

Practical Principles on Giving 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

Introduction:

1. One of the hats Paul wore was that of a fund raiser - not to enrich himself, but rather to help others.
2. Paul begins chapter 16, "*Now concerning the collection for the saints...*"
3. We discussed at length what this collection was and who it was for. It was a collection from the Gentile churches to help the poor saints at Jerusalem.
Romans 15:25-26
4. In verses 1-4, Paul is going to give the Corinthians instructions as to how this collection should be handled. Paul was planning on coming in person and he wanted the church to have the money ready when he got there.
5. Paul didn't want to have to do any fund raising when he got there. "*Gatherings*" simply means "collections or contributions." It's the same Greek word as "*collections*" in verse 1.
6. As believers who have been wondrously saved by God's grace, there should be a longing in our hearts to demonstrate our appreciation for that grace through giving.
7. When you give, it is a demonstration of the love that you have in your heart for the Lord. **2 Corinthians 8:7-8**
8. People will ask, "How much should I give? How should I give? Where should I give?" In this text, Paul will give us some very practical principles concerning giving. We all must determine that by God's grace we will apply them to our personal lives.

First, giving should be done systematically.

1. Paul taught these believers to prepare their gift on the first day of the week. Why Sunday?
 - This is the day when the saints come together and worship together. Sunday is a good day to be able to meditate, pray, and seek God about what He would have you to give. You typically don't have the distractions that come during the week.
2. But regardless of which day it is for you, the principle is that giving should be a regular, definite grace that you practice. It may not be on Sunday and it may not be **every** Sunday. It depends on how you get paid (bi-weekly, monthly).
 - But you have a systematic way in which you give to the Lord's work.
3. The opposite of this would be erratic, occasional, and spontaneous (when the urge hits you).
 - **Illustration:** You have heard of spontaneous buyers or impulse shoppers. They buy things on impulse. There isn't any forethought or plan to it. There are impulse givers. The message really touches their heart one Sunday, or the choir song moved them, or they have an extra \$10 in their wallet.
4. This grace of giving is far too important to treat in such a casual way. You are giving to the Lord (the One who saved you from eternal fire, redeemed you, purchased you, changed your life, etc.) and the Bible says that you show your love for Him this way.

5. So, when you give, it is a serious thing to you. There is a periodic, systematic way that you approach it.
 - **Illustration:** What if you dealt with FPL in an erratic, occasional, impulsive sort of way? You would be sitting in the dark, roasting like a turkey. When we look at our checkbooks there are others that we give money to in a very systematic way. But what about the Lord and His work? Isn't He worth more to you than your car, house, furniture, etc.?

Second, giving should be done corporately by everybody in the church.

1. Paul said, "...let every one of you lay by him in store..." This was to be a corporate endeavor, not just something for a few in the church.
2. Paul wanted each and every member of the local assembly to participate in giving and in helping to meet the need. He wanted each person individually to set aside his giving each week.
3. Giving is not just for the rich. "Rich" is a very relative term. The rich are always those who have more than us. You are rich to somebody else.
4. The only exception to this is if you didn't have any income from the previous week. You can't give what you don't have.
5. But the idea here is that everybody should help carry the load when it comes to the work of the Lord. The load shouldn't fall on just a few. Everybody should share in the blessing of giving to see God's work move forward.

Third, giving should be done proportionately.

1. Paul says that every person should give "*as God hath prospered him.*"
2. This doesn't mean that God supernaturally put money in your back account or caused you to win the lotto or caused you to find \$100 on the ground.
3. It simply means that anything and everything you have ultimately comes from God because He is the creator of all things. All the resources on this planet were put here by God for us to use, benefit from, and enjoy. **1 Timothy 6:17**
4. If you have the ability and understanding to take those things that God has put here in creation and work them together so as to produce gain, then that is **God** prospering you.
 - In other words, in this dispensation, the way God prospers is through hard, diligent **work**. **1 Timothy 5:8; 2 Thessalonians 3:8-12; Ephesians 4:28**
 - But when the blessings of that toil come to you, you realize that everything you hold in your hand was created **by** Christ and **for** Christ. You wouldn't have it if God didn't create it, and you lift up your head and praise Him for everything. You realize, "This is God's. He created it; He owns it. He is just letting me manage it. Thank you Jesus!"
5. The Bible teaches that we give according to what we have. **2 Corinthians 8:11-12; Acts 11:29**
 - If you made \$20 this week and you give \$5, that's a lot. But if you made \$100 and you give \$5, that isn't near as much, is it? The amount is the same, but proportionately it isn't even close.
6. What Paul is teaching here is that if you **have** more, you should **give** more. The problem is that many in America that **have** more simply use it as an occasion to

buy more. They use it to enrich themselves and make themselves more comfortable.

In Conclusion:

1. We have learned how the believer is to give, but this text also reveals to us that once the money is given, spiritual leaders have a responsibility to handle the funds with the utmost honesty and integrity. This is what verses 3-4 are all about.
2. The various churches had delegates that they appointed from their local assembly to help carry this offering to Jerusalem.
3. The local church at Corinth would have to approve in writing those that they wanted to accompany this team to Jerusalem.
4. Paul wanted to make sure that everything was done with the utmost integrity.
2 Corinthians 8:16-24
5. Churches today have an obligation to do the same.