

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 11/1/20
Acts 18:18-28 “Remembering Why We Are Here”**

Brad Brandt

Main Idea: It’s easy to lose sight of why we are here. Acts 18:18-28 reminds us that our God-given mission involves three responsibilities.

- I. Our mission involves going (18-22).
 - A. We must be devoted to God’s honor (18).
 - B. We must be dependent upon God’s will (19-21).
 - C. We must be dedicated to God’s church (22).
- II. Our mission involves grounding (23).
 - A. Paul invested time in the sending church.
 1. We need the church for refreshment.
 2. We need the church for accountability.
 3. We need the church for celebration.
 - B. Paul invested time in the daughter churches.
 1. It’s great to introduce people to Christ.
 2. It’s vital to help them grow.
- III. Our mission involves grooming (24-28).
 - A. We see a man with potential (24-26).
 1. We don’t have to know everything to start serving.
 2. We don’t know everything, so we must be teachable.
 - B. We see the marks of a mature minister (27-28).
 1. He uses his abilities to help God’s people (27).
 2. He uses the Word to reach lost people (28).

Make It Personal: Two vital questions...

1. Am I right with God?
2. Am I involved in the mission?

Why are we here? Why do we do what we do? Why do we spend our money the way we spend it? Why do we use our time the way we use it?

It’s good to ask the why-question from time to time, for it’s easy to get distracted, to lose sight of our purpose in life, personally and as a church. The Lord has given us today a text that will help us.

He used something else to help our family think about the why-question this past week. On Tuesday our Heavenly Father called my earthly father into His presence after a pilgrimage of 84 years. The Lord often uses death to help those who survive to think about important questions, including, why are we here?

Before turning to the Scriptures, I’d like to reflect for few moments. We saw the Lord work in meaningful ways in dad’s final days, by providing helpful people to help us in his care, by taking him fairly quickly, by providing the next day a buyer for the house, by providing a missionary family (that got kicked out of China due to COVID this year and lost all their possessions there) whom we were able to bless with dad’s furniture as they set up a home in the States, by giving Matt, Jen, and I meaningful time together to process dad’s passing as well as to plan his memorial, etc.

The Lord worked through you, as well. Thank you, for your encouragement through prayer and communication this week.

Why are we here? Our days go quickly, so it’s a vital question to ponder. Today’s passage can help us.

Scripture Reading: Acts 18:18-28

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

It's so easy to get sidetracked, to become preoccupied with the wrong things, and when that occurs we are like a train that's left its tracks, making good time perhaps but heading who knows where.

We're going to talk about *focus* today, namely the focus with which God wants us to live. In Acts 1:8 the Lord Jesus gave both a promise and a mission statement to His followers, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you [that's the promise]; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth [that's the mission statement]." *Be my witnesses*, He said. *To the whole world*, He said.

His instructions couldn't have been clearer. His Spirit provides the power. His followers are to take the good news of what He has done to the world. That's the church's collective mission. That is *our* mission and it hasn't changed.

But it's easy to lose sight of why we are here. We can get so wrapped up in the means that we lose sight of the goal. That job which we once viewed as a gift from God becomes our *god*. The home, the cars, the education, and all the other things we once viewed as His blessings can easily become the *stuff* for which we live.

Yes, it's easy to lose focus and forget why we're here. That's why we need the book of Acts. As we walk through the pages of Acts, we see two things. We see God's faithfulness, and the early church's obedience. God did provide the power, and the early church did take its mission seriously, so much so that in just one generation the gospel penetrated the world of the Roman Empire.

Perhaps you're feeling a little out of focus in life these days. It can easily happen. That's why we need to give serious attention on a regular basis to a text like the one before us. It's a mission text, a *focus* text.

Acts 18:18-28 reminds us that our God-given mission involves three responsibilities.

I. Our mission involves going (18-22).

"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation," Jesus said (Mark 16:15). *Go*. "As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you (John 20:21)," He likewise said. *Go*. It was not the Lord's plan for the world to come to us. It was His plan that we go to the world. Our mission involves going.

Not everyone goes, but everyone is to embrace the importance of going. Going is our assignment. We either go, or help others go. Go across the street, go to the next town, go to the next people group, to the ends of the earth.

That's exactly what's been happening for some twenty years and eighteen chapters in the book of Acts. The church has been *going*. It started by proclaiming Christ in Jerusalem (Acts 2). Then it took the message throughout Judea and Samaria (through chapter 12). Then it moved to Gentile turf and began to reach the uttermost parts of the world (in Acts 13).

As we approach the end of Acts 18 Paul is about to finish his second missionary journey. Let's do some geographical gymnastics and re-sketch some of the places he's been on this trip. If you have a map, look at the locations and think about the traveling logistics, remembering that Paul didn't have a touring van.

He started in Antioch, then ventured westward to Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch. Then he moved nearly 300 miles northwest to Troas, set sail across the

Aegean Sea, and arrived in Macedonia (modern day Europe). He preached in Philippi and basically was kicked out of town. He passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, and arrived in Thessalonica, where he again presented the gospel until he was forced to leave. Another 50 mile trek landed him in Berea where he found a more receptive audience.

But in time he had to flee there, too, and sailed a couple hundred miles south to Athens. Experiencing limited results Paul went west 50 miles to Corinth where God opened a door of fruitful ministry, and he stayed a year and a half.

As I ponder all the cities to which Paul and others traveled in Acts, I'm struck by a very simple and basic conclusion. Our mission involves *going*.

This raises the question, "If *going* is to be a reality in our lives, personally and as a church, what's necessary?" According to Paul's example in verses 18-22, we must have three things in focus.

A. We must be devoted to God's honor (18). "Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time." Why did he stay? Because God told him to stay back in verse 9. And God gave the reason in verse 10, "I have many people in this city." Paul went where God said to go, and Paul stayed where God said to stay.

After 18 months in Corinth, with a church established and solid leadership in place (consisting of men like Gaius, Sosthenes, Stephanus, and Crispus whom Paul mentions later in his Corinthian letters), Paul knew it was time to move on. Verse 18 again, "Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria."

Don't miss that. Paul left Corinth intending to head back home where he started. But he didn't leave by himself, rather, "Accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila." This husband and wife team had become his good friends and ministry partners.

Verse 18 concludes on an interesting note. "Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken." What's going on? Luke seems to be saying that after Paul left Corinth, he headed to Cenchrea, the port city for Corinth, and there got a haircut. But it wasn't merely for grooming purposes. It was part of a religious vow.

We need some background to appreciate this. Barclay explains, "When a Jew specially wished to thank God for some blessing he took the Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-21). If that vow was carried out in full it meant that for thirty days he neither ate meat nor drank wine: and he allowed his hair to grow. At the end of the thirty days he made certain offerings in the Temple; his head was shorn and the hair burned on the altar to God."¹

That's why Paul took this vow, to say thank you to God. He knew why he'd had a successful ministry in Corinth. It wasn't because of his great preaching and evangelistic abilities, though he was certainly gifted at both. He wouldn't even have survived, let alone left behind a church in Corinth except for one reason. It was *God*. God protected him and God blessed his efforts. And so, to say thank you to the Lord, Paul took a vow, cut his hair, and headed for Jerusalem to consummate his promise.

Since this vow was purely voluntary, Paul wasn't turning back from grace to law when he took it. It wasn't a matter of salvation. It was a matter of *devotion*.

Paul was devoted to bringing honor to God, and he took practical steps to show it. When he was in need, He asked God for help. When God helped, he said thank you in ways that gave God the honor. Is that the way we're seeking to live our lives?

¹ W. Barclay, p. 138.

When God does something in our lives, it's a privilege, an *essential* privilege, to give Him honor. In order for our focus to be right, we must be devoted to God's honor.

B. We must be dependent upon God's will (19-21). "They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. But as he left, he promised, 'I will come back if it is God's will.' Then he set sail from Ephesus."

If you want to talk about ministry potential, *Ephesus* was it. It's possible that Paul was heading for Ephesus a couple of years earlier on his second missionary journey. Remember Luke's statement back in Acts 16:6? "Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia."

Apparently, Paul had wanted to venture south into Asia Minor, that is, towards Ephesus, but the Spirit said "no." So in obedience to the Macedonian vision that followed, Paul ended up going northwest into Europe.

But after he finished his assignment in Macedonia and Achaia, Paul again headed for Ephesus. And this time he made it. In fact, what he found must have thrilled him, *a wide open door*. The Jews there asked him to stay and keep teaching.

To tell a good teacher you want to hear more is like throwing a bone to a dog. And in Ephesus, no less. With 300,000 inhabitants, Ephesus was the most important city in Asia Minor. In terms of size and importance it ranked as one of the top five cities in the entire Roman Empire, along with Rome, Corinth, Antioch, and Alexandria. It was a cosmopolitan city with an important harbor, located on an important intersection of trade routes. It even housed a theater that sat 25,000 people for events. I'm sure that caused the wheels to spin in Paul's visionary mind.

But he left. Priscilla and Aquila stayed, but he left.

Why? Didn't he want to minister in Ephesus? Sure, and he'll be back. But for now, *he left*.

This says something important to us about decision making in ministry. We must not make decisions based merely on what seems good to us, what we like or think is best. Nor because there happens to be an open door of opportunity. Remember Jonah? He had a wide open door, a ship going to Tarshish, but it certainly wasn't the right decision. When it comes to making good decisions, what we must know (and then obey) is *God's will*.

In my opinion, Paul left Ephesus for one very simple reason. He had something else he knew God wanted him to do. Remember the vow? The Western text says Paul wanted to make it to Jerusalem in time for one of the Jewish festivals. F. F. Bruce suggests, "If this festival was Passover, there was probably a good reason for this haste: the seas were closed to navigation until March 10 (according to Vegetius, *On Military Affairs* iv. 39), and in A.D. 52 Passover fell early in April."²

So Paul couldn't stay, not if he was going to reach Jerusalem in time to fulfill his vow.

There's a time to stay. There's also a time to move. Before you begin a new ministry, you must finish the current one God gave you to do. At times you may need to

² F. F. Bruce, p. 378.

turn down ministry opportunities for the simple reason that God already has given you an opportunity that you must finish.

Such was the case here with Paul. He had made a vow and he was going to keep it.

When it comes to *going*, we must be thoroughly devoted to God's will. Is that what you want more than anything, to do what God wants? Do you tell Him that when you begin your day, and when you make the multitude of decisions that come every day?

C. We must be dedicated to God's church (22). "When he landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch."

Don't underestimate the significance of that sentence. With these few words Luke sums up ministry travel that covered hundreds of miles and many weeks, if not months. Paul's boat ride from Ephesus to Caesarea covered at least 600 miles. His walk up to greet "the church" took him to Jerusalem, another 50 miles. Then he traveled on, this time a 300 mile trek north to Antioch.

Why did he go to Jerusalem? To finish his vow, yes, but why else? Luke says he went up and *greeted the church*. And why did he go to Antioch? Because that's where the church was that sent him on this missionary journey.

There's a vital connection illustrated here. *Going* is linked to the church. Those who go need the church. And the church needs those who go. They are doing the task of world missions together.

Let this sink in. The total distance Paul traveled on his second missionary journey was at least 2,000 miles (the distance of a roundtrip to Florida), in an age before airplanes, let alone cars and trains. By the time he returned home to Antioch he'd been gone two to three years.

Going doesn't just happen. There's a cost, for the one who goes, and for those who stay and make it possible for those who go.

There is no escaping this fact. The fulfillment of our mission involves *going*. It always has and always will. Granted, God doesn't want everyone to go around the world, but He does command all of us to participate in making the *going* possible. It's the church's task.

At WBC we support 12 missionary couples and four missionary singles. These dear people were willing to sacrifice and go. But in order to go they needed people who were likewise willing to sacrifice and send them. This is what it will take for the next generation of missionaries as well.

Do you know what it takes to go? The average cost to send a missionary to the field today is between \$60,000 and \$100,000 per year depending on where they serve (for living as well as ministry and travel expenses). It takes the average candidate two years to raise the funds to get to the field. *Two years*. Paul finished his second missionary trip in that time.

Beloved, it's good for us from time to time to revisit the question of how serious we are regarding the assignment of *going*. This includes being willing to go if God wills, but also being willing to make sacrifices so others can go, as God enables.

Several years ago missiologist Ralph Winter observed: "Americans give \$700 million per year to mission agencies. However, they pay as much for pet food every 52 days."³

³ Ralph Winter of the William Carey Library, 1705 North Sterra Bonita Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91104, in *Leadership*, IV,4,p. 64.

The issue isn't pets—it's okay to enjoy God's creation. The issue is our attitude towards the stuff God has entrusted to us. It's so easy to get out of focus.

Our mission involves *going*. If you are a Christian, it's why you are on this planet. It ought to be on our minds constantly that there are unreached people in this world who need to hear of Christ. If *going* is to be a reality for us, we must be devoted to God's honor, dependent upon God's will, and dedicated to God's church.

Responsibility #1 is going. Here's the second.

II. Our mission involves grounding (23).

Notice verse 23, "After 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."

Technically, Paul's second missionary journey ends after the first part of this verse, and his third missionary journey begins with the second part. Both parts of the verse teach us about the importance of *grounding*, of taking steps to help believers grow.

In the first phrase of verse 23...

A. Paul invested time in the sending church. He spent "some time in Antioch." How much time? We're not told. The fact that he did spend time there underscores three reasons why we need the church.

1. *We need the church for refreshment.* Think of what's happened to Paul in the past couple of years. He's been beaten with rods, thrown in jail, mocked by crowds, and kicked out of cities, not to mention he's probably missed a few meals and abused his body traveling on bumpy roads.

Plus, in terms of spiritual nourishment, it's been almost all give and no take. He's preached a lot of sermons, but hasn't heard too many in a long time. He's probably physically weary, emotionally drained, and spiritually hungry.

What does he need? He needs what we all need, and what God intends his church to provide—*refreshment*. But to receive it, we must place ourselves in its care, as Paul did.

2. *We need the church for accountability.* The church in Antioch was the church that sent Paul to the field, that supported him with prayer and finances. Paul didn't take that lightly. That's why he keeps coming back to Antioch. He knows that he, as do we, need the church for accountability. Paul made himself accountable to his church. Do you? With a pandemic, it's easy to hide. But Paul took the initiative to connect.

3. *We need the church for celebration.* And oh, how they must have celebrated when Paul arrived in Antioch! We're told what happened after Paul's *first* missionary journey in Acts 14:27, "On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."

I imagine it was much the same this time. Paul shared what God had done, and the church rejoiced.

The church ought to be known as a place of celebration. Every week when we meet, we get to celebrate what God has done for us. He gave His Son to save us, so we celebrate. He let's us see the faces and hear the stories of new brothers and sisters He is adding to His church, so we celebrate. He works in our families, so we share and celebrate. He sustains us through hard times, so we share and celebrate.

Yes, we need the church for refreshment, accountability, and celebration.

This is a good place to emphasize something we saw earlier. Paul made it a point to go back to the church in Jerusalem. He never forgot where he came from. Though he possessed a great burden to reach the Gentiles and was willing to use new methods to do so, he was thankful for his heritage. He never lost sight of God's agenda, to reach the Jew first, then the Gentile, and teach them to be *one*. So though he loved the Gentiles, he did all he could—like take this trip to Jerusalem—to maintain close ties with his Jewish brothers. The Lord wants *one* church, so Paul wants *one* church.

That's what makes the "worship wars" in today's church so sad. Is it a good thing to sing new songs? Sure. But let's never forget where we came from, and indeed, let's do all we can (as Paul did) to show appreciation for our heritage.

B. Paul invested time in the daughter churches. Verse 23 again, "After 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."

If you'll check out your map, you'll notice something significant about Galatia and Phrygia. These two regions (in modern day Turkey) are where Paul ministered during both his first and second missionary journeys. On his first trip he went there, led people to Christ, and established local churches (check out Acts 13-14). On his second trip, he went back and strengthened the churches by more teaching, and even recruited workers like Timothy (Acts 16:1-5). What did he do on his third visit? Our text says he went from place to place, "strengthening all the disciples."

What does that say to us? Two things.

1. *It's great to introduce people to Christ.* It's great to work with people who have never heard the good news and tell them: You are a sinner. You have offended a holy God. But He chose to judge His own Son when He died on the cross, and provide a way for sinners like you and me to be reconciled to Him. If you will repent and receive the Lord Jesus as your Savior, God will forgive you and adopt you into His family.

Perhaps that message is new to you, my friend. It's true, and I invite you to act on it.

Yes, it's great to introduce people to Christ. But it doesn't stop there.

2. *It's vital to help them grow.* One famous missionary used to say, "No man has the right to hear the gospel twice until every man has heard it once." Paul's actions didn't support that notion. That's why he kept going back.

Converts enter the family of God the same way we did. *As spiritual babies.* And like physical babies, they are weak and need to be *strengthened*. That occurs when they are taught and learn the Word of God. Peter explains in 1 Peter 2:2, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation."

So we have a mission, and our mission involves *going*. We must go and reach lost people. But it doesn't end there. In fact, it just begins. Our mission involves *grounding*. We need to make sure we are grounding the new believers God entrusts to us.

III. Our mission involves grooming (24-28).

The final section of chapter 18 gives us a snapshot of one of Paul's teammates. It reminds us that the mission in Acts isn't just Paul's. He's not a one-man-show. God's kind of ministry never is. That's why grooming is so essential. One of the church's primary assignments, a vital one if it's to keep reaching the lost, is *training*.

Case in point—Apollon. We see two stages in the development of Apollon here.

A. We see a man with potential (24-26). “Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He 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.”

Sometimes we tend to think that because the Bible talks only about the spread of the gospel west to Rome, it didn’t go in other directions. But it certainly did. Though the biblical account doesn’t give the details, the followers of Jesus took the gospel all over the world. For instance, we know there was a church in Egypt. The oldest known fragments of the New Testament, dating to the first half of the second century, were found in Egypt.⁴

Apollos was a God-fearing Jew from Egypt, Alexandria to be precise. Barclay says there were about one million Jews in Alexandria. But Apollos left his native city, went to Ephesus and started preaching. And could he preach! Martin Lloyd-Jones defined preaching as “logic on fire.” That was Apollos. He knew how to grab an audience’s attention and hold it. He had something to say, and he said it with power.

There was problem, however, not with what Apollos *said*, but what he *didn’t say*. He didn’t preach the whole gospel for the simple fact he didn’t know it. Nobody had ever told him.

How do you help someone like that, someone with tons of aptitude as a speaker, who has a brilliant mind, yet is off base in certain areas of his teaching? Do you rebuke him? Avoid him? Aquila and Priscilla groomed him.

After the service, they invited him home for lunch, and in due time said something like this, “Thank you for that teaching, brother. That was meaty and powerful. We appreciate how you presented the Scriptures and not your own opinions. Did you realize, however, that there’s more to the story? Did you know that what John the Baptist predicted has come true?”

And Apollos said, “Really? No, I hadn’t heard. Please tell me more.”

So they did. Luke says they “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly [KJV].” ESV, “more accurately.” NIV, “more adequately.” A lot of powerful preachers would resent such instruction from a lay-couple. Not Apollos, who teaches us two important lessons here.

1. *We don’t have to know everything to start serving.* We’re all in process.
2. *We don’t know everything, so we must be teachable.* It’s hard to tell how much Apollos actually knew. We’re told he had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures (the Old Testament). He’d been instructed in the way of the Lord and knew only the baptism of John. Apparently, he knew about Jesus, but only based on what John the Baptist had taught. He didn’t know the significance of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, nor about the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church at Pentecost.

He didn’t know the whole story, but what he knew he believed. His message wasn’t inaccurate, just incomplete. He was, in essence, an Old Testament saint.

James Boice tells a story similar to this from church history. About the time of the Reformation in England there was a man just like Apollos whose name was Hugh

⁴ LaSor, p. 289.

Latimer. He was a very educated man with a thorough knowledge of the Bible and could speak with eloquence. Eventually he was martyred for his faith.

“However,” as Boice puts it, “at the time when the following story took place Latimer was not yet a Christian, though he was in the church and knew the Scriptures well. He knew Jesus Christ; that is, he knew who Jesus was and much about him. But he did not know what it was to be born again. He did not know the gospel. Like many in his day, he thought that the way to get to heaven was by good works.”

“There was a young monk who knew Latimer and admired him. This man was known as ‘Little Bilney’ because he was short. He did not have much education. No one thought very much of him. But Bilney was converted, and he wondered how it might be possible for him to bring the gospel to High Latimer. Bilney thought that Latimer would be a tremendous force for the Reformation in England if he could just hear the gospel. So Bilney prayed about this and finally hit upon an idea.”

“Priests were required to hear those who wanted to confess their sins. So one day when Latimer was serving in the church, Bilney went up to him, tugged at his sleeve, and asked Latimer to hear his confession. Latimer said he would. So they went into the confessional, and Bilney confessed the gospel to him. He told how he was a sinner, how he was unable to save himself by his own good works, how Jesus had died for him, and how now, by faith, the righteousness of Jesus had been imputed to him apart from good works. That is what he confessed to High Latimer, and in that way Latimer heard the gospel for the very first time and was converted. It was an important moment in the English Reformation.”⁵

Apollos went through a grooming process. First, we see a man with potential.

B. We see the marks of a mature minister (27-28). “When 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.⁶ For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.”

Having received the grooming touch of Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos was on his way. He’d always had heat. Now he had light. He reveals two evidences of a mature minister.

1. *He uses his abilities to help God’s people (27).* Verse 27 says he went to Corinth and “was a great help” to the believers. How did he help them? By teaching them, no doubt. He used his phenomenal knowledge of the Scriptures to help them grow.

My friend, if you have a God-given ability—whether it’s a brilliant mind or hands that can fix things—I encourage you to do with it what Apollos did. Use it to help God’s people. A mature minister does something else...

2. *He uses the Word to reach lost people (28).* Apollos picked up where Paul left off. Remember, the Jews in Corinth had become abusive with Paul and forced him to turn to the Gentiles (18:6). But Apollos went right after them, debating the same Jews, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. By doing apologetic work with non-believing Jews, he not only took off some of the heat the believers were feeling, but he undoubtedly convinced some Jews to convert.

Some people, including Luther, believe Apollos was the author of the book of Hebrews. Whether that’s true or not, he certainly became a great servant in the kingdom.

⁵ James Boice, p. 316.

⁶ There’s another of Luke’s reminders that God initiates man’s salvation—“to those who *by grace* had believed.” God’s grace precedes a person’s belief and makes it possible.

Paul spoke highly of him in 1 Corinthians 3:6, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.” And in 1 Corinthians 4:9 where he referred to him in the warmest way as a “fellow apostle.” And though a clique eventually gathered around Apollos in Corinth (1 Cor 1:12), that was due to the fickle nature of the Corinthians rather than a fault of Apollos.

Apollos went from a man with raw potential to a mature minister. How did it happen? Humanly speaking, because a brother and sister in Christ made an investment. We must do the same. Our mission involves *grooming*.

So why are we here? Today God’s Word has reminded us that we have a mission, and that our mission involves going, grounding, and grooming. That’s not all that it involves, but it surely involves these three essentials.

Make It Personal: Two vital questions...

1. *Am I right with God?* You can’t help others know God if you’re not right with Him yourself. My friend, it starts here. Am I right with Him? Make sure today.

2. *Am I involved in the mission?* We were saved for a mission, for the mission we’ve discussed today. Are you using what God has given you so that the ministries of *going*, *grounding*, and *grooming* can be a reality? I urge you to get on the front lines.

Closing Song: #389 “More About Jesus” (all four verses)

Community Group Discussion:

1. This week’s message was entitled, “*Remembering Why We Are Here.*” Take time as a group to re-read the passage, Acts 18:18-28. What stands out most to you when you hear this passage read?

2. We learn from this passage that our mission involves *going*. What did Paul do in verses 18-21 that emphasizes the importance of *going*? Discuss the statement, “Not everyone in the church should go, but everyone in the church should embrace the importance of going.” What does that mean, and what are implications for WBC?

3. Why is it significant in verse 23 that Paul retraced his steps and went back to the same cities in which he had ministered earlier during his first and second missionary journeys? What do his actions teach us about how we should invest our time and resources?

4. In verses 24-28 we’re introduced to an intriguing man by the name of Apollos. Why do you think Luke includes him in this story? What do we learn from him about how ministry works?

5. Spend some time as a group praying for our missionary team at WBC. Also, ask the Lord of the harvest to raise up and send more laborers from WBC.