

### THE STRATEGY

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#### Acts 18:1–3 ESV

<sup>1</sup> After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. <sup>2</sup> 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, <sup>3</sup> and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.

Paul strikes up a business partnership with Aquila and Priscilla making tents. Even though he still “reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath (v. 4),” he was now actively engaged in the marketplace. And who needs a lot of tents? The Roman Army. Of course, we can’t know for sure that was one of their clients, but it wouldn’t surprise me. Now watch what happened next.

#### Acts 18:5–11 ESV

<sup>5</sup> When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. <sup>6</sup> And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” <sup>7</sup> And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. <sup>8</sup> Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. <sup>9</sup> And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, <sup>10</sup> for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” <sup>11</sup> And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Paul’s ministry team finally arrived and found Paul as usual occupied with the word. And, as usual, the Jews opposed and reviled him. And, as usual, Paul shook out his garments and went to the Gentiles. He then left and went next door. LOL! This is the same Titus that Paul wrote a letter to later when Titus was the overseer of churches in Crete. He died there when he was 92-years-old! Paul also led the synagogue ruler, Crispus and his household to the Lord along with “many of the Corinthians.”

I want to read between the lines a bit on what the Lord told Paul in a vision. It's obvious that Paul was afraid that the same thing was going to happen again—Jews stir up trouble, he gets imprisoned or killed, and the work is hindered. But this time, He tells him not to be afraid “for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you.” Wasn't God with Paul before? What's changed? We could say that God already had many in the city who were His people, but He had people in other cities. And that really didn't matter because it was the leading men and women along with government officials that mattered. Sure enough, what Paul feared happened.

### Acts 18:12–17 ESV

<sup>12</sup> But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, <sup>13</sup> saying, “This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law.” <sup>14</sup> But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. <sup>15</sup> But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things.” <sup>16</sup> And he drove them from the tribunal. <sup>17</sup> And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

Wait, what?! THIS time the proconsul (like a governor today) shut the Jews down immediately before Paul could even open his mouth! He refused to judge the matter and drove them out of his courtroom. And then the Jews attacked Sosthenes, the new synagogue ruler, and beat in in the courtroom! I love the last phrase, “But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.” LOL LOL! Again, what changed? What made it where Paul stayed 18 months in Corinth? **I believe that Paul became a businessman who was valuable and relevant to the city he was in.** He was no longer “rabble.” He was a respected businessman who provided a valuable service. And if the Roman Army was his biggest client, you can bet there was no way Gallio was going to touch this one!

We see the same pattern everywhere Paul went.

### Acts 19:8–12 ESV

<sup>8</sup> And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup> But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the

disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup> This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

<sup>11</sup> And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, <sup>12</sup> so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

Once Paul became a businessman, he started operating in “extraordinary miracles” using the TOOLS OF HIS TRADE—his work apron and sweat rags. Even more extraordinary is the impact in the spirit realm. In vv. 13-17, we read the story of the Seven Sons of Sceva who tried to cast out a demon in the name of Jesus. The demon finally tired of the efforts and beat the you know what out of them driving them out of the house. But listen to this statement:

#### **Acts 19:15 ESV**

<sup>15</sup> But the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?”

Rick Renner, a Greek scholar, says that the “Jesus I know” means that the demon knew of Jesus by acquaintance (the Greek definition) and the “Paul I recognize” means that this spirit had INVESTIGATED Paul and knew him by reputation! I find it very interesting that all of this happened after Paul became a business owner.

Later when Demetrius tried to start a riot and get Paul ran out of town, the town clerk put an end to it.

#### **Acts 19:35–41 ESV**

<sup>35</sup> And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, “Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? <sup>36</sup> Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. <sup>37</sup> For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. <sup>38</sup> If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. <sup>39</sup> But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. <sup>40</sup> For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give

to justify this commotion.”<sup>41</sup> And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

From this point on, Paul was protected until it was time for him to go to Rome where he knew jail and possibly even death awaited him. But that was his choice and in his power. There wasn't anymore nonsense of riots and being ran out of town.

I hope you see that Paul had to learn these things and his authority. But he also had to get a strategy in place, which was in the marketplace for where God's grace was sufficient for him, the strategy God gave him to him to a place of treading all opposition.