

## ***Growth Guide***

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*“One who plows the field will end up with plenty of bread, but one who pursues empty things will have plenty of poverty.” Proverbs 28:19*

**MONDAY:      Read Acts 18:24-19:7**

Question:      What commonalities do you see between the two stories in this passage?

As we near the conclusion of Acts, we’re encountering several themes which we’ve already explored in depth. For this reason we’re going to move past the beginning of chapter 18 and pick up in verse 24. However I do encourage you to go back and read all of chapter 18. For this week, there is one phrase repeated in the two stories—the baptism of John. This refers to John the Baptist and the message he preached which went like this: God is about to send his messiah (savior) and so you need to turn away from your sin and place your faith in a savior that God is about to send. But it never got more specific than that and, as we saw last week, being specific about Jesus matters. As you read the stories of Apollos and the Ephesian believers what stands out to you? Why do you think Luke chose to put these two stories together? What do these stories say about faith, salvation, sin, and God?

*Come, Holy Spirit!*

**TUESDAY:      Read Acts 18:24-25**

Question:      What does Apollos have going for him?

A professor at my seminary once started a semester with this statement to his class: “Congratulations. You are all smart enough, eloquent enough, educated enough, attractive enough, and familiar with the Bible enough to be very successful in ministry without the Holy Spirit.” Obviously, he wasn’t congratulating them. He was making the point that his students had all the worldly qualifications they would need to be successful by worldly standards. The same goes for Apollos. It’s possible to know all about Jesus and still not know him. But to be honest, I’m not sure that’s Apollos’ problem. Because as we’ll see later in the week, being only in “the baptism of John” is also associated with not having the Holy Spirit. I wonder if that seminary professor was thinking of Apollos when he welcomed his class! Tomorrow we’ll see what happens with Apollos. Before we do that, spend the rest of the day taking advantage of quiet moments to contemplate this: how in my life am I getting by on my own talents rather than living by the power of the Holy Spirit?

*Come, Holy Spirit!*

**WEDNESDAY:      Read Acts 18:26-28**

Question:      How do most “rock stars” respond to having someone tell them that they’re missing something?

I’m impressed by Apollos’ humility. I think it’s also proof that the Holy Spirit can be at work inside of you before you know anything about Him. Think about it. How does this story usually go? A popular, got-it-together person meets a couple who begins to tell him that he did a great job with his speech, but that he’s missing something important. Usually, the popular, got-it-together person would reject any attempt to help because, God-forbid, anyone ever admit weakness. But that’s not how this story goes. Apollo obviously listens to and accepts what Priscilla and Aquila have to say. If only we could all live with such humility! And what’s the result? Well, that’s what you see in the last part of verse 27 and all of 28. He is able to greatly help the believers and he finds his pastoral niche—refuting the Jews who were against the believers by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

*Come, Holy Spirit!*

**THURSDAY: Read Acts 19:1-2**

Question: Of all the questions Paul could have asked, why does he ask this one?

He could ask them so many different questions. And, as you know, the questions we ask reveal the things about which we care. Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers? Maybe this is a question we need to ask more often. And if we're going to ask it, I suppose that the best place to start is with ourselves. So how about you? Do you understand the question? In the scriptures we don't see any confusion about what this question means. No one speaks about not being sure—they either know they have or they know they haven't. Or maybe you feel more like the Ephesians who, after all, Luke does refer to as believers—"...we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." Think about this, though. Jesus tells his disciples that having the Holy Spirit will be even better than having Jesus alive walking and talking with them down the road. He also tells them that the same Holy Spirit whose power raised Jesus from the dead was going to come and live inside of them. Better than Jesus? Powerful enough to defeat death and living in me? Yeah. Maybe we should ask this question more: did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became a believer?

*Come, Holy Spirit!*

**FRIDAY: Read Acts 19:3-7**

Question: In Acts, true faith in Jesus is always proven by what?

The Ephesian believers learn about Jesus from Paul and place their faith specifically in Jesus rather than just the idea of Jesus, but their faith development doesn't stop there, does it? No, it culminates in something else. It comes to completion when they receive the Holy Spirit. Luke even gives a clue that this is the goal, the completion of belief. They are no longer believers in part, but believers in whole and Luke shows us this by mentioning that there were 12 of them. The number twelve in the bible symbolizes the twelve tribes of Israel, or the *whole* of Israel. By saying there were "about twelve" Luke is calling that idea of wholeness and completeness to mind. Their salvation is complete and whole—though still growing—when they receive the Holy Spirit.

*Come, Holy Spirit!*

**SATURDAY: Read Psalm 4**

Find a quiet place today and make the words of this Psalm your own prayer to God.

Answer me when I call, O God who declares me innocent. Take away my distress. Have mercy on me and hear my prayer. 2 How long will you people ruin my reputation? How long will you make these groundless accusations? How long will you pursue lies?(Pause to contemplate these questions) 3 You can be sure of this: The LORD has set apart the godly for himself. The LORD will answer when I call to him. 4 Don't sin by letting anger gain control over you. Think about it overnight and remain silent. (Pause to reflect on this command) 5 Offer proper sacrifices, and trust in the LORD. 6 Many people say, "Who will show us better times?" Let the smile of your face shine on us, LORD. 7 You have given me greater joy than those who have abundant harvests of grain and wine. 8 I will lie down in peace and sleep, for you alone, O LORD, will keep me safe.