: _____

3. Which of Priscilla and Aquila’s joint ventures appeals the most to you?
 - running a business
 - opening a guest house for traveling missionaries
 - going on a short-term mission project
 - hosting a house church or small group
 - offering the gift of hospitality to those who need it

4. In their lives, Priscilla and Aquila encountered Paul and Apollos—one was a teacher to them and one they taught. Who has been a mentor in your life?

5. What did that person do that was helpful to you?
 - encouraged me
 - taught me new concepts
 - affirmed my abilities
 - helped me discipline myself to develop my abilities
 - helped equip me
 - believed in me
 - other: _____

6. Who is someone you have mentored or are mentoring now? What do you think is the most important thing you can pass on to another person?

7. Which gifts do you feel you might have that God has given you for Christian service?
 - teaching
 - hospitality
 - evangelism
 - leadership
 - serving
 - music
 - listening
 - administration
 - other: _____

8. How can this group pray for you?