

↳ As we read 1st Corinthians 15, it feels like we are climbing a mountain of theology of sorts as Paul expounds thoroughly on the topic of our resurrection. The pinnacle is clearly the last verse. The very next thing we read is the first verse of chapter 16; chapter breaks can cause breaks in our thinking when, in fact, there may not have been a break in the thinking of the writer in the original document. This can be problematic because it weakens the thrust of the original text by adding a chapter break. With the title "Chapter 16" in the way, we have tendency to view the next verses as being separated from what Paul has been saying in chapter 15. The last verse in chapter 15 ends with "abounding in the work of the Lord" and the first verse in chapter 16 gives us an example of that work and labor. All of that to arrive at the simple point that giving to ministry and God's work is a labor that we all should have a part in. We have allowed the greedy and those who misrepresent the Lord in ministry to steal from us the importance of financial giving. So, we don't like the subject of money and giving because people have abused it and also because it hits us where it hurts!

1. "Give yourself fully to the Lord's work", and speaking of fully giving of yourselves, how about your finances?

- ✓ Our labor in the Lord, 1st Corinthians 15:58, is not in vain and the first labor listed in 1st Corinthians 16:1 is giving. We throw our money down so many rat holes that will not have eternal significance. Those things are not necessarily wrong, but they are, obviously, not eternal. When we invest in the things of God, it is the only time we are investing eternal things. These investments are not in vain mostly because God will be a debtor to anyone.

2. God and the things of God is a stock that will eternally rise.

- ✓ The Health and Wealth preachers say, "give God \$200 and He will give you \$2000", but the New Testament never says God is obligated to pay you back in kind. Nevertheless, it does promise that He will pay you back more than you give, much more! That pay back may very well be in things that money cannot buy like: Happiness; peace of mind; Spiritual fruit. When we give we are like God, so, giving like God means, among other things, that we don't give to get. We don't give to get, we give because we have already gotten so much from God through His Son, Jesus.

3. The Corinthian church needed help on every level, not the least of which was giving.

- ✓ They were a church out of order. They were out of order with regards to the church body: divided; a divided body is a dead body. They were out of order intellectually: they esteemed human wisdom over God's wisdom. They were out of order morally. They were out of order ethically because they were taking each other to court. They were out of order spiritually: they esteemed spiritual gifts above spiritual fruit. They were out of order at the Lord's Table: not caring for each other or waiting on each other and then pretending that they were worshipping the Lord after all of that. They were out of order in worship. They were out of order on the subject of the resurrection: saying there would be no resurrection for believers. They were out of order with regard to giving.

4. Are you out of order in your giving? Are you giving at all? If you are, then how are you giving?

- 1) The Bible says giving is not optional but mandatory. V. 1
 - ✓ We certainly don't stipulate to anyone what to give, but we will make no apology for telling people that they should be giving. God expects us to be faithful in every aspect of our lives including our finances. To fail in the area of giving is an act of disobedience.
- 2) The Bible says giving is to be regular, 1st Corinthians 16:2. Many say we should give "as the Spirit leads", on the one hand, I agree, but on the other I disagree with how we interpret that phrase. It is a phrase that is often used to cover a multitude of sins like greed and selfishness. It is to be interpreted with Scripture, and the Scriptures clearly say that the Spirit has already led us to give! When God tells us something in the Bible, it is so that He doesn't have to have that discussion with us again. If the Bible says it already, we don't need a special movement or revelation to obey it.

The Corinthian Letters, Lesson 63, 1st Corinthians 16:1-8, "Concerning Giving"

- 3) The Bible says that giving is to be a part of worship, 1st Corinthians 16:2. "First day" Sunday, when they met for worship. Sometimes we think that there is separation between physical and spiritual things. The getting out of the truth depends on praying as well as paying for it. If there is spiritual growth, the Bible expects that it will evidence itself in physical practices. If the physical is lacking, the Bible says we can automatically know that spiritual isn't right. If we are stingy with our money, there is something not right with us spiritually.
- 4) The Bible says giving is every believer's responsibility 1st Corinthians 16:2. "Each", worship is the responsibility of each and every one of us. Remember the widow and her mite? She gave personally (she knew she was responsible to give). She gave sacrificially; Jesus did not stop her; Jesus, in fact, commended her sacrifice; Jesus did not exempt her. From the outside looking in, we may be inclined to think that she wasn't very smart giving up her last bit of money. Where will she get more? What will she buy food with? How will she make it? Which is smarter: doing what God says and trusting Him for your supply or not doing what God says and trusting yourself for your supply?
- 5) Biblical giving is to be proportionate: the Widow gave very little, but, proportionately, it was a whole lot. We cannot give what we do not have, 1st Corinthians 16:2. If my income goes down, my spending, saving and giving have to go down as well.

If my income goes up, does my giving go up?, 2nd Corinthians 9:6-8. When we are tight fisted with God and His work, God will be tight fisted with us, 1st Corinthians 16:6. More than money, we need grace, 1st Corinthians 16:7-8, it is more than anything money can buy. God alone holds the keys to our happiness nothing else. Who are what do we trust in? Who has given us what we have? The answer to those questions will be demonstrated in out giving.
