

BGCC Community Group Guide



Ordinary People, Extraordinary God

May 17th 2026

Key Text: Acts 18

Introduction: Faithfulness in the Ordinary

When we read Acts, it is easy to focus only on the dramatic moments—the miracles, prison breaks, speeches, and conversions. But Acts 18 slows the pace down enough for us to notice something important: much of God’s work happens through ordinary people living faithfully in ordinary places.

This chapter reminds us that the Kingdom of God often advances through conversations at work, encouragement between believers, hospitality in homes, ordinary generosity, and fearful Christians continuing to trust God anyway.

Significance in the Biblical Story

Acts 18 marks a major season in Paul’s missionary ministry as the gospel continues expanding into influential pagan cities like Corinth and Ephesus. Corinth especially represented a culture deeply shaped by immorality, commerce, idolatry, and worldly views. Yet this is exactly where God plants a thriving church.

This passage also gives us a fuller picture of discipleship in the early church. The mission is no longer carried only by apostles. Ordinary believers like Priscilla and Aquila become central instruments in strengthening and teaching others. The Kingdom grows not merely through platforms, speeches, and miracles, but through faithful people.

Section 1 — God Works Through Ordinary People in Ordinary Places

Text: Acts 18:1–5

Summary

Paul arrives in Corinth, a massive and morally corrupt city known for wealth, trade, and pagan worship. Humanly speaking, Corinth seems like difficult ground for gospel ministry. Yet God often plants His truth in places where darkness appears strongest.

Instead of beginning with dramatic ministry, Paul goes to work. He meets Aquila and Priscilla, fellow tentmakers who had been displaced from Rome. Their introduction is surprisingly ordinary: coworkers talking while making tents. Yet hidden inside that ordinary meeting is the beginning of a powerful ministry partnership.

This is one of the great themes of Acts 18: God delights in using ordinary faithfulness. As C.S. Lewis once observed, “most of the Christian life is lived not in extraordinary moments, but in ‘the daily task, the small obediences, the unnoticed choices.’ The Kingdom often advances quietly.”

Paul himself models humility here. Though an apostle, he works to support ministry while waiting for help from other churches. Ministry is not fueled by celebrity, but by sacrifice and partnership.

Group Question

Why do we often underestimate the spiritual importance of ordinary parts of life like work, conversations, or hospitality?

Personal Relevance

Many believers assume God only works through highly gifted or visibly successful events and people. But Acts 18 reminds us that discipleship usually happens in everyday rhythms. Not just major church events and ‘intentional’ setup meetings for discipleship.

- **Flow Question:** Where do most of your everyday interactions happen right now?
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- **Reflective Question:** How might God want to use your ordinary routines as opportunities for ministry?
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Section 2 — God Keeps Working Even When We Cannot See It

Text: Acts 18:6–11

Summary

Paul experiences intense opposition in Corinth. After repeated rejection and abuse, he publicly declares he is turning to the Gentiles. From Paul’s perspective, the ministry among the Jews appears fruitless and for now finished.

Yet immediately afterward, Crispus—the synagogue leader himself—comes to faith along with his household. Paul did the right thing turning to those who would respond to the Gospel message (Read Matthew 10:14). And that bears fruit through the gentiles who believe but just because he moved on doesn’t mean God did. God is still working with the seeds Paul planted and saving souls from the front and the back.

Then comes one of the most personal moments in Acts. Jesus appears to Paul and says:

“Do not be afraid... for I am with you.”

Why would Jesus say that? Because Paul was afraid.

That detail matters deeply. Scripture does not present Paul as fearless. He came to Corinth, by his own admission, “in weakness and fear and much trembling” (1 Corinthians 2:3). God does not wait for perfect confidence before using His people. He walks with fearful people and teaches them to trust Him.

Charles Spurgeon once said, “The presence of God is the death of fear.” The promise was not that Paul would understand everything, but that Christ would remain with him.

Group Question

Why is it encouraging that even Paul struggled with fear and discouragement?

Personal Relevance

Many Christians quietly believe fear disqualifies them from usefulness. Or that it must be eliminated to move forward. But Scripture repeatedly shows God working through fearful and anxious people. Courage is not the absence of fear, but the priority of something else over that fear.

- **Flow Question:** What situations most commonly make you fearful or discouraged spiritually?
 - **Reflective Question:** What would it look like for you to trust God even without seeing the full picture?
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Section 3 — God Strengthens His Church Through Encouragement and Discipleship

Text: Acts 18:18–23

Summary

As Paul continues traveling, Luke says he strengthens the disciples everywhere he goes. This may seem like a small detail, but it reveals something essential about ministry: discipleship is not merely conversion—it is encouragement toward faithfulness.

Paul learned this pattern from Barnabas. Earlier in Acts, Barnabas strengthened and defended Paul when others doubted him. Now Paul is doing the same for others. Encouragement becomes generational discipleship.

The New Testament consistently presents Christian maturity as something formed in community. Hebrews 3:13 commands believers to encourage one another daily so hearts are not hardened by sin. Faithfulness is sustained not merely through information, but through relationships.

This section also reminds us that strengthening believers is not reserved for pastors or apostles. Encouragement itself is ministry and that ministry is a duty to *all believers!*

Group Question

Why do you think encouragement is so spiritually powerful in the Christian life?

Personal Relevance

Some believers underestimate how deeply simple encouragement can impact someone's faith.

- **Flow Question:** Can you remember a conversation or person God used to strengthen you spiritually?
 - **Reflective Question:** Who in your life might need intentional encouragement from you right now?
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Section 4 — Discipleship Happens Through Truth and Hospitality

Text: Acts 18:24–28

Summary

Apollos enters the story as an impressive teacher—knowledgeable, passionate, and bold. Yet his understanding is incomplete. He knows parts of the gospel, but not the full picture.

What is remarkable is how Priscilla and Aquila respond. They do not publicly shame him or attack him. Instead, they invite him into their home and explain the gospel more accurately.

This is discipleship at its best: truth delivered through humility, relationship, and care.

Their response reflects the wisdom of Proverbs 15:1: “A gentle answer turns away wrath.” They cared more about building Apollos up than proving themselves right.

And Apollos himself demonstrates humility by receiving correction. Eventually, he becomes a powerful leader in the early church. The growth of his ministry began not through public controversy, but through private discipleship around a table.

Tim Keller often noted that truth without grace crushes people, while grace without truth leaves people lost. Priscilla and Aquila model both together beautifully.

Group Question

Why is humility important both for giving correction and receiving it?

Personal Relevance

Discipleship often happens through small, intentional moments of investment in others.

- **Flow Question:** Have you ever had someone lovingly correct or guide you spiritually?
 - **Reflective Question:** How can you become more intentional about helping others grow in truth and grace?
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Closing Summary / Application

Acts 18 reminds us that God's mission often moves forward through very ordinary means:

- coworkers sharing faith
- believers encouraging one another
- fearful Christians continuing to obey
- couples opening their homes
- churches giving generously
- conversations that quietly shape lives

Again and again, Paul cannot see the full picture. Yet God is working far beyond what Paul understands.

The same is true for us.

Faithfulness is not about controlling outcomes or seeing everything clearly. It is about trusting the Lord in ordinary obedience and believing He is working even when we cannot see it.

“Do not be afraid... for I am with you.” — Acts 18:9–10

The extraordinary power has never belonged to ordinary people. It belongs to the God who walks with them.