



12

SESSION TWELVE

Intentional Living

SESSION SUMMARY

While on his third missionary journey, the Apostle Paul focused on two things: spreading the gospel and strengthening the church. It didn't matter if someone was a Jew or a Gentile, Paul wanted all people to hear the gospel and experience the life-transforming power of Jesus Christ. In addition, he wanted to strengthen the church and fellow believers to more accurately speak about Christ and share the gospel with others. In this session, we will discover that God's primary calling on all of our lives is to carry out His mission in our everyday lives. As a result, we will also learn how to see our various roles and daily tasks as platforms for sharing the gospel and discover new ways to mentor and strengthen those around us. Focusing on these two things will help us leave a legacy of faithfulness for those behind us.

SCRIPTURE

Acts 18:1-4,24-28; 20:17-24

THE POINT

All God’s people are called to live on mission wherever He has placed them.

INTRO/STARTER 5-10 MINUTES

Option 1

When we imagine the Garden of Eden—in books, paintings, or movies—there seems to be a lot of lounging around. Adam and Eve are reclining, relaxing, and eating grapes as dopey lions look on and lazy lambs nap. It looks like a vacation on a picturesque landscape.

At the heart of these images is a major misconception about God’s original creation. It wasn’t a perpetual day spa where no one did anything. Instead, it was a vibrant, active community; a place where Adam and Eve had work to do and showed up to do it six days a week. In other words, the concept of work wasn’t the result of the fall—it was a gift designed by God for our benefit.

Sometimes we think work is bad. Not only that, but sometimes we think work can get in the way of “real” ministry, as if ministry can only be done if it’s full-time in the church. However, this couldn’t be further from the truth. God has always intended our work—whether as a farmer or business owner, a student or athlete—to be used as a way of ministering to others and sharing the gospel. We see this in the life and ministry of the apostle Paul who, though known primarily as a missionary and preacher of the gospel, was a tentmaker by trade.

- **What are some of the various roles you participate in on a weekly basis (student, athlete, hobbies, etc.)? How might these be used as a ministry to share Christ with others?**

Option 2

Instruct students to get into groups of three or four. Say: “Think about all the roles you have: son, daughter, sister, brother, cousin, classmate, friend, goalie, linebacker, dancer, guitarist, vocalist, pianist, and the list goes on.” Now, tell students to discuss with their group some roles they fill. Give students a few minutes to discuss, then ask:

- **What are some ways you can share the gospel with others through those roles?**

Allow students a few minutes to discuss, then gather together as a group and discuss the ideas students created. Encourage them to share the gospel, no matter where they are or what they do on a daily basis. Our lives are meant to share the gospel, even in our work.

HIS STORY

15-20 MINUTES

THE POINT

All God's people are called to live on mission wherever He has placed them.

CHARACTERS

- **Paul:** also known by his Hebrew name Saul; violent persecutor turned follower and apostle of Christ; known as the missionary to the Gentiles
- **Aquila and Priscilla:** married couple who accompanied Paul to Ephesus and hosted a church in their home; instrumental in instructing Apollos in the Christian faith

PLOT

Our last session in the Book of Acts helps us to see that God wants us to view every moment and interaction of our lives as opportunities to spread the gospel and strengthen the church. Sharing the gospel is not something you add to your schedule or something that has to happen at church. Instead, sharing the gospel is something you can do while sitting in class, hanging out in the park, or by talking with someone while playing video games online.

TIMELINE

LIVING ON MISSION

Paul viewed his day-to-day work as an opportunity to spread the gospel.

**Beginning in Spring 2018*

STANDING STRONG

Refuse compromise when the truth of the gospel is at stake.

UNITY IN THE CROSS

Believers are united together in Christ.

PAUL USED HIS JOB AS A TENTMAKER TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL

You and your pastor have the same primary calling in life: to know Christ and make Him known. No matter what job or occupation you will one day have, your primary calling in life will remain the same. If you consider yourself a Christ-follower, then you must see your occupation as a means to an end, rather than as an end in and of itself. Just like Paul understood, God wants us to see our roles and occupations in life as platforms for sharing the gospel.

¹ After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ² And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, ³ and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. ⁴ And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks. (Acts 18:1-4)

Paul left Athens for Corinth in order to continue spreading the gospel throughout the world. When we read about Paul in the New Testament, it is typically about him teaching, preaching, discipling, or evangelizing. Once in a while, we hear about Paul's other occupation—tentmaking (Acts 18:3). Paul shared that his work and his hands provided for his needs and those around him—referring to his tentmaking business (Acts 20:34). While Paul said those who preach the gospel should make their livings by doing so, he refused to use that privilege (1 Cor. 9:14-15). He went on to say that, although it would be okay and right for him to earn a living through preaching the gospel, he was called to do it “free of charge” (v. 18) because the Lord provided for him through his tentmaking business.

When Paul arrived in Corinth, he providentially met two others who were new to the city, Aquila and Priscilla, who were also tentmakers by trade. Obviously, this was not coincidence. As much as Paul took pride in the fact that he was a tentmaker and able to preach the gospel, “free of charge,” he knew God was the one who ultimately provided for him.

APOLLOS FOUND A MENTOR

It's so easy to see everything as a competition. Whether it's trying to get in line at the grocery store before the lady down the aisle or competing with your classmates for the highest grade on the math test, many of us have this incessant need for and addiction to winning. Unfortunately, we have also learned that in order to win, we need to push others down. However, it's actually possible to win by helping others win.

²⁴ Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. ²⁵ He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷ And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, ²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. (Acts 18:24-28)

Instead of viewing Apollos as competition, Priscilla and Aquila saw him as a brother in the Lord and a coworker in the gospel. So, they helped him “win.” After all, if he was able to powerfully and eloquently use the Scriptures to preach about Jesus Christ, even though he only knew about John’s baptism, how much better would he be able to proclaim the gospel after he learned from more knowledgeable believers?

So, we should help others take their next step. Guide others into a deeper relationship with Christ and help them live out the Great Commission. You can do this one-on-one as the Lord brings individuals to mind, or you can do this as a peer in your Bible study group. Or maybe this session is God’s call for you to step up and lead a study, trusting that God will go before you and give you what you need to help others draw nearer to Him.

- **What do you think would have happened if Priscilla and Aquila had seen Apollos as competition instead of helping him?** (*p. 85, PSG*)
- **Why do you think it’s our natural tendency to compete with others, even in ministry?** (*p. 85, PSG*)

PAUL VIEWED THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL AS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HIS OWN LIFE

Perspective is everything. Have you ever dug deep into a subject you thought you had a pretty good grasp on, only to discover just how much you didn't know? It's humbling, isn't it?

In the same way, when things are going well, it's easy to think that it was due to our good planning or foresight. However, when hard times hit, it can sometimes feel like you'll never see the light at the end of the tunnel. Many of us are often fickle in our emotions, plans, and perspective. That's why this passage matters.

17 Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. 18 And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. 24 But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. (Acts 20:17-24)

**For a fuller understanding of these verses, continue reading through verse 38.*

Think about the conversations you've had with friends at school, around the bonfire, on a bus, or at camp. Have you taken advantage of every single opportunity to share the gospel to those you interact with regularly?

Or how about what Paul says in verse 24? Can you truthfully say that you view sharing the gospel with others as more important than your own life? Let's be honest here—most of us like our pleasures, comforts, and privileges too much to live this kind of unashamed life. We give our tithes and offerings, serve at our churches, pass an Easter invitation card to our neighbors, and say to ourselves, "That's better than most!" But it's not! You can't judge your Christian walk compared to your next-door neighbor's standards; you need to see how your life compares to the Scriptures.

- **Why do you think we measure our spiritual lives by comparing ourselves with our neighbors?** (p. 86, PSG)

TIMELINE

SHOWING MERCY

Those who know mercy show mercy to others.

A NEW IDENTITY

Peter reminds God's people of their identity in Christ.

LOVE IN ACTION

Love for God and others is the fruit of Christian living.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Discipleship (p. 85, PSG)

Discipleship is a process that takes place both formally and informally to effect spiritual maturity as people follow Jesus. Informal discipleship, as passages like Deuteronomy 6:4-9 suggest, happens everywhere, in every arena of life. Growing in our faith and deepening our walk with Christ is something that requires our whole life, not just the mind. Formal discipleship refers to periods of instruction. We make disciples through our words and actions, providing verbal instruction from God's Word and non-verbal examples through our lives (Acts 20:17-24).

CHRIST CONNECTION

On his third missionary journey, the apostle Paul saw whatever situation he was in as an opportunity for spreading the gospel and strengthening the church. His way of life reflected the selflessness and grace of Jesus, who taught us to tell the truth, help the weak, and give generously as an act of worship. Paul's endurance was a testimony to the supreme worth of Jesus Christ, the One who called him.

YOUR STORY

10-15 MINUTES

GROUP QUESTIONS

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- **Read Ephesians 4:11-12. How does this support the notion that all believers, no matter what profession they are in, should see their jobs as their ministry? How does this challenge you personally when thinking about your future?** *It should be very freeing to know God wants godly lawyers, doctors, social workers, construction workers, and so on to see their profession and platform as a means of ministry. In other words, you don't have to grow up and go to college thinking what you are studying will have no impact on your calling and ministry as a Christian—they have everything to do with it and we should see our roles as a means of ministry.*
- **How can your platform (as a student, academic club member, band participant, etc.) be used for proclaiming the gospel?** *Answers will vary.*
- **How can we reflect in our own lives what Paul said in Acts 20:20?** *Answers will vary.*
- **What does it look like to leave a legacy of faithfulness in your home? At school? In your extra curricular activities?** *Answers will vary.*

HIS STORY

God's Story of Redemption, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

YOUR STORY

Where your story meets His.

YOUR MISSION

10-15 MINUTES



HEAD

The story of Apollos should encourage us that the Lord can use anyone, regardless of their past and what they know or don't know. God is looking for those who are faithful, who have a humble heart, and want to do His will whenever, wherever, and whatever. We see this in Jesus' disciples and here with Apollos.

- **Why do you think God looks at our willingness rather than our natural talents, when it comes to using people for His kingdom?** *God can always equip people with the gifts and abilities they need for ministry. His first focus is on their hearts and desires to be used for His glory.*
- **How does this truth encourage you personally?** *Answers will vary.*



HEART

After reading an account like this in Scripture, it is important for us to pray that the Holy Spirit would internalize the account's truths within us, leading to both an inner and outer transformation. Consider making this your prayer in response to this session: "Lord, give me the strength to stand up and unashamedly share your gospel with those around me. Help me to stop valuing the things of this earth so much. Help me to be about Your kingdom rather than mine."

- **Considering the fact that your life is like a drop in the ocean in light of eternity, what sort of legacy do you want to leave?** *Answers will vary.*
- **What needs to change in your life today in order to reorient your perspective, priorities, and attitudes so that you see all of your life as being a part of God's mission?** *Answers will vary.*



HANDS

Sometimes we think we need to grow to a certain point, memorize enough Scripture verses, or know how to refute particular arguments before we can disciple others. This cannot be further from the truth. Just look at Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4) or Jesus and the demon possessed man in the region of the Gerasenes (Mark 5:1-18). After experiencing the healing power of Christ, both the woman and the man went and told others about Christ. They did not take a class on evangelism or go to seminary. They simply went and testified about what they had experienced.

- **Looking back on this past year, share with your group one thing you've learned about living your life as a Christ-follower.** *Answers will vary.*
- **If someone asked you to be his or her mentor, what do you think you could offer to that person? What could you teach him or her?** *If students cannot answer for themselves, consider encouraging them and telling them what you could learn from them.*

► ADDITIONAL INFO

LEADER PACK

For this session, refer students to pack item #11, which contains a quote poster related to the session.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the following additional resources:

- **Leader Training Videos**
- **One Conversations**
- **Midweek Studies (to access your Midweek Study, go to lifeway.com/TGPMissionWin18)**
- **Circular Timeline Poster**
- **App (for both leader and student)**



Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at
GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

And for ***free online training*** on how to lead a group visit
MinistryGrid.com/web/TheGospelProject

STUDY PLAN

YEAR 1

Fall 2015

God the Creator (Genesis 1-11)
God the Covenant-Maker
(Genesis 12-50)

Winter 2016

God the Redeemer
(Exodus)
God the Lawgiver
(Exodus, Leviticus,
Deuteronomy)

Spring 2016

God the Savior
(Numbers, Joshua)
God the Judge (Judges,
Ruth, 1 Samuel)

Summer 2016

God the King (1-2 Samuel)
God All Wise (1 Kings, Job,
Ecclesiastes, Psalms, Proverbs)

YEAR 2

Fall 2016

God the Revealer
(1-2 Kings, Isaiah)
God the Pursuer (Major
and Minor Prophets,
1-2 Chronicles)

Winter 2017

God the Sustainer
(Daniel, Ezra)
God the Provider (Esther,
Nehemiah, Malachi)

Spring 2017

God the Son (Gospels)
God Among Us (Gospels)

Summer 2017

Jesus the Storyteller
(Synoptic Gospels)
Jesus the Miracle-Worker
(Gospels)

YEAR 3

Fall 2017

Jesus the Savior (Gospels)
Jesus the Risen King
(Gospels, Acts)

Winter 2018

The Spirit Who
Empowers (Acts)
The God Who Sends (Acts)

Spring 2018

The God Who Directs His
People (Epistles)
The God Who Changes
Us (Epistles)

Summer 2018

God's Prisoner (Acts, Epistles)
The God Who Makes All
Things New (Epistles,
Revelation)