

## BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

# THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL INTEGRITY, [2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15](#)

### B. The Men Who Handle the Collection, [2 Corinthians 8:16-24](#)

#### [2 Corinthians 8:16-24 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

<sup>17</sup> For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord.

<sup>18</sup> We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in *the things of the gospel has spread* through all the churches;

<sup>19</sup> and not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness,

<sup>20</sup> taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;

<sup>21</sup> for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

<sup>22</sup> We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of *his* great confidence in you.

<sup>23</sup> As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, *they are* messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

**([2 Corinthians 8:16-24](#)) Introduction:** men who handle collections in the church have an important function, very important. They hold a position that is very visible. People are always aware of the persons who handle their money. Therefore, within the church it is important that such persons be trustworthy and moral; that they live a good and clean life, and that they have a strong Christian testimony.

In the present passage, a special mission project is being undertaken to help the poor churches in Judea. A large sum of money (“**this abundance**”) is involved. Paul wants to make absolutely sure that everything is above board, that he leaves no door open for questioning what happened to the money. He wants to protect the name of Christ and his own name.

Therefore, he chooses Titus to head up a delegation of men to handle the offerings. And note: the men are chosen by the church, not by Paul ([2 Corinthians 8:16-19](#)).

**2 Corinthians 8:16-19 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

<sup>17</sup> For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord.

<sup>18</sup> We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in *the things of the gospel has spread* through all the churches;

<sup>19</sup> and not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness,

Again, the importance of the men who handle collections cannot be overstressed. For this reason, this passage discusses these men and the kind of men they must be. (See below note— [Acts 20:4-6](#); and note— [1 Corinthians 16:1-4](#) for more discussion.)

1. They care for the church—earnestly care (v.16-17).
2. They have a reputation for the gospel, a testimony for witnessing (v.18).
3. They are representatives chosen by the church in order to avoid charges of misconduct against the minister (v.19-21).
4. They are diligent in many things, but especially in collections (v.22).
5. They are partners of the minister (v.23).
6. They are to be loved by the church (v.24).

**1. (2 Corinthians 8:16-17) Stewardship— Offerings: men who handle collections (ushers) care for the church, earnestly care.**

**2 Corinthians 8:16-17 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup>“But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

<sup>17</sup> For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord.”

**NOTE # 2**

**1 Corinthians 16:1-4 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.

<sup>2</sup> On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

<sup>3</sup> When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem;

<sup>4</sup> and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me.”

## Some Instructions on Financial Collections, [1 Corinthians 16:1-4](#)

[\(1 Corinthians 16:1-4\)](#) **Introduction:** this passage spells out some wise instructions on church offerings and collections. The instructions have too often been ignored; and the result has been scandal, rumor, and destruction of the cause of Christ.

1. **First, the instructions are for every church (v.1).**
2. **Second, the instructions (v.2-4).**

1. [\(1 Corinthians 16:1\)](#) **Stewardship: first, the instructions on giving are for every church.**

[1 Corinthians 16:1-4 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.”

Note that Paul had given the very same instructions to the churches of Galatia which numbered several churches. What Paul taught here, he apparently taught everywhere. This seems to be the set order in which church offerings and collections are to be handled.

“As I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.”

The collection referred to was a special offering being taken for the poor believers in Jerusalem (cp. [Romans 15:26](#); [1 Cor. 16:1, 3](#); [2 Cor. 8:1](#); [2 Cor. 9:1](#); [Acts 24:17](#)). For some reason the Jerusalem believers were suffering extreme poverty.

Some commentators have speculated that the suffering was due...

- to severe persecutions by the Jews (cp. [1 Thes. 2:14-16](#)).
- to the failure of common ownership which the early church practiced, expecting the Lord’s immediate return (cp. [Acts 4:32-37](#)).

It had been some thirty years since the early church had begun to practice common ownership of goods. The opinion of some is that the system had failed and caused widespread poverty among the Jerusalem believers.

Whatever the immediate cause of the poverty, the Jerusalem believers were in desperate need, need so desperate that a world-wide offering from all Christian churches was needed to meet the crisis.

**Thought 1.** The lesson is clear. The church must meet the desperate needs of men: the needs of the poor, the hungry, the diseased, the homeless, the lost, and the multitudes of others who have little if anything in this world including health and hope. Believers must give, and give sacrificially. Believers must do all they can. The instructions of this Scripture are for all the churches of the world.

**Matthew 5:42 (NASB)**

<sup>42</sup>“Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.”

**Luke 3:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup>“And he would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.”

**Luke 12:33 (NASB)**

<sup>33</sup>“Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.”

**Acts 20:35 (NASB)**

<sup>35</sup>“In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

**Romans 12:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup>“Contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.”

**Galatians 6:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup>“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

## **2. (1 Corinthians 16:2-4) Stewardship— Offerings: second, the instructions.**

**1 Corinthians 16:2-4 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup>“On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

<sup>3</sup>When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem;

<sup>4</sup>and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me.”

### **Note six significant points.**

1. When is the offering to be received? “On the first day of the week,” which is Sunday. According to the Jewish calendar, the first day of the week was Sunday. The Jews, of course, worshipped on the Sabbath, but the early Christian believers began to worship on the first day of the week. Their primary reason for switching the day of worship was to commemorate the resurrection of the Lord. In fact, they even began to call the first day of the week *The Lord’s Day* (cp. [John 20:19](#); [Acts 20:7](#); [Rev. 1:10](#)).

**John 20:19 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup>“So when it was evening on that day, **the first day of the week**, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace *be* with you.”

**Acts 20:7 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup>“**On the first day of the week**, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul *began* talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.”

**Revelation 1:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup>“I was in the Spirit **on the Lord’s day**, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound of a trumpet*.”

**Note:** the believers were not to make only occasional offerings, they were to give regularly, every Lord’s day: “**On the *first day of the week***.”

**1 Corinthians 16:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup>“**On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.**”

2. Who is to give? “Every one of you.” The instruction is clearly stated. But why would God expect the poor to give as well as the middle class and the rich? Paul deals with this same offering in another passage and gives two strong reasons why everyone is to be involved in meeting the needs of the world ([2 Corinthians 9:12-14](#)).

**2 Corinthians 9:12-14 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup>“**For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God.**

<sup>13</sup>“**Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all,**

<sup>14</sup>“**while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you.**”

a. Giving stirs people to praise God.

Praising God...

- *excites* and motivates people.
- pleases God.

b. Giving builds a strong fellowship among believers ([2 Corinthians 9:14](#)).

**2 Corinthians 9:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup>“**While they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you.**”

**2 Corinthians 9:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup>“**Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.**”

**Hebrews 13:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup>“**And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.**”

**Proverbs 11:25 (NASB)**

<sup>25</sup>“**The generous man will be prosperous, And he who waters will himself be watered.**”

**Proverbs 22:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup>“**He who is generous will be blessed, For he gives some of his food to the poor.**”

**Isaiah 58:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup>“And if you give yourself to the hungry And satisfy the desire of the afflicted, Then your light will rise in darkness And your gloom *will become* like midday.”

**Luke 6:38 (NASB)**

<sup>38</sup>“Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, *and* running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”

3. How is the offering to be given? By laying “**in store**,” that is, by laying aside one’s offering. This could not mean that a person is to keep his offering “**stored up**” or set aside for long periods of time before giving it. Paul explicitly says that it is to be given to the church every week *so that there will be no need for a special offering* when he comes to the church.

Therefore, to lay “**in store**” must mean...

- to put the offering in the *storehouse*, that is, the treasury of the church.
- to lay the money aside at home during the week so that the person will not spend the offering.

**Thought 1.** The importance of this point can never be over-stressed. How often believers spend the Lord’s money simply because they failed to set it aside.

**Proverbs 3:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup>“Honor the LORD from your wealth And from the first of all your produce.”

**Malachi 3:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup>“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.”

4. Why are believers to give? Because God has prospered them. God looks after His people; He blesses them. The Lord Jesus clearly taught that all the necessities of life would be given to His people. Therefore, God expects believers to give as He has prospered them. Closely note the principle: a believer is to give on the basis of his prosperity. This definitely means that the rich are to give generously, very generously.

**Acts 11:29 (NASB)**

<sup>29</sup>“And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send *a contribution* for the relief of the brethren living in Judea.”

**2 Corinthians 8:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup>“For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a person* has, not according to what he does not have.”

**2 Corinthians 9:7 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup>“Each one *must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*”

**1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup>“**Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.**

<sup>18</sup> *Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,*

<sup>19</sup> *storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.*”

**Deuteronomy 16:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup>“**Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.**”

5. Where are believers to give the offerings? At the regular services of their church. Paul is clear: there is not to be the need for a special offering when he returns to the church. The offering is to be taken weekly as they meet for worship.

**1 Corinthians 16:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup>“**On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.**”

**Malachi 3:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup>“**Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,**” says the LORD of hosts, “**if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.**”

6. In receiving the offering there was one administrative function that had to be carefully handled. The men who were to handle the offering were to be hand-picked.

**Note that they were to be men of character:**

⇒ men whom the church could “**approve**” and trust to handle the money.

⇒ men whom Paul could commend through letters of commendation. He would have to write letters in their behalf to the Jerusalem church.

Note also that Paul himself would not touch the money. He would thereby be above reproach at all times. Verse four really stresses the point: if his schedule allows him to make the journey to Jerusalem, then the men will still personally deliver the money to the Jerusalem believers.

**Thought 1.** This is a lesson that needs to be heeded by all preachers, whether pastor, evangelist, or teacher.