

## 1 Corinthians 16

**What was the “collection” (v. 1)?** It seems that the Corinthian Christians had heard about the “collection” of money Paul was getting together for the poor Christians in Jerusalem (v. 3), and they apparently wanted to make a contribution. Paul had already given orders to the churches of Galatia about the “collection,” and he now instructs the Corinthians to respond in the same manner that the Galatian saints had been urged to do.<sup>1</sup>

**What was the guidance Paul gave to the Corinthians (v. 2)?** Giving should be a systematic, weekly practice on Sunday when the church meets together.<sup>2</sup> It should be proportionate to one’s income. Saving up for giving should be a regular practice so that special offerings wouldn’t be needed to take care of unexpected needs.

**What Old Testament principle was not mentioned by Paul?** Tithing. Christians are no longer under the Mosaic Law which mandated a 10% tithe. Neither Jesus Christ, nor the apostles, commanded tithing. **How were they to determine how much to give?** An appropriate amount based on their income. The amount was left entirely up to the givers (hopefully as led by the Holy Spirit).

What was important was that giving be a unified ministry with each one participating, regardless of his income. Then when it came time to deliver the contributions to the saints in Jerusalem, no last-minute collections would need to be made, and the gift could be sent off gladly, not grudgingly (2 Corinthians 9:5)—as would be true if it were wrung out by emotional appeals or personal pressure.<sup>3</sup>

**How did Paul handle the transfer of money (vv. 3-4)?** In an intentional manner with great integrity. Paul gives us very valuable insight into the care that should be taken with money that is gathered in a Christian assembly. Paul’s practice in money matters was scrupulously aboveboard.

It is noticeable, first, that the funds were not to be entrusted to any one person. Even Paul himself was not to be the sole recipient. Secondly, we notice that the arrangements as to who would carry the money were not made arbitrarily by the Apostle Paul. Rather, this decision was left to the local assembly. The emphasis was on proper financial accountability and responsibility.

**The travel plans of Paul and his fellow apostles are described in vv. 5-9. Why was Paul planning to stay on at Ephesus (vv. 8-9)?** He realized that there was a golden opportunity for serving Christ at that time at Ephesus. He did not regard the opposition there as an indication of a closed door, or as a sign that God wanted him to move on to a more comfortable ministry. The presence of opposition was a sign to him that his labor was worthwhile and reason for pressing on and not running away (Acts 19:30-31).

Paul followed his own advice to “*stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord*” (15:58). Adversaries and opposition constitute spiritual warfare and should not break the spirits of faithful ministers, but only rekindle their zeal.

**What picture does Paul draw of the dilemma of Christian service (v. 9)?** On the one hand, there are the fields that are ripe and ready to harvest; on the other hand, there is a sleepless foe who seeks to obstruct, divide, and oppose in every conceivable way!<sup>4</sup>

**What was Paul’s perspective on Timothy and what direction did he give the Corinthians (vv. 10-11)?** Paul saw Timothy as a devoted young servant, a protégé, a beloved assistant. He was of great value to Paul in his ministry. His message to the Corinthians was, “Don’t scare him. Don’t intimidate him. Because *he is carrying on the work of the Lord.*” Apparently, Timothy was somewhat timid, lacking Paul’s robust boldness, and Paul recognized that working with the Corinthian church was no picnic.

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<sup>1</sup> MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (p. 1811). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 546). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (p. 1812). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**What was Paul's concern about Apollos (v. 12)?** Paul had strongly urged him to visit Corinth. Apollos did not feel that this was God's will for him at the time, but he indicated that he would go to Corinth when he had the opportunity. Verse 12 is valuable to us in showing the loving spirit that prevailed among the servants of the Lord. Someone has called it a beautiful picture of "unjealous love and respect." It also shows the liberty that prevailed for each servant of the Lord to be guided by the Lord without dictation from any other source. Even the Apostle Paul himself was not authorized to tell Apollos what to do.<sup>5</sup>

This verse clearly shows that Paul conducted himself not as a master but as a partner with others who labored in ministry.<sup>6</sup>

**What were Paul's final practical exhortations to the Corinthians (vv. 13-14)?** They are to be on their guard, to stand firm in the faith, to be men of courage and to be strong. Perhaps Paul is thinking again of the danger of false teachers. They are not to give up an inch of vital territory. They are to behave with true courage.

Finally, they are to be strong in the Lord. In all that they do, they are to manifest love. This will mean leading lives of devotion to God and to others. It will mean a giving of themselves.<sup>7</sup> "Love" was the greatest need of this church. An entire chapter was devoted to "love" (1 Corinthians 13).

**Why did Paul urge his readers to appreciate Stephanas and his family (vv. 15-16)?** These Christians were the earliest converts in Achaia (Greece). They were among those who voluntarily assumed responsibility for the general welfare of the church. Those who set themselves apart for the service of Christ should be looked up to and be shown the loving respect of all the people of God.

**How did the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus impact Paul (vv. 17-18)?** They brought joy to Paul's heart. They supplied what was lacking on the part of the Corinthians. This may mean that they showed kindness and affection to the apostle which the Corinthians had neglected to do. Paul wanted the Corinthians to be sure to give them the recognition they deserved.

**How did Paul conclude this strong, but loving epistle (vv. 19-24) (with the exception of the warning of v. 22)?** With a series of encouraging greetings (vv. 19-21), with his love (v. 24), and with a prayerful benediction of God's "grace" (v. 23). Note that this letter also began, "Grace to you" (1:3). Grace is the beginning and the end of the Christian gospel; it is the single word that most fully expresses what God has done and will do for his people in Christ Jesus.

**What was Paul's passionate warning about (v. 22)?** He invoked God's wrath on those who had been causing him grief, probably aimed at false teachers (12:3) whom he believed to be already present in the congregation (2 Corinthians 11:3-4). And in the same breath, Paul appealed to Christ to return.

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<sup>5</sup> MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (pp. 1812-1813). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>6</sup> Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 547). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>7</sup> MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (p. 1813). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.