

Principles For Charitable Giving – 1 Cor 16:1-4

1 Cor 16:1-4 (p.962); This obviously begins the final stretch in our study of 1 Corinthians, and leaves just 3 or 4 more messages *after* this weekend; So the end is near

But before it's over, Paul seems to be tying up some loose ends

Kind of like you do when you know you're not going to see someone for a while

And the first, is the issue of their giving

From which, we get some principles – “Principles For Charitable Giving”

Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. [2] On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. [3] And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. [4] If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

- *The collection* to which Paul refers, was a special offering he was gathering, to help the church in Jerusalem (**map**), the *saints* as he calls them here
And it's the *same* collection he talks about at length in 2 Corinthians 8, which he wrote from Macedonia, as he was traveling to Corinth, about a year after this
And then, about a year after *that*, he summarized it all as he wrote the church in Rome from Corinth, just before returning to Jerusalem with the gift

And that summary is found in **Rom 15:25-26** – *At present, however* [i.e. as opposed to seeing them right away], *I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. [26] For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.*

So Macedonia (**map**) was the region to the north of Corinth where Thessalonica and Philippi were, while Achaia was the region in which Corinth was located
And together with Galatia, as Paul says in 1 Cor 16:1 – which was the area across the Aegean Sea where Ephesus and Colossae were . . .
Together, they were pleased to make a charitable contribution (**Rom 15:25-26**) – *for the poor among the saints* in Jerusalem

- Poor, b/c they not only were suffering due to a drought and hard economic times, but b/c they suffered neglect and persecution due to their faith
And Paul's making the case that the church in Corinth, among others, should help them
Not “the poor and needy in Jerusalem in general,” but *the poor among the saints*

IOW the collection is for the church

B/c the church, our brothers and sisters in Christ, is our *primary* obligation

It's not our *only* obligation when it comes to helping the poor, but it *is* our *primary* one

Like he told the churches in Galatia, in **Gal 6:10** – *So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

The church; The saints

And then says to the church in Corinth 6 years later – *as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do* (1 Cor 16:1); And we're no different

The church is our primary obligation, and . . .

As needs arise, we must do our part (v1)

That's the first principle for our charitable giving

As I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do Paul says

Directed, as in, exhorted them to *excel* in giving, like he says in **2 Cor 8:7**

As you excel in everything . . . see that you excel in this act of grace [act of giving] *also*

And then in **v13-14** of 2 Cor 8, he said – *I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness [14] your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness.*

As needs arise, and we're in a position financially as a church, and as individuals in the church – we must do our part

Our abundance should supply the needs of others – especially other believers

And *their* abundance, should supply our needs as well, if the opportunity presents itself

- All of which happened in a big way the past few years with the earthquake in Haiti and the tsunami in Japan
We collected an offering for Haiti, much like Paul did for Jerusalem, and gave through **Churches Helping Churches** – the relief arm of our Fellowship
And many of you gave *directly* to CHC, for the Japan effort
As needs arose, we did our part

And I thought now would be as good a time as any, to give you an update on that
So take a look at this short **video** from CHC

The cool thing, is that some of the churches in Haiti, gave to the churches in Japan
A perfect example of reciprocation, that there may be fairness as Paul said

- As a church, we have an obligation to support *other* churches; other works of ministry
And for all kinds of needs
Like the gift we gave late last year to HBC-Bloomington Indiana – as they were trying to raise the money necessary to launch
And we're doing the same, in *several* different ways, with Chattanooga and Fairfax
B/c we're no different than Corinth, and they're no different than Jerusalem
As needs arise, we must do our part; Individually, *and* as a church; Second . . .

As God enables, we should give regularly (v2)

That's the 2nd principle for our charitable giving; And the gist of v2

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

Now, while this is talking about a *special* offering, for which they had advance notice, the force of Paul's words seem to indicate that . . .

- **It's a good practice for all our giving**

Our tithes, our capital campaign, our Compassion Fund – you name it

To the extent that we have advance notice on a need, we should give toward it on a regular basis; It's one of the reasons I encouraged you a few weeks back . . .

To give regularly towards the build-out

If we're going to make our goal, we need large gifts, more gifts, and regular gifts

I wasn't just saying it for pragmatic reasons, but biblical reasons

Giving regularly is a biblical principle for *all* our giving

You could even apply it to natural disasters, by giving *ahead* of time

Knowing full well it's only a *matter* of time

That's the *first* implication of giving regularly; Second, is that . . .

• **It keeps the need front and center**

The discipline of giving regularly, *on the first day of every week* as Paul says – keeps the need in the forefront of your mind . . .

And enables the church or ministry to *meet* the need *now*

Even if your pay period is monthly, it might be a good idea to give weekly

B/c in our busy, insulated lives, we tend to forget the things that don't directly affect us

They're out of sight, out of mind

Which in turn, decreases our prayer for those needs, and goes downhill from there

If that's you, better to give regularly b/c it keeps the need front and center

Third, regular giving as God enables . . .

• **It forces us to give up control**

When Paul says *put something aside and store it up* – he means “give it”

Not save it yourself, or hang on to it as long as you can – but give it away to the work of ministry; And there are 2 reasons I say that:

(A) The word for “setting something aside and storing it up” in first century Greek, carries the connotation of putting it into the treasury

And most treasuries in the 1st century, were in the temple; Or in this case, the church

So the connotation of the word is to give it

(B) When Paul says store it up *so that there will be no collecting when I come* . . .

The implication is that the collection will have already been taken; The money will have already been given

Otherwise, if people were to put their contribution under their mattress and give it when he *got* there, it would still have to be collected

So in addition to the *meaning* of the words, the implication of what Paul says – is give it now; Don't hoard it; Don't keep it until the last possible minute

Don't wait until the need is beyond help – break the bondage, give up control, and give regularly; B/c 4th . . .

• **It's a part of worship**

Giving is a part of worship; Which is shown by his exhortation, that – *on the first day of the week, each of you is to put something aside*

The first day of the week being *Sunday* in Paul's Jewish mindset

Which became the preferred day of worship right after Jesus' resurrection (Jn 20:26)

And by the end of the 1st century, it was known as *the Lord's day* (Rev 1:10)

And it's here in v2, that Paul links the two together – making giving, a part of worship, whether it's Saturday, Sunday, or otherwise

Part of our worship is to give, and *all* of our giving is worship; 5th . . .

• **It's for everyone**

Regular giving is for everyone; Notice he didn't say . . .

“If you're *led* to give, or *feel* like it, or happen to be in the mood” – then give; Or that it's only for the wealthy; Rather, he said *each of you* should give

When it comes to meeting the material needs of people – it's for everyone

Which puts it in a class by itself; B/c that's not the case for our build-out

While we need more gifts and more people to participate, you should only do so if your heart *moves* you to give

That's the example in Scripture from **Ex 25:1-2** where God is talking about contributions for the tabernacle

The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me.

Meeting material needs is for *everyone* it seems, while meeting building needs isn't****

And I want you to know that as a church, we meet the material needs of a lot of people on a regular basis, through our Compassion Fund

Totally separate from our General Fund, and supplied solely through your special gifts from time to time – we give away about \$2000 every quarter

And it's for everyone to participate in; Each of you as Paul says; But . . .

• **It's based on what you have**

This principle of regular giving to meet charitable needs – is based on what you have

Each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper

Prosper little, give little; Prosper much, give much; That's the idea

So while everyone should *participate* in special offerings, the amounts will likely vary

And even vary from time to time, depending on how God has provided for *you*

That's the second principle for charitable giving from this passage – as God enables, we should give regularly; Third . . .

As money is given, we ought to ensure its intended use (v3-4)

That's why trustworthy people were to accompany the Corinthian's gift to Jerusalem – to protect against theft, corruption, and mismanagement

Ensuring that it was used for the purpose it was given; Look at v3-4

When I arrive [Paul says], I will send those whom you accredit by letter [those you trust, those you approve of] to carry your gift to Jerusalem. [4] If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

IOW if the amount, or circumstances, or comfort level of the church required Paul himself to go, he would; And he did

Providing oversight, security, accountability, integrity, and transparency – all to ensure its intended use; All of which we strive for as well

From collecting and counting the money, to depositing it and using it – we have multiple systems, practices, security, and people in place to ensure its intended use

It starts with the ushers and counters, and ends with a full scale audit each year by an outside CPA firm; It costs money, but we're committed to the integrity it brings
And in between, there are staff, deacons, and elders who play various roles to ensure thorough oversight, reporting, and accountability
All for the purpose of ensuring that the money we give is used the way it's intended

- Part of which is putting our giving in the **bulletin** each week
Each/every week we want you to know how we're doing in terms of our budgeted need
And right now as you can see, we're doing pretty well – we're about **\$126k** ahead
That's in spite of the slight drop in giving last week and last month – both of which are annual phenomena

And while 126k may seem like a lot – with a \$4M budget, it's only about 3%
It would be like getting \$103 dollars on a \$100 budget; Not that much when you put it in perspective; And it goes pretty fast sometimes when unexpected needs arise . . .
Or opportunities present themselves
In any case, we want to be open about our giving

- And the same goes for our *budget* (**chart**) – another way to ensure that the money given is used as intended; For instance . . .

5.4% – Office Expenses; That includes everything from pens and pencils, to printers and computers

14% – Facilities; Covering everything from utilities and supplies, to maintenance and our mortgage; In fact, our mortgage is about 2/3 of this slice
Or about 9% of our overall budget

12.3% – Outreach; Money used and given *outside* these walls
And that doesn't even include the salaries of those who lead our Outreach ministries
Add those in, which you should, and it's 16% of our budget

61.3% – Salaries & Ministry; 52% salaries and 9% ministry *expenses*
Which we combine, b/c salaries *are* ministry

In fact, paying a pastor or AA who lead the ministry and support the ministry . . .
Is more “ministry” than buying a speaker, or renting a bus, or whatever

7% – Savings; That's how much we're saving right now in different sub-funds
Most of which are for the build-out; Which amounts to about \$200k this year, in addition to any surplus in *giving* at the end of the year; That's our budget*****

- Our spending meanwhile, is slightly *under* budget for the year thus far
Which, if that continues, will also add to our savings

All of which we track on a weekly basis, in multiple different ways, to ensure not only that the money is being used *properly* . . .
But that it's being maximized, and leveraged, and put to the best *possible* use (**Sum.**)

So that as you do your part, and give regularly – whether it's your tithe, or the capital campaign, or the Compassion Fund . . .
We're committed to doing ours, to do our part – and ensure its intended use

Pray – Thank you for these principles; *And* for the privilege of applying them
Of participating in your work of ministry – both here and around the world. We give now, as an expression of that