

RESERVE PLAYERS

Scripture Reading: Read Acts chapter 18

As I write this devotional, the National Basketball Conference Championships are taking place. The Boston Celtics are engaged in a battle with the Miami Heat in the east and the San Antonio Spurs are being challenged by the Oklahoma City Thunder in the west. The winner of each conference championship will play in the finals. If you're a sports fan, the names of James, Duncan, Wade, Garnett, Rondo, Ginobili, Parker, Durant, Pierce and Allen are familiar ones. Lesser known, perhaps, are the reserves that come off the bench. Yet, without them, a championship can be lost.

When you read through the book of Acts, it's obvious who the star players are: Peter, Paul, John, James, Stephen and Philip immediately come to mind. They get most of the spotlight in Luke's history of the early church. Yet, there are some reserves that come off the bench and make some essential plays that bring victory to the home team. Two of those players are found in today's chapter reading: Aquila and Priscilla. While you will find Paul's name (or his other name, Saul) mentioned over 200 times in Acts, you'll only find Aquila and Priscilla mentioned by name a total of seven times in the entire New Testament! Yet, their role in the kingdom coming off the bench proved invaluable to Paul and to the church. Take a look for yourself.

- ★ **Acts 18:1-3** – He set up shop with them in tent-making when he went to Corinth on his second missionary journey. This provided him with income to support himself so he could preach the gospel in Corinth.
- ★ **Acts 18:18-19, 26** – They traveled with Paul to Ephesus near the conclusion of Paul's second missionary journey. By doing so, they were in a position to provide teaching and training to Apollos, who, in turn, proved invaluable in helping the church in both Ephesus and in Corinth.
- ★ **Romans 16:3-5** – Paul identifies the couple as “my fellow workers in Christ Jesus” implying they labored with him in ministry even though they're not mentioned on the front page of the “sports” section. In addition, Paul expressed his appreciation for the couple because “they risked their lives for me.” This probably happened during the riot in Ephesus when Paul was there on his 3rd missionary journey.
- ★ **I Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:5** – They had a church that met in their home (which means they probably pastored the church).
- ★ **2 Timothy 4:9** – At the end of Paul's life, just before he was put to death by Emperor Nero, he sent greetings through Timothy to Aquila and Priscilla. Their faithful friendship had continued for over 15 years.

In ministry, not everyone will be in the limelight as a “star” player but every player is valuable. The stars and the reserves together are part of the same team but God gets the glory for the win!

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Go back through Acts and see if you can find any other “reserve” players that came off the bench to help the team “win.” Pray that the Lord will show you what role you play on the team.

Take-a-way: *In the kingdom, all players are valuable to the team.*