

1 Corinthians 16

16:1 Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. ² On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. ³ Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

In the final chapter of his letter to the Corinthian Church covers the topic of giving to God's ministry. I haven't met a pastor that likes speaking on tithing or giving to the church. This money is to be collected for the poor Christians living in Jerusalem. Paul wrote this same recommendation in many of his letters. Read Acts 11:29-30, Romans 15:26 and Galatians 2:10. This collection was not forced on the Corinthians but it was a love offering for the poor. Paul didn't tell them what percentage or amount to give. They were to give from the heart.

Taking care of those in need was encouraged throughout the New Testament. Paul even instructs Timothy on taking care of those in need in 1 Timothy 5. In verses 3 and 4, Paul gives them details regarding getting the financial support to specific individuals in Jerusalem. Either Paul will accompany them or he will provide them with letters of introduction.

5 After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. 6 Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

Paul went through Corinth on his 2nd and 3rd missionary journeys. He wrote this letter to the Corinthian church after leaving Corinth after his first visit and traveling to Ephesus where he stayed for 3 years. In these verses, Paul provides the Corinthians with the possible logistics for him getting back to Corinth. He leaves things open to what God plans for his life and travels by saying, "if the Lord permits." Paul is going to stay in Ephesus through Pentecost because God has opened a door for him to reach more people for Christ.

Acts 19 tells us about those that opposed Paul in Ephesus. There ended up being a riot caused by the silversmiths. Their income was based on making idols to their god, Artemis. If the Ephesian people accepted the gospel message then the silversmiths would have no income from the idol worship.

10 When Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. 11 No one, then, should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers.

Earlier in this letter, Paul told them that he was sending Timothy to them to help them stay on track. Now Paul is saying, “When he gets there, don’t give him a hard time.” Timothy is an extension of Paul, so Paul wants him treated well. Based on verse 11, Timothy will meet up with Paul. I think it is interesting how two people can find each other in the miles and miles of area covered by Paul. There were no cars and no cell phones. It seems almost impossible to me.

As far as we know, Paul had no children. Yet here is Paul speaking like a father on young Timothy’s behalf. In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul tells Timothy, “*Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.*”

12 Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.

Paul is beginning to wrap up the letter and he wants to make sure that he has covered everything, so he tells them about Apollos’ plans. Do you remember who Apollos was? He was a disciple of John the Baptist. Read Acts 18:24-28 for more. Acts 19:1 tells us that Apollos did end up in Corinth.

13 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. 14 Do everything in love.

In these two verses, Paul sums up everything that he has tried to tell them in this letter. He wants them to “*stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.*” In Paul’s letters, he has constantly reminded them and us to stand firm in the faith. In our study of 1 Corinthians 10, Paul said to “stand firm”, so I took you to Ephesians 6:10-18 and the Full Armor of God. By putting on the attributes of Jesus, we can do as Paul says, “stand firm”.

Paul has told them and us numerous times that before we say or do anything, we need to pass it through a love filter. “Is what I am doing or saying showing my love for this person or these people?”

15 You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord’s people. I urge you, brothers and sisters, 16 to submit to such people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it. 17 I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. 18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition.

In these verses, Paul specifically mentions others involved with missionary outreach. Paul praises them and gives them credit for what they are doing for Christ.

“Apparently, Stephanas was the head of the household, and Fortunatus and Achaicus were two household slaves of his, who accompanied him on his journey to see Paul. Fortunatus and Achaicus were common names for slaves or freedmen (former slaves).”
“Paul was especially grateful for their coming, because they ministered to Paul's needs when they visited (*they refreshed my spirit*), doing what the Corinthian church should have, but did not (*what was lacking on your part they supplied*).

We read about Stephanas in 1 Corinthians 1:16. He was one of the firstfruits (NASB) of Achaia because they were among the first saved in that region, and were baptized by Paul himself.

19 The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. 20 All the brothers and sisters here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. 21 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. 22 If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed! Come, Lord! 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. 24 My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.

This is final greeting from Paul to the Corinthians. He sends them a greeting from those like minded Christians in Asia which includes Ephesus. He mentions Aquila and Priscilla by name.

He tells them to “*Greet one another with a holy kiss.*” This was a Jewish custom and early church tradition indicates that the holy kiss was a common greeting in that culture.

Verse 21 says, that Paul wrote this letter with his own hand. It was common for the New Testament authors, even Paul to have someone else do the physical writing. Paul writing the letter added a more personal touch to the letter. In verse 22, Paul curses anyone that does not love the Lord Jesus. Is this the unpardonable sin? Read Matthew 12:31-32. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to convict us of our sin and help us to recognize that we need a savior. He finishes verse 22 with “Come, Lord” which is an Aramaic expression used by early Christians (“*Marana tha*”). John used this same closing to Revelation 22:20. In the last chapter, we read about the resurrection and the Rapture. Jesus will return to take us home, just as He promised in John 14:3.

His final prayer for the Corinthian Church and us, “*The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.*”