



THE GOSPEL: ALL ABOUT JESUS

Open it

1. When did you have to train or practice really hard for something? How did your training help you?

Daily devotions

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Acts 18:18–28

2. How would you summarize this passage? What are some of the key things that happened?
3. What stood out to you in this passage?
4. What did you learn about God from this passage?
5. What questions do you have after reading this passage?

Day 2

TODAY'S THEME: KEEPING YOUR WORD

Read Acts 18:18

We don't really know what kind of vow Paul was under. It could have been a Jewish vow to God for thankfulness for past blessings (such as Paul's safekeeping in Corinth) or a petition for future blessings (safety for Paul's future journeys) or a Nazarite vow (which involved abstaining from alcohol and cutting one's hair).¹ Even though we don't know exactly what kind of vow Paul was under, we do know that he had apparently taken a vow and he had kept it.

It's really easy for us to back out on our commitments. Like maybe you committed to hang out with a friend for a weekend but then something else came up that sounded better. Do you back out on your word to hang out with your friend? As Christians, we need to be people who keep our word and stick to our commitments. Jesus said in Matthew 5:37, "Let what you say be simply 'yes' or 'no'." Whether it's keeping your word with a friend or sticking to a commitment you have made to God, it's important to follow through on what you say you're going to do.

6. What character traits might someone need in order to keep their word and follow through on their commitments?

Which of these traits do you struggle with? How might you grow in that area?

7. What kind of commitments does God want you to make right now?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Strength to carry through your commitments even when it's hard
- Wisdom to make good commitments and how to carry them out
- For God's help to grow in the areas you may be struggling in
- What commitments does God want you to make in our life right now?

¹ Marshall, I. Howard. *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 2000. p.300

Day 3

TODAY'S THEME: "LORD WILLING"

Read Acts 18:19–23

I remember growing up I used to always hear older people say, "Lord willing," when they would talk about what they were going to be doing in the near future. But why in the world would they say that? Well, I think they stole that saying from the Bible! In today's passage, Paul tells the Christians in Ephesus that he would return to them "if God wills."

It's not that Paul didn't want to be with the Ephesians, but he knew that God was calling him to keep moving on for that time. Paul's main concern was walking in step with God's will. So even if that meant that he didn't get to do something he really wanted to do, then so be it!

- 8. Read James 4:13–17. Why does James say we shouldn't make assumptions about what's going to happen tomorrow?**

- 9. How does thinking through your future plans under the banner of "Lord willing" change your attitude about God and your plans?**

I HAVE A QUESTION!  Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Just spend some time praying about your plans for the next few days. Commit your plans to God.
- Pray that your faith and trust in God would grow more and more to the point where trusting God with your future plans doesn't seem as scary anymore.

Day 4

TODAY'S THEME: BIBLICAL TRAINING

Read Acts 18:24–25

Introducing Apollos! This dude comes around and he knows his stuff. He had been trained in the way of the Lord, probably from his upbringing, somewhere in Alexandria since it was a city center of education and philosophy, although we don't know anything about the beginnings of Christianity in that city.² He spoke truthfully about the Messiah but only knew the baptism of John the Baptist. He would later end up receiving more teaching from Priscilla and Aquila about Jesus!

Apollos was effective in his ministry and was noted for being “competent in the Scriptures,” which is something that I'm sure many of us strive for. We would love to be known as someone who knows our Bible really well and are able to defend what we believe. The only problem is, not many of us are willing to go through the “training” to get there. We understand the importance of training or practice when it comes to every other area of our lives. If it's in the arts, we practice our instruments and rehearse singing our songs. We will have endless hours of play practice or we may draw that same picture over and over until it's perfect. In sports we train our bodies physically and practice the different skills necessary for success. We go to college to get specified training in whatever field we are wanting to work in. But for some reason, when it comes to our faith, we just don't want to put in the hard work. We could wish that osmosis worked with our Bible, that overnight we might become a biblical scholar. No, it takes time studying God's Word to know it well; there is no way around it. The greatest things in life don't come easy. Are you willing to put in the training?

10. What is one thing in your life that you go to training or practice for? How many hours do you think you spend on a normal week training for it? What are some of the drills or practices you may use as part of your training?

11. What training steps do you need to take to grow and develop in your knowledge and understanding of God?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Diligence to study and learn the way of the Lord
- Perseverance when the going gets tough or when you don't feel motivated

² Marshall, I. Howard. Acts, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 2000. pp.302–303

Day 5

TODAY'S THEME: KNOWING THE BIBLE VS. KNOWING JESUS

Read Acts 18:26–28

Apollos knew his stuff. We learned that Apollos knew about the Messiah and the way of the Lord and the baptism of John the Baptist. He was able to speak confidently and boldly about what he knew to be true, but as he taught, Priscilla and Aquila couldn't help but notice that he didn't fully understand who Jesus was.

Knowing Jesus is what it is all about! It's great to know a whole lot about the Bible, but if you don't understand who Jesus is, you're missing it altogether. We have seen it a hundred times in Acts— Paul goes to a new city and goes straight to the Jewish synagogue and starts teaching the Jews about Jesus, using the Bible. These were people who knew their Old Testament like the back of their hands, but they still didn't get it when it came to Jesus. So none of that other knowledge really mattered.

It was necessary that Apollos be trained more accurately about Jesus so that he could teach the full gospel message— hope in Jesus alone! Yesterday we were challenged to take the effort to be trained in our knowledge of the Bible, and that is super important. But it should never take the place of knowing Jesus personally. As we study and learn, we do so in order to better understand who Jesus is and what he has done for us!

12. Why is it critical that we keep our focus on Jesus as we study the Bible?

13. Studying the Bible can sound like an academic thing to do, almost like homework. How can you keep a personal relationship with Jesus the focus instead of just thinking about your relationship with God as an intellectual thing?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- That you would come to know Jesus more and more as you study the Bible

Note: This study guide was written by Pastors Tim Badal, Mario Arindaeng, and Jeremy Anderson, Village Bible Church. www.villagebible.church