

Men's Sunday Night
The Book of 1 Corinthians
Christian Conduct
Lesson 15 - 1 Corinthians 16
“Giving and Living”

It is to the credit of the believers at Corinth that, when they wrote their questions to Paul, they asked him about the collection he was taking for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul answered their question and then closed the letter by informing the church of his personal travel plans and also the plans for his associates in the ministry.

How to Take the Offering (16:1-4)

A local church gets its financial instructions from the Word and not from the world. How sad it is when churches reject the biblical method of financing and adopt worldly methods.

Giving was Regular

Paul encouraged them to bring the money weekly, if possible. Some people are paid weekly, others by the month. Paul is saying, “Don’t let your tithes and offerings accumulate at home.” Regular giving makes for spiritual growth.

Giving was for Everyone

Giving was not just for the rich, but rich and poor alike. In fact, in 2 Cor. 8-9, Paul tells us that the poor saints in Macedonia gave liberally out of their poverty. Here is the biblical model for giving. The church member who is able to give but does not give faithfully is a thief: he is robbing God (Mal. 3:8-10); he is robbing other Christians, for they pay the bills while he gets the blessings; moreover, he is robbing himself of blessings.

Giving was Proportionate

The tithe was the minimum standard for giving in the Old Testament, and there is no reason why this standard should not apply to the New Testament Christian as well. Tithing was practiced long before the Law was given (Gen. 14:20; 28:22), so it cannot be argued that tithing is a legalistic practice.

Giving was Carefully Handled

Paul was always careful about the handling of money. He wanted church-appointed representatives to assist him, lest anyone accuse him of stealing money for himself. It is right for a church to have a financial system that includes receipts and records.

How to Help the Servants (16:5-12)

Paul outlined his future plans, trusting that the church would want to share in his ministry. He was then at Ephesus where there were both battles and blessings; Paul, in faith, looks at the blessings, not the battles!

How to Strengthen the Church (16:13-24)

Paul's commands in verse 13 sound like military orders, suggesting that the church is an army and ought to act like one. "Act like adults!" he exhorts them, and how we need that exhortation today. Too often the church does not have the discipline and maturity of an army. The Corinthians were acting like babies; it was time they grew up and acted like adults.

We must love and appreciate faithful laborers in the church. Paul mentions several workers in verses 15-19, including his beloved Aquila and Priscilla. Paul could never have done his work were it not for the assistance of many Christians, and he was glad to acknowledge his thanks to them.

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-4. Pray and answer the following questions:

Paul seldom ministered alone. In all of his travels and missionary ventures, he was in the company of trusted and valued friends. Some of his lowest times came when he was isolated. In spite of Paul's great gifts and calling, he recognized his need for fellowship and support. He depended on others for help and encouragement. These supportive people were his partners in ministry. God calls all of us as Christians to be involved in ministry. We are partners together with Christ and other believers. How incredible to realize that God calls us to partnership in the building of His Kingdom.

1. What attitudes, actions and characteristics of the early Christians do you think you should imitate?
2. What principles should govern our giving to the work of the Lord?
3. How should we decide how much to set aside for the church?
4. How do you think you can be a better steward of the resources God has given you?

Read 1 Corinthians 16:5-11. Pray and answer the following questions:

Paul stated his intention to visit Corinth by taking a route through Macedonia rather than sailing directly from Ephesus. His desire was to spend some extended time with the Corinthians, perhaps even a winter. Paul also mentioned that he would stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, the Jewish feast that followed seven weeks after Passover. By doing this, he was hoping to take advantage of the opportunity he had to preach the gospel at Ephesus.

5. What do you learn about Paul's heart and his ministry?
6. What words did Paul share about Timothy's visit?

7. What did Paul's words reveal about Timothy?

Read 1 Corinthians 16:12-24. Pray and answer the following questions:

In his final appeal and farewell, Paul mentioned Timothy's approaching visit to Corinth. He concluded by offering several encouragements and gave recognition to many others for their faithful service in the work of the gospel.

8. How can we actually do everything in love?

9. How did Paul end this difficult letter to the Church at Corinth? What does this teach us about confronting others with problems?

10. Paul longed for the Lord's return (16:22). How did this affect his ministry? What effect does the promise of Christ's return have on your life?

11. What are the keys to working effectively with others?

Life Application

Compare your notes and daily Scripture references. Take some time to pray and meditate on what God showed you in a practical way this week and how you can apply it to your Christian walk. Write your insights down for review and group discussion.