



1. Can you remember a time in your life when someone helped you to correct a deficiency in your spiritual life? What effect did this assistance have on your spiritual development?
2. What reasons might Priscilla and Aquila have given for not helping Apollos, and what reasons might Apollos have given for not listening to them? Why do you think the couple chose to help him and he chose to listen anyway? Considering God's blessing on Apollos' continued ministry, what lessons can we take from their respective decisions to teach and to listen?
3. At two different times in this passage, Apollos is noted for using Scripture effectively. What do you think it takes for someone to become "mighty in the Scriptures?" How could this relate to what the Bereans did in 17:11? What steps might someone take to become such a person?
4. The disciples in 19:1-7 who only knew the baptism of John (the Baptist) did not have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. In what ways might His absence have been evident in their daily lives? Do you think a lack of evidence of the Holy Spirit's power in a person's life is reason to question if that person has truly believed in Jesus or not? Explain your answer.
5. Why do you think John's disciples were so ready to believe in the Lord Jesus once Paul presented the good news? What application is there for us as we share the gospel?
6. In 19:13-16, why does the demon not respond to the name of Jesus when used by the sons of Sceva? What does this tell us about the likelihood of success for people who try to deal with their own or others' sin (or to do any other spiritual work) without an actual relationship with God?
7. Why do you think the experience of the sons of Sceva led the Christians of Ephesus to publicly forsake every association with magic? Why do you think they publicly confessed their sins instead of privately confessing them? Why do you think they burned their magic books instead of selling them? What application might this have for us today?
8. Our passage ends with an observation about the church that has been said differently several times in Acts. 19:20 is the last such "growth marker" in the book. What common threads do you see in these? (See 2:47b; 5:14; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5 for the others.) How much do we see these same types of things happening in our own churches today?
9. What lessons can we learn from this entire passage about the importance of accuracy and truth in spiritual matters? In what ways will you demonstrate this same importance in your own life?



Running Diagnostics
Leader Notes for Acts 18:23 – 19:20

This passage marks the beginning of Paul's third missionary journey. One thing became quickly evident from the events that transpired – as the church continued to grow, new and different challenges arose. People were teaching the church who did not understand the full gospel, others appeared to be members of the church but had not yet actually come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus, while still others from the outside attempted to use the well-known power of the Holy Spirit for their own personal ends.

After setting Paul off on his journey from Antioch, the author, Luke, placed us firmly in Ephesus for the rest of the passage, where we get to watch that church grow over the course of more than two years.

Having been left behind by Paul in Ephesus, Aquila and Priscila were watching out for the church in that city. When a new teacher, Apollos, arrived and began to speak about the Lord Jesus, it became evident from his teaching that he did not have a complete understanding of the good news of salvation. Though Apollos was a learned man and quite impressive, the refugee tent-making couple did not hesitate to take him aside privately and help him better understand the truths about Jesus. Apollos, for his part, quite evidently learned with humility and openness, with the result that he became a blessing not only to the saints in Ephesus but also to those across the Aegean Sea in Corinth!

When Paul finally arrived in the area as promised, he met some disciples of John the Baptist. After discovering that they had not yet received the Holy Spirit, Paul realized that they did not even know about Jesus! Once they had this important gap in their understanding filled by Paul, these disciples, who had already been prepared by John's message of repentance, readily trusted in the Lord Jesus and were quite evidently born again.

As was his custom, Paul then began his ministry in the synagogue. But after a while, as a result of stiff opposition from the Jews, he transferred to a Gentile location. He taught there for two years. During this time, through both Paul and others working with him, much of the province of Asia (western Turkey today) was evangelized.

God bore witness to the truth of Paul's preaching in miraculous ways. As this power display became known, others attempted to mimic what they saw as Paul's magical powers. They quickly realized, however, that it was not the words themselves that had power – the name of Jesus could not be used by just anyone. Rather, the all-powerful God was showing Himself strong on behalf of those who were His people. At this understanding, the church in Ephesus publicly broke all ties with their own magical past, confessed their sins and burned their expensive magic books – choosing the true Source of all power over men's sinful attempts to lay hold of that power.

The passage concludes with what can be called a "growth marker" – statements made by Luke describing what was happening in the churches at various times in the book of Acts. These statements can be our aspirations for the Holy Spirit's work in our churches even today.

