

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 57)

THE TYRANNUS VISION. Paul went as far as he could using the synagogue method of reaching Jews first. At Ephesus Paul made a strategic change. Ephesus was the border of a new frontier. It was the greatest city in Asia Minor and its metropolis. Ships traveled there from all parts of the Mediterranean, and all roads led to Ephesus. Paul was thinking of how to send the Gospel to the regions beyond. His solution was to make Ephesus the new Antioch where he was sent out on three missionary journeys. From Ephesus the Gospel could be launched to the rest of the world. It was the ideal place for sending out church planters. Ephesus was the most important city in Asia Minor (modern Turkey), and the Ephesian church had become the most prominent of all the churches Paul established. What started in a local synagogue ended in a school, probably owned by one of Paul's disciples. It was called "the school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:9). There Paul developed a new discipleship paradigm. He created a model which was intended to continue for the entire church age. Paul's new paradigm allowed him to train more disciples in a shorter period of time. Within two years "all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). Ryrie comments on the success of Paul's experiment in Asia. "It was an astounding accomplishment that all in Asia Minor should have heard (not necessarily believed) the gospel. Undoubtedly accomplished mostly by ordinary believers witnessing as they went about their business throughout the region. Churches in Colosse, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and perhaps some of those in Revelation 2-3 were established during these two to three years." The Tyrannus experiment was clearly a matter of the Holy Spirit leading Paul to implement an accelerated approach that would yield a greater harvest than was ever experienced before. Paul did this while remaining in Ephesus himself. Scrogge estimates that Paul taught about five hours a day, giving over 700 addresses and 3,500 hours of witness. The work of the ministry was no longer a matter of training a few, but as many as possible in a church Bible school. This was a radical discipling revolution.