**“NOW CONCERNING THE COLLECTION”**

*“1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. 3 And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.”* (1Cor.16:1-3) This text is an “approved example” of how churches raised funds under the guidance of the inspired apostles. Since this example has Divine approval, we know that if we do likewise, then we are on safe ground. If “the churches of Galatia” could do it, and the church at Corinth could so it; then a church today can raise money in the same manner! If not, why not? Let’s look at some of the pertinent details…

**This text teaches a *periodic* gift: “On the first day of the week.”** In fact, the Greek is literally “the first day of EVERY week” (see NASV, RSV, ESV, and NIV). The church is authorized to meet on any day of the week (cf. Ac.2:46; 5:42). However, the church MUST meet on “the first day of the week” to eat the Lord’s Supper “till He comes” (Ac.2:42; 20:7; 1Cor.10:16; 11:26). This, in turn, provides a convenient time to collect funds necessary to maintain the church’s work. Indeed, no othertime is authorized in Scripture (cf. 2Jn.9).

**This text teaches a *personal* gift: “let each one of you.”** Every Christian has an obligation to financially support the local church to which he belongs. Your financial contribution represents your share of the collective expenses incurred by a church. We are all in this together; and therefore, we should each do our part to fund the local work.

**This text teaches a *pooled* gift: “lay something aside, storing up.”** I use the word “pooled” to suggest the idea that our individual gifts are collected into a singular fund – a “treasury.” In fact, the Greek word translated “storing up” is “thesaurizo” – from which comes the English word “thesaurus” (a *treasury* of words). This emphasizes that this collection was NOT a “private” collection at home, as some teach; but authorizes the formation of a collective fund for the collective operation of the local church. In other words, each member contributes (lays something aside) into this fund, which is then saved (stored up) for some future use. To reinforce this point, consider Paul’s use of the phrases, “the collection” (singular, v.1), “storing up” (i.e., pooling together, v.2), and “your gift” (singular, v.3). There is little doubt that this has reference to a singular fund collected from many individual gifts.

**This text teaches a *proportionate* gift: “as he may prosper.”** Notice that there is no specific percentage stipulated. No, this does NOT mean we may give as little as possible. On the contrary, the gift is *geared* to our prosperity! The more one prospers, the more one is able to give. Consequently, the one who makes more should give more! Do you think of this when you get a raise at work? When you get a raise, you should give the Lord’s work a raise! In fact, I would argue that, while one may certainly give 10% of his income (i.e., a tithe) to the Lord’s work, *he is also free to give even more!* And if you “prosper” far beyond what you actually NEED in order to live, then you have an obligation to share that prosperity – even BEYOND a mere 10%.

As an aside, I would add that this presupposes that the local church is not hoarding money. Indeed, the money of a local church is collected to be SPENT, not hoarded. In such cases, continuing to give is actually a POOR use of funds on the part of the giver (individual saints) and receiver (local church). Giving is not an end in itself, but a means TO an end. If you are part of a church which hoards its money and cannot convince them to change course, it is time to find a more faithful congregation.

**This text teaches a *preventative* gift: “that there be no collections when I come.”** The idea of the text is that Paul wanted this particular collection finished, with all the money together in one lump sum ready to go when he got there. This would prevent any hindrances to his mission to carry funds to the needy, because those funds are ready to go when he arrives. To make application for our purposes today, we can learn the need to have funds “on hand” for any need which may arise. This speaks to the need to keep the treasury replenished on a weekly basis in order to recover those funds which have already been committed or spent. I hope this brief study has been of some profit.

--Lanny Smith