

Crucial Conversations Podcast Companion

Week 3: Aquila, Priscilla & Apollos | Featuring Jon Henninger

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Listen to this week's conversation with Jon Henninger before gathering. Come ready to talk honestly about the difference between knowing people and allowing yourself to be known.

OPENING CHECK-IN

When you look at your calendar, does it show that relationships are a necessity - or mostly a nice idea?

WHAT STOOD OUT?

- What statement, story, or moment stayed with you? Why?
- What part of the conversation felt most personally challenging or encouraging?

MORE THAN ATTENDANCE

Shane observed that we can attend church, shake hands, and know names without being connected. Jon called acquaintances a real level of relationship - but not usually the kind that transforms us.

- Where is the line between being friendly and being truly known?
- What does a relationship need before you can share a real struggle instead of a polished answer?
- How might someone participate in church activity while still remaining relationally isolated?

"Relationships matter most because they lead us to the relationship that matters most."

JON HENNINGER

THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT SHAPE US

Jon described relationships as an "access piece." Trust built over time lets another person see what a casual acquaintance cannot. That access creates room for accountability, development, encouragement, and faith that becomes visible in everyday life.

- Who has been given enough access to see you at your best and your worst? How has that shaped you?
- Jon said, "Iron sharpens iron ... and that only happens over time." Why can lasting relationships form us in ways a single conversation cannot?
- Shane shared how a youth pastor helped him move from checkbox Christianity toward a relationship with Jesus. Who helped faith become personal for you?

NAME THE INFLUENCE

Choose one person God has used to sharpen your faith. What did their presence make possible that information alone could not?

A QUESTION OF ACCESS

- Who can lovingly challenge you when your choices and your faith are drifting apart?
- What makes it difficult for you to grant that kind of access - fear, busyness, past hurt, pride, or something else?

WHEN WE PULL AWAY

The conversation named relational withdrawal as a warning sign. When people are depressed, overwhelmed, ashamed, or living in ways they do not want exposed, the natural impulse is often to become reclusive - especially around those who know them best.

- Why can relational disconnection come before spiritual disconnection?
- What changes in your habits when you are struggling: Do you cancel, go quiet, hide behind busyness, or avoid the people who might ask real questions?
- How can a Life Group notice withdrawal without becoming intrusive or judgmental?
- What would it look like to move toward someone with patience and care instead of assuming they are uninterested?

PERSONAL WARNING SIGN

Complete the sentence privately: "When I start pulling away, it usually looks like ..." Then name one person you can contact before isolation gains momentum.

CHRIST-CENTERED COMMUNITY

Jon was clear: a Life Group is not merely another club. Its distinct center is Jesus. Even an ordinary conversation can return to the shared desire to become godlier people, build stronger marriages, and practice faith together.

- What can Christ-centered community offer that a shared hobby or social circle cannot?
- How can a group keep Jesus at the center without making every gathering feel artificial or overly formal?

GIVING COMMUNITY A CHANCE

"Giving it a chance is the first step to creating some sort of a lifelong friendship."

JON HENNINGER

Shane did not want to lead a group after a devastating accident. Forced conversation with near-strangers felt like the last thing he needed. Looking back, he saw that God had placed those people in his life at exactly the right time. Strangers became friends who stayed through both vacations and hard seasons.

- Why can community feel most inconvenient precisely when we may need it most?
- What is the difference between giving a group a fair chance and expecting instant chemistry?
- Jon noted that a six- or eight-week group may not produce a best friend - and it does not require immediate disclosure of your deepest secrets. How does that lower the pressure?
- What small act of participation could create an opening for a deeper relationship over time?

REFRAME THE INVITATION

A group is not a guarantee of instant friendship. It is a willingness to create space where God may form a connection you could not plan.

TALK IT THROUGH

- Which barrier feels most real right now: schedule, inconvenience, awkwardness, disappointment, or reluctance to be known?
- What would "give it a chance" mean in concrete terms for the next six weeks?

GOD USES PEOPLE

Aquila and Priscilla came alongside Apollos and helped him understand the way of God more accurately. Their relationship strengthened both his knowledge and his ability to tell others about Jesus. In Corinth, shared work could have made Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla competitors; instead, they explored what God might do through partnership.

- Who came alongside you in a season when you needed guidance, courage, or clearer understanding?
- When have you seen God place someone in your life at just the right time?
- Where might comparison or competition be keeping you from a partnership God could use?
- Who may need you for a season - not as a lifelong best friend, but as a faithful companion in the next step?

"Sometimes allowing yourself to engage in a group gives God the opportunity to introduce you to somebody who might be that in your life."

JON HENNINGER

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

"They invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately."

ACTS 18:26 • NIV

- What do Aquila and Priscilla model about correction that is personal, humble, and relational?
- How did their private investment multiply through Apollos' public ministry?

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Choose one step that turns the value of community into a visible decision this week.

- Invite someone to coffee and ask a question that goes beyond small talk.
- Tell a trusted person where you are honestly struggling.
- Re-engage a Life Group or attend one consistently for the next six weeks.
- Reach out to someone who has begun to disappear relationally.
- Thank a person God used to sharpen your faith.
- Choose partnership over comparison and offer your help.

MY NEXT STEP

I will _____ by _____.
The person who can help me follow through is _____.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Relationships are not merely a nicety; God uses them to bring people to faith and strengthen daily faithfulness.
- Attendance and acquaintance cannot replace the trust that comes from being known over time.
- Withdrawal from healthy relationships can be an early warning sign of deeper struggle.
- Life Groups create Christ-centered space for accountability, encouragement, and growth.
- Community may feel awkward or inconvenient at first; giving it a chance opens a door God can use.
- God places people in our lives for different seasons, and faithful partnership can multiply far beyond us.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank you for the people you use to lead us closer to you. Give us courage to be known, wisdom to notice when someone is pulling away, and humility to receive and offer loving guidance. Help us make room for the relationships you are forming. Amen.