

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*

Stewardship with Integrity Calls for Accountability

[2 Corinthians 8:18-23 \(NASB\)](#)

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

¹⁹and 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,

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

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

²²We 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.

²³As 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.”

2 Corinthians 8:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ “We have **sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches.**”

Not only was Titus, whom the Corinthians knew well and highly respected, involved in the collection, but so also was an unnamed **brother whose fame in the things of the gospel had spread through all the churches.** Paul had **sent him along with Titus** to Corinth to help with the collection. The inclusion of this highly regarded individual signaled Paul’s intention to handle matters with absolute honesty and integrity. It further deflected any possible criticism that he might misuse the money.

Some have speculated that the unnamed **brother** was **Tychicus**, others that he was **Trophimus** or **Luke**. But since his name is not given, such speculation is futile. The Corinthians would certainly recognize him, if for no other reason than that he would arrive with Titus. The implication of Paul’s words, however, is that they already knew him as a distinguished preacher of the gospel. Paul did not choose him to help with the collection because of his business acumen, but because of his spiritual maturity, unimpeachable character, and reputation for integrity. The involvement of another godly leader with the collection further enhanced the project's credibility. It was also in keeping with the New Testament pattern of entrusting money to the spiritual leadership of the church (cf. [Acts 4:37](#)).

Acts 4:37 (NASB)

³⁷ “**And who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.**”

2 Corinthians 8:19 (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.**”

Not only had Paul and Titus chosen the unnamed brother to help oversee the collection, **but he** had **also been appointed by the churches to travel with** them **in that gracious work.** He was not just another of the apostle’s protégés who would be under his thumb. His appointment by the **churches** protected Paul and Titus from any false accusation that they were in collusion to mishandle the money. The reason for the apostle’s concern was not that he and Titus could not be trusted, but rather that Paul’s enemies at Corinth could not be trusted. They could not be allowed to make an accusation that would further confuse the already unsettled Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 8:19 (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.**”

The collection was **being administered by** Paul and his companions **for the glory of the Lord Himself**. They wanted to be absolutely certain that no reproach fell on the name of Christ. The unnamed preacher would act as an objective, outside auditor, ensuring that no valid criticism about the handling of the money could be made. They also wanted **to show** their **readiness** to help the poor, something Paul had always been eager to do (cf. [Galatians 2:10](#)).

[Galatians 2:10 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁰“They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.”

[2 Corinthians 8:20 \(NASB\)](#)

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

So, anticipating his enemies' attacks on his credibility, Paul took the **precaution** of involving the godly preacher who would accompany Titus **so that no one** would **discredit** him **in** his **administration of** the Corinthians' **generous gift**. It was a wise safeguard, since his enemies at Corinth had accused him of being in the ministry for money. Defending his rights and privileges as an apostle, Paul wrote in [1 Corinthians 9:3-15](#),

[1 Corinthians 9:3-15 \(NASB\)](#)

³“My defense to those who examine me is this:

⁴Do we not have a right to eat and drink?

⁵Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

⁶Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?

⁷Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?

⁸I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things?

⁹For it is written in the Law of Moses, “YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING.” God is not concerned about oxen, is He?

¹⁰Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*.

¹¹If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?

¹²If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

¹³Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the *food* of the temple, *and* those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?

¹⁴So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their

living from the gospel.

¹⁵ **But I have used none of these things. And I am not writing these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one”**

Though Paul had every right to receive support from the Corinthians, he did not take it. He wanted to avoid lending credence to the false accusation that he was in the ministry for the money.

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE SECOND ASSISTANT-

2 Corinthians 8:22

2 Corinthians 8:22 (NASB)

²² **“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.”**

There wasn't much money in 1932, so it was no time to buy a drugstore. Then grasshoppers ate all the crops in the region. This, in turn, was followed by a dust bowl, a long drought, temperatures for ten days straight over 100 degrees. So the drugstore seemed about to fold. Nevertheless, **Ted and Dorothy Husted** were believers in God. They asked themselves: “How can we get these people into the drugstore?” They said, “We'll put up some signs.”

So, they went 25 miles in each direction and put up signs that read, **“Free Ice Water at the Wall Drugstore, Wall, S.D.”** They put up signs at 10 miles; and at 5 miles the sign read: **“Hold on! It's Only 5 Miles to the Wall Drugstore and Free Ice Water.”** They got so enthusiastic that they even put up a sign at Albany, New York: **“1725 Miles to the Wall Drugstore”**.

Now druggists had been handing out free ice water for generations but it was Ted and Dorothy who were the first people to think of advertising it. Today, more than 15,000 people crowd the drugstore on a busy day in a town of 800 people. It remains the most successful drugstore in the entire industry. The persistence of these Christians to not give up, but to keep trying led to their business success.

In the same manner, we too, are to be persistent in living our lives for the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to do our best in sharing with others the message of the **“Living Water”** that is found in our Lord. Paul mentions here that another brother in the Lord is being sent to assist Titus in the collection and security of the love offering. He would also help to protect the reputation of Paul in the handling of the love offering for the Jerusalem believers.

The apostle revealed the godly persistence of this man by the fact that he had proved to be a diligent person in many things. What does Paul mean by the word **“tested or proved?”** It is from the word *dokimazo* {*dok-im-ad'-zo*} which means **“to test, examine, prove, to scrutinize to see whether a thing is genuine or not such as metals, to**

recognize as genuine after examination.” This brother in Christ was trusted because he proved to be the **“Real McCoy.”** His life was scrutinized and tested and he was found to be a trusted man of God.

Paul said he proved to be **“diligent”** which means he was **“zealous, earnest, active, and very diligent.”** This third unnamed assistant was actively persistent and serious about serving the Lord Jesus Christ. He was a man who was **“living above the boards.”** Let me ask, “Are you living above the boards? How determined are you in serving our Lord?” May we all heed the challenge of Paul found in [1 Corinthians 15](#).

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NASB)

⁵⁸**“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain in the Lord.*”**

5. ([2 Corinthians 8:23](#)) Stewardship— Offerings— Ushers: men who handle collections (ushers) are partners of the ministers.

2 Corinthians 8:23 (NASB)

²³**“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.*”**

Note that Paul expected people to be asking who these men were. This is a natural inquiry, for the men handle the offerings for the church. Therefore, it was extremely important that the credentials of the men be of the highest quality.

1. Titus was the partner and fellow helper of Paul—especially in ministering to the Corinthian church. Most of the Corinthians would know this, for Titus had been God’s main instrument in bringing revival to the church.

2. The other two men were messengers of the church, men especially chosen by the church to represent the church. Note also that they were the messengers of the glory of Christ. They were to reflect and share the glory of Christ as they served the church.

Thought 1. Both points are to be true of all ushers and men who handle collections in the church.

- 1) Ushers are to be the partners of the minister.
- 2) Ushers are to be messengers of both the church and of the glory of God.

Romans 12:5 (NASB)

⁵**“So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”**

1 Corinthians 12:5-7 (NASB)

⁵**“And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.**

⁶**There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons.***

⁷ But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

1 Corinthians 12:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

¹² For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.”

THE PARTNERSHIP OF TITUS AND THE PROOF OF THEIR LOVE- 2 Corinthians 8:23-24

2 Corinthians 8:23-24 (NASB)

²³ “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.

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

If any questions were asked about **Titus** and his identity, they were to explain that **Titus** was **Paul’s** partner and helper. If people asked about the assistants, they were to explain that these brothers were messengers or representatives of the churches. This is one place where the Greek word *apostolos*, usually translated “**apostle**,” occurs in the non-technical sense of a messenger or someone sent on a mission.

Paul instructs the team to openly show the Corinthian believers the proof of their love for them and the pride they had in these folks. They were not going to Corinth to just “**take**” from these people. They were going also to love and encourage them for their generosity, selflessness, and sacrifice for Christ.

We too, are to show others the proof of our love for them. We are to demonstrate our love by our words and actions. This is the meaning of *endeixis* {*en’-dike-sis*} which is the word translated “**proof**.” Do you demonstrate your love to the Lord by the way you live? Talk is not enough, beloved. Are you living above the boards when it comes to being open in your love for the Lord Jesus Christ? May the Lord help us all to prove our love for Him.

6. (2 Corinthians 8:24) Stewardship— Offerings— Ushers: men who handle collections (ushers) are to be loved by the church.

2 Corinthians 8:24 (NASB)

²⁴ “Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.”

This is essential: the church had to prove its love to the men who were handling the money if they were to effectively fulfill their ministry. The church was to prove its love in two ways:

⇒ **First**, by receiving the men, accepting both them and their ministry.

⇒ **Second**, by helping the men fulfill their ministry. The church had to let the men present the mission project and then contribute to it.

Matthew 5:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

John 13:34-35 (NASB)

³⁴“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

³⁵By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Romans 13:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the* law.”

James 2:8-9 (NASB)

⁸“If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,” you are doing well.

⁹But if you show partiality, you are committing sin *and* are convicted by the law as transgressors.”

Stewardship with Integrity Calls for Giving That Is an Expression of Love

2 Corinthians 8:24 (NASB)

²⁴“Therefore **openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love** and of our reason for boasting about you.”

Paul had instructed the Corinthians about the importance and procedure of making their contribution. He had taken every reasonable precaution to avoid any appearance of impropriety. Now it was time for the Corinthians to give **openly before the churches** (lit., “before the face of the churches”) so that all would clearly see their generosity. By so doing, they would **show them the proof of** their **love**; as Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (**John 13:34-35**). A loving church is a generous church, and the Corinthians’ generous love would validate Paul’s **boasting about** the work of Christ in them.