



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V25 N45 November 12, 2023

## OPENHANDED

“Surrender: Trusting God More”

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Generosity

I gladly give my resources  
to fulfill God's purposes.

*“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*  
**2 Corinthians 9:6-7**



Is Christian  
benevolence  
too costly?

From the very beginning the church assumed responsibility for caring for its own. Luke tells us that early on the needs of the “have nots” were addressed by the “haves” in the body. He writes: “For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sale and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need” (Ac 4:34b-35). Consequently, “there were no *needy persons* among them” (v. 34).

Somewhat later, after the number of believers in Jerusalem had grown substantially, Luke tells us how the needs of *widows* were addressed. He writes: “In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food” (Ac 6:1). To rectify the oversight, the twelve delegated this responsibility to seven deacons. “At this stage of its development, the church was entirely Jewish in its composition. However, there were two groups of Jews within the fellowship: (1) *Hellenistic Jews*. Those born in lands other than the Holy Land who spoke the Greek language and were more Grecian than Hebraic in their attitudes and outlook (see NIV text note). (2) *Hebraic Jews*. Those who spoke Palestinian Aramaic and/or Hebrew and preserved Jewish culture and customs” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note Ac 6:1). The church assumed responsibility for all widows having no one to care for them, regardless of their cultural background, by providing a daily distribution of food. Later still, after agreeing that Paul should go to the Gentiles, the apostles in Jerusalem imposed no restrictions on him and his ministry apart from one – that he should continue to remember the poor, which his subsequent letters make clear he did. About that visit with the apostles in Jerusa-

lem, Paul writes: “James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along” (Gal 2:9-10).

Two observations are worth noting in regard to the offerings taken for the impoverished saints in Jerusalem – two of which are explicitly mentioned in the New Testament. (The first is mentioned in Acts 11:29-30 where Luke tells his readers that Paul and Barnabas carried a gift from the Christians in Antioch to the elders in Judea. The second is mentioned in Acts 24:17 [cf. Ro 15:25-27; 1 Co 16:3-4; 2 Co 9] where Luke records the words of Paul in his defense before Felix the governor: “After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings” [Ac 24:17]. Paul made this trip to Jerusalem following his third missionary journey.) *First*, the offerings crossed international boundaries. The predominantly Gentile churches planted by Paul on his missionary journeys, which collected the offerings, were located throughout Asia Minor and Greece, more specifically in Antioch, Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia. *Second*, the offerings crossed racial boundaries. The contributors were largely Gentiles, and the recipients were largely Jews. Nevertheless, because both groups were Christians, the Gentiles overlooked the ethnic and cultural differences between them.

His instructions in 1 and 2 Corinthians regarding a special offering to be taken for poor saints in Jerusalem gives us a pattern for giving in general, which when it comes to benevolence in particular, should cross international and racial boundaries.

# 1

## EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

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### Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

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.

### Cf., another translation

1 Now regarding your question about the money being collected for God's people in Jerusalem. You should follow the same procedure I gave to the churches in Galatia. 2 On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once. 3 When I come, I will write letters of recommendation for the messengers you choose to deliver your gift to Jerusalem. 4 And if it seems appropriate for me to go along, they can travel with me. (NLT)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline "Now about" in v. 1.
- Circle "collection" in v. 1.
- Circle "Lord's people" in v. 1 and "Jerusalem" in v. 3.
- Bracket "first day of every week" in v. 2.
- Bracket "each one" in v. 2.
- Bracket "in keeping with your income" in v. 2.
- Bracket "set aside" and "saving it up" in v. 2.
- Box "so that" indicating *purpose* in v. 2.
- Bracket "letters of introduction" in v. 3.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The words “now about” appear repeatedly in 1 Corinthians (see 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1). What do they indicate?
2. Identify the recipients of “the collection” that Paul is referring to in verse 1.
3. This appears to be a *special* offering rather than a *regular* offering. How so?
4. Explain why the Corinthians should set aside money for the collection on “the first day of every week.” What makes that day more appropriate than any other?
5. He tells them to “set aside a sum of money . . . saving it up.” What exactly is he telling them to do?
6. How much are they to “set aside” weekly?
7. Is this just Paul’s way of telling them to tithe? Explain why you think so or not.
8. Explain Paul’s *purpose* for giving these instructions.
9. Why would the apostle want to send representatives from the donating churches to deliver the gift to Jerusalem?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about what this *special one-time* offering for poor saints in Jerusalem, then, has to do with the *regular* giving of believers, now.

### Commentary On The Text

At the outset of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles Peter, James, and John, those reputed to be pillars in the mother church, approved of what he was doing. They agreed that he and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles while they would go to the Jews. The only thing they asked Paul to do was to remember the poor, which he actually continued to do (Gal 2:9, 10). On his final trip to Jerusalem recorded in Acts 19:21-21:17 he sent a letter to the church at Rome. In it he told his readers, whom he apparently did not know personally, that he planned to stop and visit them on his future trip to Spain to make their acquaintance and secure their support for his ministry. He also wrote that he was on his way to Jerusalem with money for the poor that he himself intended to present to the Judean saints. "I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there," he said. "For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem" (Ro 15:25).

When the Christians in Achaia first learned about "the collection," they asked Paul what part they might have in it. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 he answered their question. "Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem." Apparently, they responded by making a modest donation, but a year later Paul was still waiting on them to finish the work they had been so eager to begin (2Co 8:6, 10-12). No one today knows exactly why they aborted their original plans, but Paul probably did and so he sent Titus to Corinth to help them keep their promise (2Co 8:16-24). As a result of his visit and Paul's exhortation the Corinthians ultimately finished by God's grace what they had started.

1 Corinthians 16 begins with an expression of Paul's heartfelt concern for the church in Jerusalem, which was facing hardship. By the time he wrote his first letter to the church at Corinth in the spring of 56 A.D., he had already planted churches throughout Asia Minor and Greece, and according to one writer: "He was burdened with the needs of the mother-church, which had been facing very straitened circumstances for a long time as a result of a severe famine (this had been foretold by Agabus in a word of prophecy [Ac 11:27-30], a natural disaster that would have hit Judea particularly hard because it was not a very wealthy area, especially around Jerusalem. In every church for which he was responsible Paul stressed the opportunity, privilege and responsibility of this meeting the needs of the saints in Jerusalem. There was no better or more tangible way of cementing relationships between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians" (David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, TBST 279-80). Remembering poor Jewish

Christians is something he had been asked to do by the apostles in Jerusalem – something he calls "the very thing he had been eager to do all along" (Gal. 2:10).

In their letter to Paul, among other things, the Corinthians inquired about an offering being taken by predominantly Gentile churches for the predominantly Jewish church in Jerusalem. Evidently, they wanted to know how they might participate. The apostle tells them to do what he told the Galatian churches to do. These churches were those in southern Galatia, including Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, which he had planted on his first missionary journey (Ac 13:13-14:25). Paul evidently passed through this region on his way to Ephesus, from which he wrote 1 Corinthians (Ac 18:23).

In a nutshell, he tells each one to set aside a sum of money regularly, so that everyone will have a substantial amount to contribute when the time comes to send the collection to Jerusalem. While everyone is expected to contribute, the amount each one is to set aside weekly is left to the individual to decide. No particular percentage or fixed proportion is specified. One commentator agrees: "Paul did not say how much to set aside, except that it was to be as the Lord had blessed them ('as he may prosper'). The amount was entirely up to the givers. Paul mentioned nothing specifically here about giving proportionately to one's income. We saw earlier that both rich and poor made up this church (11:21). Paul's counsel amounted to: Set aside a little regularly now, so that you will not need to make a major withdrawal from your funds later" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 1 Corinthians," 2019 ed, 303-304, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1Corinthians.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1Corinthians.pdf)). The size of the donation is to be determined by the donor's ability to give from week to week, as each is prospered by God. The money is to be set aside on the first day of the week – a fitting time even if the money isn't brought to the church each Sunday – suggesting that Paul views disciplined giving as act of worship. "Saving it up" implies that the money accumulates in the donor's home until the time comes for it to be sent to Jerusalem as part of the larger collection. That way Paul will not have to take an offering when he arrives; the money will be waiting for him. He will then be able to write letters of introduction for those whom the church approves to take the money to Jerusalem, or if advisable, he will accompany them, making the letters unnecessary. Whether he went with them or not, Paul wanted representatives from the Gentile churches that contributed to deliver the collection to the Jewish church in Jerusalem, since in the words of one commentator, "On the one hand, they would probably be carrying a considerable sum – all in coin! – and there is some safety in numbers . . . On the other hand, surely for Paul the personal representation would be as important as the gifts themselves in his greater concern for the unity of the church" (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 815).

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *now about* Gk. *peri de*. Canonical 1 Corinthians is likely the second letter Paul sent to Corinth. In it the apostle addresses the Corinthians' response to his first letter, taking "exception to his position on point after point . . . So he takes up the items in their letter one by one, most of them introduced by *peri de* ('now about'; 7:1, 25; 8:1 [cf. 8:4]; 12:1; 16:1, 12), and at an appropriate place inserts one more item about which he had been informed (11:17-34)" (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 267, italics added). Paul's contacts and correspondence with the Church in Corinth can be summarized as follows. Paul spent 18 months in Corinth when he visited the first time on his second missionary journey before sailing for Ephesus en route to Jerusalem (Ac 18:11, 18-22). On his third missionary journey he returned to Ephesus where he ministered for two years or so (19:10). He probably wrote the letter mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9, which was misunderstood and later lost, soon after arriving in Ephesus. After he learned from members of Chloe's household that he had been misunderstood and that there were problems in the church (1Co 1:11), an official delegation brought him a number of questions that the church wanted him to answer (16:17, 18). He then wrote 1 Corinthians to address these matters. However, his letter did not solve the church's problems, so he made a "painful" visit to the congregation (2Co 2:1; cf. 13:1 which refers to a third visit). After this second visit and his return to Ephesus, Paul sent Titus to Corinth with the "stern" or "sorrowful" letter mentioned in 2 Corinthians 7:8, 9. Afterward he left Ephesus before Titus returned, not knowing how the church had responded to his correspondence. When he arrived in Macedonia, he met Titus who brought him good news about the general well-being of the church but bad news about a group opposed to him there. From Macedonia he wrote 2 Corinthians and followed it up with his third visit there (Ac 20:2). These events occurred between c. A.D. 51 and 57.

v. 1 *collection* The Gk. word *logeias*, translated "collection," is "the technical term for the actual activity of 'taking up' the contributions. Since this word is not used again by Paul in any of the discussions of this 'collection,' its use here is most likely a reflection of the Corinthian letter, and of their concern for how to go about the actual 'collection' of the money" (Fee, 812).

v. 2 *set aside . . . saving it up* "It is impossible that at that time there was any Church treasury, and not until much later was money collected during public worship. Each is to lay by something weekly 'in his own house, forming a little hoard, which will become a heavenly treasure' (Matt. Vi. 19-21; Luke xii. 21). Chrysostom says that the accumulation was to be made in private, because the additions might be so small that the donor would be ashamed to make them in the congregation" (Robertson and Plumber, 384-85). "Paul trusts the Corinthians: he does not ask them to hand in their collection on a weekly basis, they are allowed to keep the collected money and thus little by little a sufficient amount will be saved up" (F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 398).

v. 2 *in keeping with your income* One commentator suggests "that is probably a bit too modern, especially for a culture where a number of the community were slaves and had no 'income.'" He suggests "in accordance with 'whatever success or prosperity may have come their way that week' . . . the gift is simply to be related to their ability from week to week as they have been prospered by God" (Fee, 814). "The amount is to be fixed by the giver in proportion to his weekly gains; and there is no dictation as to the right proportion, whether a tenth, or more, or less. A tenth is little for some, impossible for others; but week by week each would see how much or how little he had got, and would act accordingly" (Robertson and Plumber, 385).

v. 3 *letters of introduction* "He will either write letters with which to send the delegates (2 Cor. iii. 1; Acts xi. 2), or he will take the delegates with himself" (Robertson and Plumber, 386). "Such letters of introduction, or commendation, were a regular part of business dealing in antiquity" (Fee, 815).

# 4

## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Paul's pattern for Christian giving suggests that you should give as an act of worship – voluntarily, regularly, and in keeping with how God has prospered you, rather than grudgingly, inconsistently, and out of keeping with it.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



### 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

Tithe. What does that mean exactly? Do we give based on gross or net income? What percentage are we supposed to give? Are tithe and offerings the same? Explaining the principle of tithing to kids feels a little like explaining algebra to a giraffe, especially when we might not fully understand the concept as adults. Parents, tithing is not a math equation, but quite simply, a matter of the heart. It's a matter of obedience that is personal between you and God. I'd be willing to bet your children understand this better than you think. Over the past several years I've witnessed countless examples of cheerful and sacrificial giving by your precious kids. I've been handed jars of money from garage sales and baggies filled with coins from lemonade stands. The joy and innocence in the eyes of these children have brought me to tears. They can't wait to bring their offering and bubble over with excitement as they openhandedly give their very best to the church. A beautiful prayer from a faithful friend of mine has stuck with me over the years. She asked to have more so she could give more (2 Corinthians 9:11). I want to be like this. I want to have more so I can give more. I want to bounce on the balls of my feet grinning from ear to ear as I offer my best to God. I'm praying for your family as you model cheerful and sacrificial giving for your children.

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

1. Who is the collection for?
2. When should the money be set aside?
3. How much money should be set aside?

### What Do You Think?

What can you do to give generously if you don't have a job or money to give?

### What Do You Do?

Bake cookies this week and offer the first batch to a neighbor. Pray with them when you deliver the cookies.

### CORE COMPETENCY: Generosity

I give away my faith, life, money and time to help with God's work.

### MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 41:10

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

### KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- \_\_\_\_\_ I completed my Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ I memorized this week's verse
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought my Bible to church
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)

*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)

*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)

*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)

*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)

*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)

*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)

*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)

*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)

*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)

*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)

*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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