

### “Priscilla”

**Acts 18:1-3; 18:18-19; 18:24-26; Romans 16:3-4; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19**

As we saw in our review last week, most of the women we’ve studied lived in Old Testament times, with the exception of Mary & Martha. This week we’ll be discussing another woman from the New Testament, Priscilla.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, believers were left to carry on and spread the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. They were known as people of “the way.” Such were Priscilla and her husband Aquila. They were Jews who had come to know Jesus as their Savior. They would be instrumental in the early work of the church as students of the Apostle Paul and fellow workers with him in the profession of tentmaking.

We don’t hear a lot about Priscilla as a church leader in the days of the early church, but we should know that she is credited with being exactly that. Unlike the other women we’ve studied, Priscilla is never mentioned in the bible without her husband Aquila. They had both become believers in Jesus Christ, probably together. If ever a couple was called to the ministry together as a team, it was Priscilla and Aquila. The first reference is in **Acts 18:1-3**. So the first thing we learn about Priscilla is that she and her husband had come from Italy, along with other Jews living there when the Emperor Claudius expelled them all and they were forced to leave. They came to live in Corinth. As we know from earlier studies, Corinth was a city known for its immorality and for its worship of Aphrodite, known as the goddess of fertility. Not exactly the ideal place for new believers, and yet this is where God had them, and this is where they met Paul and forged a life-long bond with him, taking him into their home, working with him, and studying God’s word.

Nothing ties believers closer than ministering together in the work of the Lord. While Priscilla and Aquila’s chief occupation was making tents, working alongside Paul, who just happened to know the trade, they also had the opportunity to be schooled and trained by Paul. They had even taken him into their own home. In **Romans 16:3**, Paul referred to them as “*my fellow workers in Christ Jesus.*” They developed into a powerful team, opening their home to all believers who wanted to know more about the good news of Jesus Christ. They had received the joy of salvation and the promise of eternal life, and now they were anxious to share that joy with other believers.

The next account of Priscilla is in **Acts 18:18-19**. Here we see that after living for a while in Corinth, Priscilla and her husband Aquila are called to accompany Paul when he sets off for Syria. They stop at Ephesus and Paul leaves them there. Paul apparently had enough faith in them to know that they would do well there, ministering to the brethren. He had spent the last two or three years training them and getting to know them. He knew they both loved the Lord, and that they both had a heart for ministry. As it turned out, his faith in them was well founded. When he returned to them a year later, their gatherings had turned into a home church. It is here in Ephesus that Priscilla and Aquila experience a very interesting encounter in **Acts 18:24-26**. Their meeting with Apollos was definitely God ordained. Here was a well known eloquent speaker, well versed not just in the scriptures, but he had also come to be a follower of John the Baptist and a believer in John’s message of the need for repentance in light of the coming Messiah. It was said that Apollos spoke with passion and boldness, so that he drew large crowds

of people who came to hear him -- people like Priscilla and Aquila. However, he did not have the full story. He knew nothing of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. They listened and then after he was through speaking, they took him aside and probably said something like, "We really enjoyed your teaching ... but can we tell you about the events that took place after the death of John the Baptist. We think you'll be amazed!" And he listened to them, and he was amazed! He received what they had to say and believed it. Now, there are two things that could have had a very different outcome here: 1) Priscilla and Aquila could have interrupted Apollos while he was still speaking, or they could have caused a stir among the people, perhaps murmuring that Apollos was two sandwiches short of a picnic; or 2) When they approached Apollos, he could have reacted in a negative way, perhaps becoming offended by strangers trying to correct him or tell him what he didn't know. Priscilla and Aquila acted in a very respectful manner as they waited for him to finish speaking, and then they took him aside privately. As it happened, Apollos went away enlightened and became even more effective in presenting the case for Jesus as the Christ and the only way to gain eternal life.

In **Romans 16:3-4**, Paul makes mention of Priscilla and Aquila having "*risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.*" While the Bible never tells us how it was that Priscilla and her husband risked their lives for Paul, it gives us insight as to the depth of their relationship with Paul. They were, no doubt, sure of two things: 1) Paul was a great apostle, ordained and anointed by God; and 2) and there was no cause greater than the spreading of the good news of Jesus Christ. They were willing to do whatever it took to protect Paul and the ministry.

In that same scripture, Paul says, "*Likewise greet the church that is in their house.*" Priscilla and Aquila moved around quite a bit, and their home was open to receive other believers and anyone wanting to study the word with them. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul made mention of them in **1 Corinthians 16:19** where he says, "*Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.*" (It is believed that they began home churches in Ephesus, Corinth and Rome.) It's easy to picture Priscilla wearing many hats: in addition to being a wife and taking care of her household, she also served in the ministry of hospitality, wove tents with her husband, and was an active partner with her husband in teaching the word of God.

Priscilla's relationship with her husband was traditional in the sense that since they were Jews, she would have been educated in all the customs of their Jewish heritage. Since they both became believers in Jesus Christ, however, she was elevated to the status of being able to study the word of God with her husband. As New Testament believers, their marriage was one of equality – neither one was a leader, and neither one was a follower. They were partners in all things – work, ministry and their love for the Lord.

The affection Paul had for Priscilla and Aquila was always apparent in the scriptures. In his last letter to Timothy, he asks him to greet "*Prisca and Aquila*" in **2 Timothy 4:19**. Prisca was a shortened version of Priscilla's name, a nickname that probably would have only been used by those close to her. This was just another example of the close relationship Paul shared with them. They had lived together, worked together, and shared the Lord together. It was a friendship of mutual trust and faith in the Lord Jesus. Many of us can attest to like relationships with those who become our brothers and sisters in Christ. With Christ as our common denominator, we cannot help but develop a bond with other believers. That's why we're told in Hebrews 10:25: "*And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*"

### **Some things to learn from the life of Priscilla:**

- She was a happy multi-tasker. She did not neglect one thing while concentrating on another. She obviously had much to do, but she was able to find a healthy balance. *“Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” Galatians 6:9*
- She was always ready to teach or expound on the word of God. *“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season.” 2 Timothy 4:2*
- She knew her place. She was very talented, gifted and intelligent, and the Lord used her, but she did not feel the need to elevate herself above her husband or anyone else. She ministered as unto the Lord. *“The Lord lifts up the humble.” Psalm 147:6*
- She was courageous in a time of great persecution. *“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the one who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.” Deuteronomy 31:6*

The life of Priscilla encourages us, as women, to aspire to be all that God wants us to be – women after God’s heart, committed to doing what we can to spread the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

*“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.”*  
*Ecclesiastes 4:9*

