



# Spiritual Strengthening

**"And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples" (Acts 18:23).**

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"And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. 22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples" (Acts 18:18-23).

The openly declared goal of Jesus is "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16). It would be a deeply painful experience for a mother to give birth and none of the children survives. The same applies to Soulwinning, and we see this play out immensely in Paul's ministry through the various measures he took in various places to preserve the converts in faith, including but not limited to the ministry of visitation, establishing local churches, appointing elders/pastors, letter writing, etc. In this study we learn that:

- 1) After the insurrection at Corinth had ended, Paul "... tarried there yet a good while..." (vs 18) before taking leave of the brethren. Obviously, his purpose was to strengthen the brethren.
- 2) In sailing to Syria he took along with him Priscilla and Aquila, co-workers he met at Corinth, who later became prominent helpers in ministry (vs 18). He was mindful to establish long term relationships for the advancement of God's kingdom.
- 3) At Cenchrea Paul (or Aquila) shaved his head because of a vow he had taken (vs 18). Some

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believe this was to discharge himself from the vow of Nazarite. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed" (Ecclesiastes 5:4).

- 4) On getting to Ephesus he "... entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews" (vs 19). Obviously he strengthened the believers who wanted him to "tarry longer time with them" (vs 20) but he consented not because of his goal "to keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem" (vs 21).
- 5) Though he bade them farewell, he also gave them some hope "... but I will return again unto you if God will" (vs 21).
- 6) Sailing from Ephesus, he landed at Caesarea, saluted the church and when down to Antioch (vs 22), where he was originally commissioned for the missionary work. In all this we see his keenness maintaining contact and fellowship with others, and using every opportunity to develop and establish the believers in faith.
- 7) After spending some time with them, "... he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples" (vs 23)

Strengthening all the disciples was one of his primary objectives in life and ministry, and so must it be with us. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). We need the encouragement of one another to stay strong and finish the race with success.