

I CORINTHIANS 16

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH APPLIED

STUDENT GUIDE

DAILY BIBLE READING

DAY 1	I CORINTHIANS 16: 1-4
DAY 2	I CORINTHIANS 16: 5-9
DAY 3	I CORINTHIANS 16: 10-19
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The Christian faith is deeply spiritual but supremely practical. Why? Because believers belong to two different worlds. They are citizens of two competing kingdoms. We are citizens of heaven. However, we also live in the here and now, bound to live in the present world. Our head is in heaven while our feet are firmly planted here, so to speak. Given our dual citizenship, we should not be surprised when the Bible speaks to both spheres of our life in extended detail. A significant part of the details about which the Bible addresses is our material possessions, our money, our wealth. Scripture is never embarrassed to admonish the believer concerning his or her finances. Neither should we be hesitant. As Paul ends his words to the Corinthian believers in his first letter, he addresses the practical side of the faith beginning with how the church is to handle money! Subsequently, he deals with three more practical principles of how faith is applied in life.

OUTLINE

1. The Principle of Appropriation (vv. 1-4)

Paul begins the chapter by referring to the collection (vv. 1-3).

A.) The purpose for the collection. The collection is to be taken for the benefit of the saints. He makes the need precisely known, telling the people where the collection is to be used. When the people know, people will give, God will see to it. From Paul's standpoint, while the collection was to be taken for the *benefit* of others, the collection nonetheless became a *blessing* to the Corinthians themselves. A church is not a cistern for saving bounty, but a channel for sharing blessings.

B.) The procedure of the collection. Interestingly, Paul never offers an apology for speaking about the collection nor does the church appear to offer an apology for taking the collection. On the contrary, Paul gives specific procedures on taking the collection. Collections are to be *punctual*; that is, collections take place on "the first day of the week." In addition, collections are to be *personal*. Paul says, "let every one of you lay by him in store." In other words, the collection is for all God's people, not just some. Giving is also to be *proportional*. The gauge Paul gives us to measure our giving is simple, "as God has prospered him." Leaving the amount to our own discretion, we determine a thoughtful consideration of what God has done for us. Finally, collections are to be *practical*. Paul desired "no gatherings when I come." The Corinthians were to consider what God gave them and respond appropriately. The principle works the same for us.

2. The Principle of Anticipation (vv. 5-9)

Paul next expounds the principle of anticipation (vv. 5-9). There's nothing haphazard about Paul's life. He has goals and plans he actively pursues. Included in his plans was a trip to Corinth. One thing he was sure about: he would remain in Ephesus for an indefinite time. Why?

A.) He anticipated opportunity to preach the Gospel. Ephesus was the center of pagan idolatry. Ephesus was knee-deep in sophisticated sin, being the great metropolitan center of that part of the world.

B.) Paul anticipated opposition toward preaching the Gospel. Never imagine preaching the Gospel will be without opposition. Nothing the church does is more opposed by Satan than spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All the powers of hell are lined up against it.

The principle of anticipation should be practiced by every believer. We anticipate God's presence, His power, and His full pleasure when we stand in the face of the enemy and spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

3. The Principle of Appreciation (vv. 10-19)

Paul never believed he stood alone. He always recognized God had His anointed wherever he travelled (vv. 10-12). For Paul, though unknown saints existed, insignificant saints did not. Paul lists people who were virtually unknown either in the ancient world or ours. Nevertheless, he knew they were essential to God's Kingdom work. Plain people are God's preferred servants. We need no special skills to be anointed by God. Instead we need only surrendered hearts. Walking the streets of Corinth were average people living for the Lord Jesus, walking in the Holy Spirit.

As examples, Paul mentions, first, the youthfulness of Timothy (vv. 10-11). Later Paul exhorted no one to despise Timothy's youth (1 Tim. 4:12). Instead they were to honor his faith. Paul also mentions Apollos (v. 12). Apollos was a great preacher. He further was wise and steadfast. In addition, Paul refers to Aquila and Priscilla (v. 19). Paul's appreciation for those dedicated servants of God did not hinder his apostolic role in admonishing them as well (vv. 13-14). Paul not only admonishes them as an authority but also appeals to them as a lover. The church is a family, the eternal family of God. The greatest need for the family is love (1 Cor. 13). Their division, bickering, and self-centeredness must be tempered by love for each other.

4. The Principle of Authentication (vv. 20-24)

It was common for Paul use the skills of secretaries who wrote his letters as he dictated them. Here, however, Paul takes the pen and gives strokes characteristically his own. Incidentally, this proves the letter authentic and not a forgery as some critical scholars erroneously maintain. Five specific statements stand out.

A.) Paul's statement about enlargement (v. 20). Our normal custom is a rigorous handshake. Whatever the custom, it authenticates brotherly affection for each other, validating Christian communion.

B.) Paul gives a statement about enlightenment (v. 22). If you know how much Jesus loves you, what Jesus Christ did for you, but still reject Him, you deserve hell!

C.) Paul gives a statement about encouragement (v.22). We ever turn our eyes heavenward, looking for the Lord Jesus to rescue us from the presence of sin.

D.) Paul gives a statement about enablement (v. 23). God's grace is with us each day we live. We are not only saved by grace, we are sustained by grace.

E.) Paul gives a statement about endearment (v. 24). With these final words Paul makes it clear his words should never be perceived as unloving toward the Corinthian believers.

Wrap Up

1 Corinthians is indicative of the church of Jesus Christ today. We face division, doctrinal heresies, and moral decay. The culture we inhabit only accentuates the problems the church faces. However, Jesus Christ offers hope, help, power, and deliverance. As Lord of the church, if we look exclusively to Him, our difficulties will vanish and our deliverance will be sure. May our Lord work His miraculous grace in and through His church today.