



PAUL'S LIFE AND MINISTRY

Date: 07.27.25 | Ministry at at Corinth
Scripture: Acts 18:1-11; 1 & 2 Corinthians

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- God values all people and calls Christians to live on mission for the sake of reaching the lost with the gospel.
- God continues to work in the world, and people are invited to join Him in His work.
- We are to be involved in reaching the nations through prayer, giving resources, acting with love, and sharing the gospel.
- The church is a fellowship of believers, and we are called to meet together regularly.
- The church is not a place or a building, but rather a community of people who belong to the family of God.

HIGH SCHOOL:

- God values all people---born and unborn, young and old, male and female, all ethnicities, those of opposing faiths---and calls Christians to live on mission for the sake of reaching the lost through prayer, giving resources, acting with love, and sharing the gospel.
- God continues to work in the world, and as we join Him in His work, He uses people to accomplish His eternal purposes.
- We demonstrate honor for God when we respect the earthly authorities God has placed in our lives.
- The church is a community of believers called to gather regularly to study Scripture, pray, worship, serve, encourage one another, and proclaim the gospel to the world.
- The church is called to train and equip its members for works of ministry.



MEMORY VERSE

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. - Romans 1:16a

16 F l a n a o t g, f i i t p o G f s t e w b, - use this first letter memorization tool that aids in remembering text by using the first letter of each word as a cue.



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INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

“What Would You Do?”

Tell them: “I’ll give you a real-life scenario. Your job is to decide what you would do. Be honest—no perfect church answers needed. After each one, we’ll talk about how it connects to Paul’s story.”

Scenario 1:

You’re at school. You overhear people making fun of someone for going to church or talking about God online.

What do you do?

- A. Keep quiet and avoid getting involved.
- B. Speak up and defend them.
- C. Text them later to encourage them.

(Connect to Paul: Paul faced public opposition in Corinth. Some people were hostile, but he didn’t stop speaking about Jesus.)

Scenario 2:

You’re trying to invite a friend to youth group, but they laugh it off and say, “Church is boring and fake.”

What do you do?

- A. Drop it—you don’t want to make it weird.
- B. Invite them again later when it feels more natural.
- C. Ask why they feel that way and keep the convo going.

(Connect to Paul: Some rejected Paul’s message, but he kept trying to reach new people. God even encouraged him in a vision to keep going.)

Scenario 3:

You’re tired of being the “church kid.” You feel like people watch your every move or expect you to be perfect.

What do you do?

- A. Try to blend in more and stop talking about your faith.
- B. Talk to someone you trust about how you feel.
- C. Own it and keep living for Jesus anyway.



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(Connect to Paul: Paul probably felt tired, too—but God reminded him: “Do not be afraid. I am with you.” That gave him the courage to stay.)

Wrap It Up:

“Corinth was wild. It was a hard place to follow Jesus—just like your world can be. Paul didn’t have it all figured out, but he trusted God and kept going. God reminded him he wasn’t alone—and that’s still true for us today. The letters of 1 and 2 Corinthians show us what it looks like to follow Jesus in a messy, real-world kind of way.”



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BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Paul's second missionary journey began around AD 48–49 and concluded in AD 51, as recorded in [Acts 15:36-18:22](#). The missionary's focus was on proclaiming the gospel and strengthening new believers in the Greek provinces of Macedonia and Achaia. Throughout this journey, we see God's sovereign hand directing Paul's steps, opening hearts, and expanding the church. The message of salvation by grace through faith remained central, and cultural barriers were navigated wisely for the sake of the gospel. Suffering was not viewed as a setback, but rather as an opportunity to witness to God's power and joy in all circumstances. Despite opposition, the church continued to grow, grounded in sound teaching and strengthened by the work of the Holy Spirit ([Acts 16:5](#)).

Re-cap of the Second Missionary Journey Thus Far...

- Paul and Barnabas split over John Mark ([Acts 15:36-41](#)), and Paul chose Silas to go with him on the second missionary journey from Antioch.
- They visited churches in Syria and Cilicia to strengthen them ([Acts 15:41](#)).
- They traveled to Derbe and Lystra ([Acts 16:1-5](#)), where they met Timothy, who joined them on the missionary journey.
- The Holy Spirit prevents the men from traveling to Asia and Bithynia ([Acts 16:6-8](#)).
- Paul has a vision of a man from Macedonia asking for help ([Acts 16:9-10](#)), so the team makes their first stop in Europe.

In Macedonia (Northern Greece) ...

- In Philippi ([Acts 16:11-40](#)), they met Lydia, a businesswoman, who became a believer. Paul and Silas were beaten and jailed, but were miraculously freed. The Philippian jailer and his household believed and were baptized.
- In Thessalonica ([Acts 17:1-9](#)), they preached in the synagogue, and some Jews and many Greeks believed. They faced persecution and had to flee the city.
- In Berea ([Acts 17:10-15](#)), the people were eager to study the Scriptures, and many believed. However, opponents from Thessalonica came and stirred up trouble, forcing Paul to leave again.

In Achaia (Southern Greece) ...

- Athens ([Acts 17:16-34](#))
- Corinth ([Acts 18:1-18](#)) (TODAY'S LESSON)
 - Paul traveled to Corinth, where he met Aquila and Priscilla and worked with them as a tentmaker.



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- He stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching God's Word and establishing a strong church.
- Though he faced opposition from the Jewish community, many Gentiles believed in Jesus.
- The Lord appeared to Paul in a vision, encouraging him to continue speaking boldly, for God had many people in the city.

Following today's lesson, the journey comes to an end...

- Paul set sail from Corinth and made a brief stop in Ephesus ([Acts 18:18-22](#)), where he reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue.
- He then traveled to Caesarea and went up to greet the church.
- From there, Paul returned to Antioch in Syria, completing his second missionary journey ([Acts 18:22](#)).

Corinth was Paul's last major place to witness on his second missionary journey. His initial work in the city ([Acts 18:1-11](#)) is followed by a notable incident where the Jews brought him before the Roman proconsul for trial ([Acts 18:1-17](#)). However, the case was dismissed, and Paul was able to stay "many days longer" ([v.18](#)).

Located 46 miles west of Athens, Corinth was a Roman colony and the most influential city in the province of Achaia, both politically and economically. It sat at a strategic location on the narrow isthmus of Corinth, through which nearly all traffic between Northern and Southern Greece passed. As a bustling trade hub and host to a constant flow of travelers, Corinth had a mixed and transient population, which contributed to its reputation for extreme wickedness and immorality.

In AD 49, Emperor Claudius ordered all Jews to leave Rome, likely due to unrest in the synagogues sparked by the Christian message. As a result, a Jewish man named Aquila and his wife Priscilla came from Italy to Corinth. There, they met Paul. Like Paul, they were Jews and tentmakers (cf. [1 Thessalonians 2:9](#)), and they may have already been Christians before fleeing Rome. Aquila and Priscilla became close friends and faithful ministry partners to Paul, even risking their lives for him ([Romans 16:3-4](#)).

While in Corinth, Paul supported himself by working with Aquila and Priscilla rather than relying on financial support from the Corinthians (see [1 Corinthians 9](#)). Each Sabbath, Paul reasoned and tried to persuade both Jews and Greeks (often referred to as "God-fearers") about Jesus. Sharing the gospel was a matter of patient, persistent persuasion.



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Paul began his ministry in the synagogue, always seeking to reach his own people first. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul became fully engaged in preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the promised Christ ([Acts 18:5](#)). Silas and Timothy had likely returned from visiting the Macedonian churches ([Acts 17:15](#)). They may have brought with them a financial gift to support Paul's ministry (cf. [2 Corinthians 11:9](#)).

Despite Paul's faithfulness, many opposed and insulted him. In response, Paul shook out his garments as a symbolic act of rejection, a practice rooted in Jewish tradition. Jews returning home from Gentile lands would shake off the dust from their clothes and sandals to avoid bringing anything unclean into their homes. Paul's action communicated that he had fulfilled his responsibility to preach the truth. Their rejection of the gospel and blasphemy against Christ left them fully accountable before God.

Still, Paul didn't completely walk away from the Jews of Corinth. He moved his ministry next door to the synagogue. There, both Jews and Gentiles came to faith in Jesus. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, was among those baptized ([1 Corinthians 1:14](#)), along with many other Corinthians who heard, believed, and were baptized ([Acts 18:8](#)). Baptism often followed immediately after someone's profession of faith.

Despite outward success, Paul was emotionally and physically exhausted. In his first letter to the Corinthians, he confessed that he had come to them "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" ([1 Corinthians 2:3](#)). Up to this point, Paul had often been forced to leave places due to persecution. But in Corinth, the Lord appeared to Paul in a vision, promising protection and fruitfulness. Encouraged by this divine assurance, Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months. During that time, he wrote his first two letters: 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians.

Eventually, Paul departed from Corinth, stopping briefly in Ephesus, and then sailing on to Caesarea. From there, he went up to visit the church and then returned to Antioch, where he regrouped before setting out on his third missionary journey.

Paul wrote two letters, 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, to the church in Corinth during his third missionary journey. He wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus around AD 54 and 2 Corinthians from Macedonia around AD 56. These letters reveal Paul's deep pastoral concern for a church that was both spiritually gifted and spiritually troubled. Corinth was steeped in various philosophies, religious traditions, and immoral lifestyles. The church, though sincere in its beginnings, struggled to break free from its pagan environment. Paul's first letter deals with a long list of problems: pride, division, immorality, misuse of spiritual gifts, and confusion about doctrine. The tone of 1 Corinthians is firm, yet instructive. Paul



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calls the believers to live out their faith with clarity and purpose. It's a book full of practical wisdom, reminding readers that theology is not just to be studied—it is to be lived out.

After writing 1 Corinthians and dealing with the long list of sins, Paul's relationship with the church goes from bad to worse. Second Corinthians is a severe letter to this difficult church. This is perhaps Paul's most emotional and personal letter. He defends his ministry, rebukes false teachers, and calls the church to examine their faith. Yet through all the conflict, Paul continues to uphold the gospel and pursue the Corinthians' spiritual health.

These two letters provide a real look into the “nitty-gritty” life of a local church. We see how gospel-centered leadership must respond to real struggles with sin, spiritual immaturity, and relational tension. In Corinth, we see both the challenges and the hope of ministry in a broken world, reminding us that the church, though flawed, is still God's chosen vessel for spreading His truth and grace. Theology is practical. The Bible is meant to be lived out, not merely studied and admired. Paul's letters to the Corinthians call believers not just to know the truth, but to let it shape how they live, lead, and love in the messiness of real community.



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LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY

Remind your group that we are studying the New Testament. The book of Acts is about God sending the Holy Spirit to permanently dwell within Jesus' disciples and other believers after He ascended back to heaven. With the help of the Holy Spirit, those who followed Christ told many people about Jesus, helped others, and started the first churches. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the message of Jesus began to spread all over the world.



TELL THE STORY - Acts 18:1-11; 1 & 2 Corinthians

Paul went to Corinth, a big and important city in Achaia. It was full of travelers and business people, but also full of sin and wickedness. While there, Paul met Aquila and Priscilla, two Jewish tentmakers who had been kicked out of Rome by the emperor. Paul worked with them, and they became great friends and helpers in ministry.

Paul spent every Sabbath teaching people about Jesus. He told both Jews and Greeks the good news. Later, when Silas and Timothy came back from visiting churches in Macedonia, Paul was able to spend more time preaching. They may have even brought a gift from those churches to help Paul (*2 Corinthians 11:9*).

Some people didn't want to listen and were mean to Paul. So, he shook out his clothes to show that he had done his part—he had shared the truth, and now it was their choice to believe or not. He then moved next door to the synagogue and kept teaching. Many people, including Crispus, the synagogue leader, believed and were baptized.

Paul was tired and afraid, but God encouraged him in a vision. God told him not to be afraid and promised to protect him. Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months, the longest he stayed in one place except for Ephesus. During that time, he wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians to the churches he had visited earlier.

After finishing his work in Corinth, Paul sailed to Ephesus, where he talked with the Jews in the synagogue. Then he traveled to Caesarea, greeted the church, and returned to Antioch in Syria. His second missionary journey was complete.



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Later, while on his third journey, Paul wrote two letters to the Christians in Corinth. He wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus around AD 54 and 2 Corinthians from Macedonia around AD 56.

The church in Corinth had a lot of problems. The people were surrounded by bad influences—false religions, wrong beliefs, and sinful behavior. Even though they had started strong, they began to struggle. Paul's first letter provided clear instructions on how to follow Jesus and live a godly life. He taught them that the Bible is meant to be lived out, not just studied and admired.

Sadly, things didn't get better right away. Paul had to write a second letter—2 Corinthians—which was more serious and emotional in tone. He reminded them to stay true to Jesus, warned them about false teachers, and encouraged them to check their hearts and actions.

These two letters provide an honest look at the everyday life of a church. They show that churches aren't perfect, but God still uses them! We see how Paul lovingly corrected and taught the people, even when it was hard.

In Corinth, we see both the challenges and the hope of following Jesus in a broken world. The church is God's chosen way to spread His truth and love—even when it's messy.

Theology is practical. The Bible is meant to be lived out. Paul's letters help us see that being a Christian means more than just knowing about God. It means letting God change how we live, how we treat others, and how we serve in our churches.



RETELL THE STORY



SHARE THE GOSPEL

Sharing the gospel isn't always easy, but it's always worth it. When Paul went to Corinth, he didn't let fear or rejection stop him from sharing the good news about Jesus. He worked hard, preached often, and patiently explained the good news—even when some people were unkind or refused to listen. Paul knew it was his job to share the truth, and it was up to others to decide how they would respond to it. He didn't give up, and because of his faithfulness, many people believed and were baptized. Paul's time in Corinth reminds us that God can use us—even when we're tired or afraid—to bring His message to others. The gospel changes lives, and sharing it means helping people know and follow Jesus in real, everyday ways.



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QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

Where did Paul go after he left Athens? (*Acts 18:1*)

Who did Paul meet in Corinth, and what job did they have in common? (*Acts 18:2–3*)

Why were Aquila and Priscilla living in Corinth? (*Acts 18:2*)

What did Paul do on the Sabbath while he was in Corinth? Who did he talk to? (*Acts 18:4*)

Who came to Corinth from Macedonia to join Paul, and what did they probably bring with them? (*Acts 18:5 and 2 Corinthians 11:9*)

How did some people react to Paul's teaching? What did he do when they rejected his message? (*Acts 18:6*)

Did Paul stop teaching after people rejected him? What did he do next? (*Acts 18:7–8*)

Who was one of the important people who believed in Jesus in Corinth? (*Acts 18:8*)

What did God say to Paul in a vision when he was tired and afraid? (*Acts 18:9–10*)

How long did Paul stay in Corinth? What letters did he write during that time? (*Acts 18:11; he also wrote 1 & 2 Thessalonians during this time*)



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Where did Paul go after leaving Corinth, and where did he finally return to? (*Acts 18:18-22*)

Later, what two letters did Paul write to the church in Corinth? (*1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians*)

What problems was the Corinthian church facing? (*sin, division, wrong beliefs, pride*)

How did Paul help them through his letters? (*1 Corinthians gives practical teaching; 2 Corinthians is more emotional and encourages faithfulness*)

What does Paul's time in Corinth teach us about how to live as Christians? (*The Bible is meant to be lived out. We should let God change how we live, treat others, and serve the church.*)

What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?

What does the story teach me about myself?

Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?

Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?

How does this story help me live on mission?



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PRAYER PROMPTS

Thank You, God, for empowering us with Your Holy Spirit so we can share the good news about Jesus, even when it is hard. Help me to tell others about You and help me to show Your love! Amen.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

16 F l a n a o t g, f i i t p o G f s t e w b, - use this first letter memorization tool that aids in remembering text by using the first letter of each word as a cue.



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ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - God is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.



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ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.



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Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?



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Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD



- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD



- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?