

Jenga

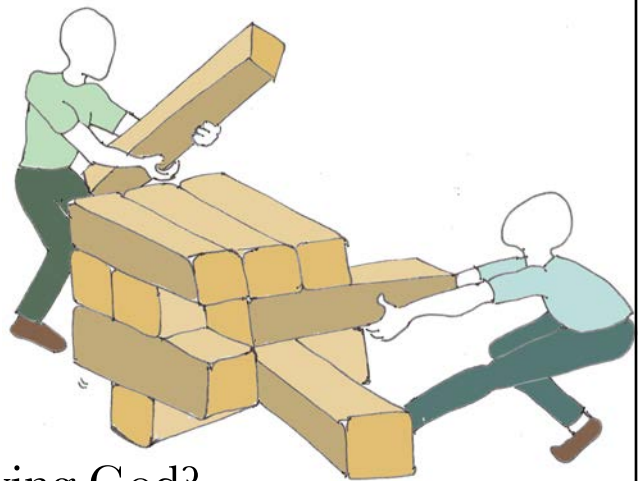
- Start with a stable pile of blocks
- Remove a block and put it on top
- Making a less and less stable tower
- Until it falls



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Life like Jenga

- Building up & Tearing down
 - Sometimes other people
 - Sometimes ourselves
- How does that happen in life?
- How does it feel?
- How does that happen in following God?
- Where is that true for you today?
Where is your life & ministry like Jenga?



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<i>When Paul got discouraged...</i>		
City	Beginning	Outcome: opposition and departure
Galatia		
Antioch	Whole city came to hear	Jews persecuted him & drove him out
Iconium	Great number believed	Jews tried to stone them. They fled
Lystra	People started to worship Paul	Jews from Antioch came; Stoned almost to death; left
Macedonia		
Philippi	Lydia converted. Cast out the evil spirit of the fortune teller	Gentiles upset. Arrested, severely flogged, & jailed; Released; told to go
Thessalonica	3 weeks in the synagogue, explaining and proving Jesus	Jews were jealous; Riot, attempted arrest; Fled by night
Berea	Teaching in the synagogue	Thessalonian Jews came and tried to start another riot. Fled
Achaia	Many believers	
Athens	Talked in synagogue	Talked with Gentiles ; little belief; left

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Paul's description of how he felt in going to Corinth

And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, **I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom** as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. **I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.**

1 Corinthians 2:1-3

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Acts 18:1-17

1-4: In Corinth: worked & proclaimed the Gospel

5-8: • Met Aquila & Priscilla: needed connections it seems

9-11: • In common: visitors, Jews, Christians, persecuted,

12-17: tentmakers

- Would come to form a significant team
- God used the hardship of their persecution (expelled from Rome) to add to Paul's ministry
- Paul returned to the synagogue
- Persuading Jews & Greeks

Chinese: page 1799

Spanish: page 1413

English-Green: page 758

English-Brown: page 1112

** Larger print

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Acts 18:1-17

1-4: In Corinth: worked & proclaimed the Gospel

5-8: Jews opposed Paul, yet the Gospel grew

9-11: • Gifts from other churches → full time proclamation

12-17: • Focus on evangelism among Jews

- Forceful opposition shifted Paul's focus to Gentiles

- Dramatic Jewish image of judgment

- A watchman is guilty if the warning is not given

- Effective ministry was certainly offensive to Jews

- Ministry center next door to the synagogue

- Synagogue leader & whole household converted!

- Many others converted & were **baptized**

- Perhaps Paul expected trouble: "Here we go again!"

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Acts 18:1-17

1-4: In Corinth: worked & proclaimed the Gospel

5-8: Jews opposed Paul, yet the Gospel grew

9-11: Jesus' message to Paul: Keep proclaiming the Word!

- 12-17:
- **Commands: Don't fear & keep speaking (repeated)**
 - Personal vision shows the need for the command
 - **Reasons**
 - Jesus is present
 - Attacks (which will come) will not bring harm
 - Jesus had many people in Corinth
 - It seems: anticipation of many more conversions
 - Paul obeyed: his part in bringing conversions
 - Proclaiming the Word is God's means for new life

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Acts 18:1-17

1-4: In Corinth: worked & proclaimed the Gospel

5-8: Jews opposed Paul, yet the Gospel grew

9-11: Jesus' message to Paul: Keep proclaiming the Word!

- 12-17: Vision fulfilled: attack that brought good!
- Like previous persecutions in other provinces
 - Jews hoped to have Christianity judged illegal
 - Paul planned to have to defend himself
 - Gallio: Christianity was a legal part of Judaism
 - Refused to take up the case ("drove them off")
 - Attack on Sosthenes: tried to force a ruling
 - Result: freedom for Christian life & ministry!

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The Big Idea

Jesus is building His Church/His Kingdom
 through His presence, protection, and redemption
 which is often hard to see
 and through the perseverance
 of His servants on mission
 who walk by faith

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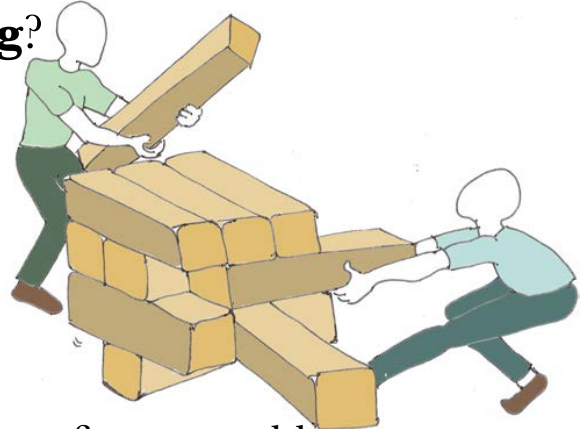
Being “On Mission”

- What has God **called** you to do?
 - **Obvious mission:**
 - Evangelism / Discipleship: new life and growing life in Christ
 - Lead a Life Group / Mentor friends or relatives in Christ
 - Pray for church & missionaries / Give / Serve
 - **Less obvious mission:**
 - Work, study, parent, make a home, care for those in need, ...
 - “Vocation”: What God “calls” you to do / discernment
 - Bless those who curse, love those who annoy, speak truth, ...
 - Honor God (give) with money, heart, talents, time, ...

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Being “On Mission”

- What has God **called** you to do?
- When does it get **discouraging**?
 - Perhaps no visible progress
 - Perhaps visible decline
 - Perhaps visible opposition
 - Perhaps invisible opposition
 - Perhaps I’m my own trouble!
 - Perhaps discouragement because of past trouble



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Being “On Mission”

- What has God **called** you to do?
- When does it get **discouraging**?
- Then focus our hearts & minds on the promises of Jesus:
 - “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking [serving], do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.”*
 - Jesus is with us in our perseverance and obedience
 - Jesus will protect us from **full** harm → **perseverance**
 - Jesus is doing His work through our obedience **is essential!**

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Paul's exhortation to the Christians in Corinth

Our true hope is the resurrection: God's victory over death

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm.

Let nothing move you. **Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord**, because you know that **your labor in the Lord is not in vain.**”

1 Corinthians 15:18

No act of faith-based obedience is ever wasted or lost

in vain = empty, useless

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The Big Idea

Jesus is building His Church/Kingdom
through His presence, protection, and redemption
which is often hard to see
and through the perseverance
of His servants on mission
who walk by faith

Are you “on mission”? It is not the default...

**As God has called you, stand firm, let nothing slow you down,
always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord...**

Because it will never be wasted or lost in Christ!

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