

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

- 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).**

We have examined two areas in this portion of 2 Corinthians 8.

* *The Passion of Titus*

* *The Praise for the Assistant to Titus*

* *Next, the Precautions for Security and Integrity*

3. (2 Corinthians 8:19-21) Stewardship— Offerings— Ushers: men who handle collections (ushers) are representatives chosen by the church in order to avoid charges of misconduct against the minister.

2 Corinthians 8:19-21 (NASB)

¹⁹“And not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this **gracious work** [*gift* or *grace*], which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness,

²⁰ **taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;**

²¹ **for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”**

This is a very significant fact—a lesson that must be heeded by ministers and churches alike. If Paul had handled the offering himself, he could have left himself open to the charge of confiscating or stealing money. The only wise course was to have the church elect one of its own men to handle the offering.

Note that the offering was called “**this grace.**” As Charles Hodge points out, any free gift is a grace (*An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 209).

Therefore, the offering of a church is a grace; it is the heart of the church being poured out in a free gift to reach and help the desperate of the world. The church must pour its soul out in offerings for the lost and needy of the world. They reel under the weight of sin, hunger, thirst, disease, ignorance, loneliness, helplessness, purposelessness, and death. This alone stresses the *awesome importance* of the ushers and men who handle the collections.

Note another significant point: why the offering was being ministered. It was for the glory of the Lord. When people saw the offering, and knew what it was to be used for, their hearts would glorify the Lord. The Lord would be praised more than He otherwise would be.

1 Corinthians 4:2 (NASB)

²“In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one **be found trustworthy.**”

Philippians 2:15 (NASB)

¹⁵“So that you will prove yourselves to be **blameless** and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.”

Hebrews 3:5 (NASB)

⁵“Now Moses was **faithful** in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later.”

2 Peter 3:13-14 (NASB)

¹³“But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in **peace**, **spotless** and **blameless.**”

Note: Paul clearly states why he had taken such precautions. He wanted all men to know that he was honest, that he would never put his hand into the till and take money out of the offerings. He did not want anyone to have a question about his personal conduct. Appearance *mattered*—what people thought *mattered*—for he had dedicated his very life to reaching and helping people.

THE PREPARATIONS AND PRECAUTIONS FOR SECURITY AND INTEGRITY—[2 Corinthians 8:19-21](#)

2 Corinthians 8:19-21 (NASB)

¹⁹“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,

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

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

This section provides important reminders to us about the importance of precaution and preparation. This man that was sent to assist **Titus** and **Paul** would help to provide added security in transporting the love offering back to Jerusalem. He would be a witness of the eagerness, zeal, or **“readiness of mind”** of the Corinthian believers to help the Jerusalem church. Paul was taking precautions and making preparations in two key areas: security and integrity.

We will first, focus our attention on the importance of **“preparation”** in the life of the Christian. Then we will address the issue of integrity. A key reason why many Christians do very little for Christ is because they are not prepared to do anything. Preparation is not even in their thinking.

Our lack of preparation can spiritually harden our heart because we are not alert to God's leading in our lives or to the opportunities that God places in our path. There may be something that the Lord wants you to do, but if you are not paying attention, or if you are not prepared for the task, then the opportunity is many times lost. Frequently, we miss out on opportunities to serve the Lord because of several factors:

- We are in financial bondage.
- We are ignorant of Bible truths.
- We have flooded our schedules with too many commitments.
- We have damaged our testimony by sinful living and have not cleared our conscience.
- We are physically drained from poor health or stress from our schedules.

We can become apathetic about serving Christ when we are overwhelmed by these issues. Apathy or unconcern for doing God's will breeds coldness in our heart. We get an **“I Don't Care”** or an **“I give Up”** attitude. Have you ever been there or been tempted to think this way? Beloved, God wants us to be **“in tune”** with Him. We are to be attentive to His leading in our lives so that we will take advantage of the spiritual opportunities that come our way. According to the Bible, we are to make preparations in several areas of our lives.

1. Prepared to Search the Scriptures and Learn from God's Word

Ezra 7:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ **“For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.”**

2. Prepared to Serve the Lord

2 Timothy 2:21 (NASB)

²¹ **“Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”**

Titus 3:1 (NASB)

¹“Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed.”

3. Prepared to Shun Temptation

Daniel 1:8 (NASB)

⁸“But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.”

4. Prepared to Spread the Gospel

Ephesians 6:15 (NASB)

¹⁵“And having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.”

1 Peter 3:15 (NASB)

¹⁵“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

5. Prepared for the Snatching of the Saints or the Rapture

Matthew 24:44 (NASB)

⁴⁴“For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will*.”

James 5:8 (NASB)

⁸“You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.”

1 Thessalonians 5:2 (NASB)

²“For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.”

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (NASB)

⁵¹“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,

⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

Paul made preparations for security, but he also was taking precautions to guard his integrity. The apostle knew he had his enemies and his critics. He knew well that there would be critics who would not hesitate to charge him with turning part of the collection to his own use, and so he took steps to see that it would be impossible to level that charge against him, by ensuring that others would share with him the task of taking the love offering to Jerusalem. This is what he means by the phrase “**taking precaution so that no one will discredit us...**”

2 Corinthians 8:20 (NASB)

²⁰ “**Taking precaution so that no one will discredit us** in our administration of this generous gift.”

The word “**precaution**” is from the Greek word *stello* {*stel'-lo*} which means “**set in order, equip; to prepare one’s self.**” He was preparing himself against “**discredit**” which is a strong word in the Greek. The word “**discredit**” is from the root word *momos* {*mo'-mos*} which means “**blemish, blot, disgrace, insult or censure.**” Brother Paul was doing everything he could to prevent any kind of blemish or disgrace upon his testimony. This attitude is reflected repeatedly in the New Testament.

Romans 12:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ “**Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.**”

Romans 14:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ “**Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil.**”

1 Corinthians 10:32-33 (NASB)

³² “**Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;**
³³ **just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the *profit* of the many, so that they may be saved.**”

Paul was not shackled by being a man-pleaser when it came to preaching the Gospel and taking a stand against sin. On the other hand, he was concerned about what men thought when it came to the issue of finances and conducting financial matters above board. He did not want to do anything that would hinder his ability to reach the lost with the Gospel. He could not allow his enemies to make any false accusations that might discredit and bring suspicion on him before the watching world. If he lost credibility or brought disgrace upon himself, his ability to reach the lost would have been greatly hindered or impossible.