

## APOLLOS - THE ELOQUENT TEACHER

**Scripture References:** Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4-9; 16:12; Titus 3:13 Apollos was impressive. Really impressive. He was "a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures." He was "a native of Alexandria", one of the most intellectually sophisticated cities in the ancient world. He was "fervent in spirit" and spoke with "great fervor."

When Apollos started preaching in Ephesus, people were blown away. He argued persuasively in the synagogue, proving from Scripture that Jesus was the Messiah.

But there was a problem: "He knew only the baptism of John" (Acts 18:25).

Apollos understood that the Messiah had come. He knew Jesus was that Messiah, but his theology was incomplete. He didn't fully understand the work of the Holy Spirit, Christian baptism, or the full implications of Jesus' death and resurrection.

He was preaching truth, but not the whole truth.

That's when Priscilla and Aquila stepped in. They invited Apollos to their home and "explained to him the way of God more adequately" (Acts 18:26).

This moment is huge. Apollos could have been offended. He could have said, "Who are you to correct me? I'm the educated one here. I'm the one with thorough knowledge of the Scriptures!"

But he didn't. Instead, Apollos humbled himself and received their teaching. That humility would make all the difference. After being disciplined by Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos went to Achaia (the region around Corinth) and became an even more effective minister:

*"When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah." (Acts 18:27-28)*

Apollos was a gifted debater. He could take on the toughest opponents and demolish their arguments using Scripture alone. He wasn't just about winning arguments. He was "a great help to those who by grace had believed." He strengthened the faith of believers and equipped them to stand firm.

Apollos wasn't just smart. He was useful.

Unfortunately, Apollos' success in Corinth led to an unexpected problem. Some believers started forming factions around their favorite teachers. Some said, "I follow Paul." Others said, "I follow Apollos." Still others said, "I follow Cephas (Peter)." (1 Corinthians 1:12)

The Corinthian church was dividing into fan clubs, treating Paul, Apollos, and Peter like competing celebrities.

Paul's response was sharp:

*"What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."*  
(1 Corinthians 3:5-7)

Paul and Apollos weren't rivals. They were partners. Paul planted the church in Corinth. Apollos came later and helped it grow. Neither of them made it happen - God did. Apollos wasn't competing with Paul, and Paul wasn't jealous of Apollos' success. They were on the same team, working toward the same goal. One of the most telling details about Apollos comes in 1 Corinthians 16:12:

*"Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity."*

Paul wanted Apollos to go back to Corinth, probably to help resolve the divisions in the church. But Apollos refused. Why? We're not told, but it's likely that Apollos didn't want to make the problem worse. If some Corinthians were already forming an "Apollos party," his presence might only fuel the division. So, he said no to Paul, not out of defiance, but out of wisdom. He didn't want to be a source of conflict in the church.

That takes integrity. Apollos could have gone to Corinth and enjoyed the adoration of his fans, but he chose the health of the church over his own ego.

The last mention of Apollos is in Titus 3:13, where Paul tells Titus to "do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need." Apollos was still traveling, still ministering, still serving the churches. He never wrote a book of the Bible. He never became as famous as Paul or Peter. But he was faithful. And his faithfulness strengthened countless believers.

### **He was humble enough to be taught!**

Apollos was brilliant, educated, and gifted. But when Priscilla and Aquila corrected him, he didn't get defensive. He listened. He learned. He grew. In discipleship, one of the hardest things to do is admit you don't have it all figured out. Especially if you're used to being the leader, the teacher, or the one with answers. Discipleship requires humility. It requires being willing to say, "I need help. I need to learn. I need to grow."

If you're too proud to be taught, you'll never mature in Christ. But if you're humble enough to receive correction, you can become the kind of disciple God uses powerfully.

Apollos shows us that even the most gifted people need mentoring and discipleship. Even the most knowledgeable believers need to keep learning.

No matter how far you've come in your walk with Christ, stay teachable. Stay humble. Stay open to correction. That's how you keep growing.

True discipleship means maintaining a learner's posture throughout your entire life. It means recognizing that spiritual maturity isn't about knowing everything - it's about being humble enough to keep learning from God and from others He places in your path.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - CHAPTER 10: APOLLOS

1. Apollos was intelligent and gifted, but his theology was incomplete. Have you ever been in a situation where you thought you knew the truth, but later realized you had more to learn? How did you respond?
2. When Priscilla and Aquila corrected Apollos, he humbled himself and received their teaching. How do you typically respond to correction? What makes it hard to accept correction graciously?
3. The Corinthians formed factions around Paul, Apollos, and Peter. Why is it dangerous to idolize Christian leaders? How can we honor and learn from teachers without creating "celebrity culture" in the church?
4. Apollos refused to go to Corinth when Paul asked him to, likely because he didn't want to fuel division. Have you ever had to say no to a good opportunity because it wasn't the right thing for the situation? How did you make that decision?
5. Paul said, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow." What does this teach us about teamwork in ministry? How can we celebrate the success of others without feeling threatened?
6. **DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS:** Apollos was willing to be taught, even though he was already knowledgeable. In discipleship, staying teachable is essential. What are some ways you can remain humble and open to learning as you grow in your walk with Christ?

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Apollos—eloquent, knowledgeable, fervent in spirit, and yet humble enough to be taught. Thank You that when Priscilla and Aquila gently corrected his incomplete understanding, he received their instruction with grace. Thank You for his example of using his gifts powerfully while remaining teachable and humble.

Lord, forgive us when we think we've learned enough and close our hearts to correction. Forgive us when we use our gifts for our own glory rather than Yours. Forgive us when pride makes us unteachable and when insecurity keeps us from using our gifts at all.

Give us Apollos's combination of confidence and humility—bold in proclaiming what we know to be true, yet humble enough to admit what we don't know. Help us to develop our gifts and abilities, not for applause, but to serve You more effectively. Teach us to receive correction graciously and to be lifelong learners of Your Word.

Show us that being teachable is not weakness but wisdom, that growing in understanding is not shameful but commendable. Help us to speak persuasively about You while remaining humble before You.

Use our gifts, whatever they may be, for Your kingdom and Your glory alone.

In Christ's name,  
Amen.



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