

## *Two Becoming One*

By Harold & Bette Gillogly

The concept of “two becoming one” in marriage is first declared in Genesis 2:24. It is stated again by Jesus in Matthew 19:4-6 and finally by Paul in Ephesians 5:31-32. Much has been said about the meaning of oneness, about the process of becoming one, about how this ONENESS is a testimony to the world about Christ and the church.

In this “Seeds” article we don’t want to belabor what has already been said about these aspects of becoming one. What we do want to emphasize, however, is this: Through this special and unique union between husband and wife, God has a special and unique way He desires to minister to others. Just as people are unique, so also is every couple. God wants to use that uniqueness in ministry.

There is a couple in Scripture that depicts this in a beautiful way. Their names are Aquila and Priscilla. Let’s follow them through the Bible and learn from their example.

We start with Acts 18, skipping through the chapter, hitting only the highlights. *After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontes, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome.* This is our introduction to this wonderful couple. They are new arrivals in Corinth, having moved there because of religious persecution. They are Jews who had probably grown up and gotten married in Rome. But Emperor Claudius did not like Jews, so they are now refugees in a strange city.

*Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them....So Paul stayed for a year and a half teaching them the Word of God....* Aquila and Priscilla might have been refugees, but they were busy ones. They had already started their own business of tent making, and apparently had enough work to have Paul join them. From these verses, it seems he also stayed in their spare room for a year and a half. We don’t know exactly at what point Priscilla and Aquila became Christians, but sometime during that extended visit, they came to know the Lord Jesus and grew under Paul’s teaching along with the other Christians in Corinth.

### **A couple moving home and business for others.**

*Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila....They arrived at Ephesus where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila....* After a year and a half in Corinth, Paul declares that it is time to move on to Syria and start some new churches and encourage the believers there. What do Priscilla and Aquila do? They roll up their tents and proclaim, “You’re going to need some help. We’ll go with you.” When the three of them arrived in Ephesus, Paul, after preaching in the synagogue, left our missionary couple in Ephesus to carry on. Can you imagine how they must have felt? They had been left alone in a foreign land, far from home, just the two of them. So they began their Ephesian ministry in the most logical place for Jews — the synagogue. They must have

reasoned successfully there about the Messiah, because in verse 27, we are told that by the time Apollos got there, others had become Christians. And later in 1 Cor. 16:19, Paul writes a letter to Corinth from Ephesus stating that the Ephesian church *meets in their [Priscilla and Aquila’s] house.*

*Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos...came to Ephesus ....He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.* Can’t you just see it? Priscilla and Aquila attend synagogue regularly, speaking a word for Jesus whenever given the opportunity. Then one Saturday, a stranger shows up and requests permission to speak. This guy really knows the Scriptures, and speaks *with great fervor and teaches about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.* The couple thinks, “This guy is good, but he doesn’t have the whole picture.” So they invite him to dinner and catch him up on the rest of the story. There would be so much they had to teach him, that they must have had him over to their home many times. Finally, the day came when Apollos was ready to go on alone. And Aquila and Priscilla and the rest of the believers in Ephesus gave him a big send off to Achaia.

Priscilla and Aquila were ready for God to use them anytime, anywhere. They worked together in ministry, bringing people to the Lord, opening their home whenever needed, giving of themselves to people who needed discipling, and letting go of their disciples when

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their work with them was done. This was indeed a couple God could count on. Can He count on you? Is your home open for Him to use? Is your time and energy available for the Master's use? Ministering together in your home is one of the most rewarding things you two will ever do. Do you believe that? Then it's time to throw another chicken leg in the pan, and invite someone home for dinner.

Ministering together may have an additional aspect as well. One of you may teach a Sunday School class or lead a boy's or girl's club or whatever. But you can still be ministering as a team by being involved in one another's service.

You can help each other cut out flannel graph figures, serve in the nursery together, and, of course, you can pray together for one another's areas of ministry. Sometimes we have the attitude, "This is what **I** do. This is where **I** shine. Go away and do something else." If that's your attitude, you are cheating yourself out of your mate's spiritual, emotional and even physical support. We need to give support, and we also need to be willing to receive it.

There is one more reference that we would like to share about Aquila and Priscilla: Romans 16:3 and 4. *Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my*

*fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.* We don't know how this couple risked their lives for Paul, maybe it was during the riot in Ephesus which exploded one time after Paul's preaching. Whatever it was, all the churches of the Gentiles owe them their gratitude to this very day. You and I owe Priscilla and Aquila a debt of gratitude for helping save Paul's life. If they hadn't, we might not have half of the New Testament.

**Greater love has no one than this that one would lay down his life for another.**

Do you think Aquila and Priscilla, while risking their lives for Paul, were thinking, "Wow, this is really significant. Why, we're changing the course of history! We're making a profound difference in this world!" That is all true, isn't it? But the point is, none of us know how significant what we do really is. Every time you open your home or give yourselves in ministry, you may be making a profound, significant difference in people's lives, and, indeed, the whole world. Someday, someone may be telling a group of people in a far distant land how they owe a debt of gratitude to **you**. It

can happen if you let God use you as **His** couple. You can be sure of this: God wants to give you something **useful** to do **together** as a unit.

So what have Priscilla and Aquila shown us about shared ministry?

**a. Their home was open and available for ministry to others** — both to individuals like Apollos and to groups like the church that met there.

**b. They shared together in both ministries** — The passages don't say that Aquila took Apollos aside, nor that he alone led the church in their home — it mentions them **together** in **both** cases.

**c. They were willing to move for the sake of ministry to others.** People were always more important than **things** to them.

**d. And finally, they submitted their ministry to Paul's authority and guidance** as we should to our church leaders.

**Let us go and do likewise!**

(Most of this article is an excerpt from our Leader's Guide, *Achieving God's Design for Marriage*, Joy Publishing, pgs. XI 7-10 in the chapter on Spiritual Intimacy.)

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