

2 CORINTHIANS, PART II

STUDY NUMBER SIXTEEN – 2 Cor. 8:16-9:5

TEXT:

- v. 16 But thanks be to God, who is putting the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.
- v. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he went to you of his own accord.
- v. 18 And we sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches.
- v. 19 And not only this, but he also was appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness,
- v. 20 taking precaution that no one should discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;
- v. 21 for we are taking into consideration what is morally right not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men.
- v. 22 And we sent with them our brother, whom we often tested to be diligent in many things, but now even more diligent by reason of his great confidence which he has in you.
- v. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow-worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.
- v. 24 Therefore openly before the churches be showing them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

Chapter Nine:

- v. 1 For it is superfluous for me to be writing to you about this ministry to the saints.
- v. 2 For I am knowing your readiness, of which I am boasting about you to the Macedonians, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal stirred up the majority of them.
- v. 3 But I sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not lose its justification in this case, so that just as I was saying, you may be prepared;
- v. 4 lest if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we – (not speaking of you)—should be put to shame by this confidence.
- v. 5 Therefore I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they should go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, that the same might be ready as a bountiful gift, and not a gift that is grudgingly granted by greed.

INTRODUCTION:

Cabin on Little Cougar Creek

Cowboy Poetry 520b-18

There's a cabin don't you see
That means a lot to me
High up on Little Cougar Creek

It ain't very much to view
Of rooms, it's just got two
Near the bluff by the old Salt Lick.

It was the year Aunt Lea died
Grandpa had some tears to hide
He spent the winter buildin' in the snow.

And to this very day
All I ever heard them say
Was "ten years old is way too young to go."

Grandpa didn't build that arbor
Or live to see Pearl Harbor
It was up to my Daddy to run the spread.

They said someone had to stay
Provide troops with beef and hay.
So off to Europe marched my Uncle Fred.

Grandma was getting' better
Till she received that army letter
That Uncle Fred had died at St. Lorraine.

She lived in the cabin in her last year
Plantin' roses far and near
Claimed they helped to mollify the pain

And when I was just a lad
The cow business got real bad
The bank came and tried to take it all away.

It was 1953
So the folks moved sister and me
To that cabin with the floor made of clay.

Dad worked day and night you bet
Until he paid off all his debt

When we moved back to our home it felt so large.

I was too young to feel the shame
But his health was never the same.
He hung on until I was old enough to take charge.

We still use that cabin ever' year
To share Thanksgiving cheer
With our kids and our grandkids, don't you know.

It's a special kind of feelin'
Just to stare up at that ceilin'
And remember how it's watched this family grow.

So you want to build something nice
And pay most any price
If we'd just agree to sell that little shed.

There ain't treasure enough been found
For that hallowed piece of ground
That's the last word on the topic to be said.

I reckon it must seem kind of funny
Some things can't be bought with money.
A good lesson to find out 'fore it's too late

So goodbye and God Bless you
May your other dreams come true
And don't forget you'll have to close the gate.

An Old Cowboy's Advice

- Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight and bull-strong.
- Keep skunks, bankers, and lawyers at a distance.
- Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.
- A bumble bee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.
- Words that soak into your ears are whispered...not yelled.
- Meanness don't jes' happen overnight.
- Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.
- Do not corner something you know is meaner than you.
- It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge.
- You cannot unsay a cruel word.
- Every path has a few puddles.
- When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty.
- The best sermons are lived, not preached.
- Most of the stuff people worry about ain't never gonna happen anyway.

- Don't judge folks by their relatives.
- Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
- Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.
- Don't interfere with somethin' that ain't botherin' you none.
- Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance.
- If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.
- Sometimes you get, and sometimes you get got.
- The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every mornin'.
- Always drink upstream from the herd.
- Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.
- Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in.
- If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.
- Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Leave the rest to God...

An Old Texan's Advice:

The easiest way to eat crow is while it's still warm, 'cause the colder it gets, the harder it is to swallow.

Sage Advice

1. Do not walk behind me, for I may not lead. Do not walk ahead of me, for I may not follow. Do not walk beside me either. Just pretty much leave me alone.
2. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a broken fan belt and a leaky tire.
3. It's always darkest before dawn. So if you're going to steal your neighbor's newspaper, that's the time to do it.
4. Don't be irreplaceable. If you can't be replaced, you can't be promoted.
5. No one is listening until you say something stupid.
6. Always remember that you're unique. Just like everyone else.
7. Never test the depth of the water with both feet.
8. If you think nobody cares if you're alive, try missing a couple of car payments.
9. Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them you're a mile away and you have their shoes.
10. If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
11. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.
12. If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
13. If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.
14. Some days you're the bug; some days you're the windshield.
15. Don't worry; it only seems kinky the first time.

16. Good judgment comes from bad experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
17. The quickest way to double your money is to fold it in half and put it back in your pocket.
18. A closed mouth gather no foot.
19. Duct tape is like the Force. It has a light side and a dark side, and it holds the universe together.
20. There are two theories to arguing with women. Neither one works.
21. Generally speaking, you aren't learning much when your lips are moving.
22. Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.
23. Never miss a good chance to shut up.
24. We are born naked, wet and hungry, and get slapped on our bottom. Then things get worse.
25. Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.
26. There is a fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."
27. No matter what happens, somebody will find a way to take it too seriously.
28. There comes a time when you should stop expecting other people to make a big deal about your birthday...that time is age 11.
29. Everyone seems normal until you get to know them.

Enjoy your day!

From 0 to 200 in 4 seconds

The couple had been debating the purchase of a new auto for weeks. He wanted a new truck. She wanted a fast little sports-like car so she could zip through traffic around town. He would probably have settled on any beat up old truck, but everything she seemed to like was way out of their price range.

"Look!" she said. I want something that goes from 0 to 200 in 4 seconds or less. Any my birthday is coming up. You could surprise me."

For her birthday, he brought her a brand new bathroom scale.

Services are pending.

Tim LaHaye in his book Your Temperament: Discover Its Potential says,

Selfishness, as much as we don't like to face this ugly word, it is a fact nonetheless. We are fearful because we are selfish. Why am I afraid? Because I am interested in self. Why am I embarrassed when I stand before an audience? Because I don't wish to make a fool of myself. Why am I afraid I will lose my job? Because I am afraid of being a failure in the eyes of my family or not being able to provide my family

and myself with the necessities of life. Excuse it is you will, but all fear can be traced basically to the sin of selfishness.

(Who Speaks for God? By Chuck Colson)

This “bigger is better” mindset is deadly. Vernon Grounds has wisely warned, “We are sinfully concerned with bigness – with budgets, buses, buildings and baptisms.”

(The Walk-on Water Syndrome by Edward B. Bratcher)

Nathanael Guptill writes that the idol which the New Testament called “mammon” has the name today of “success.”

The worship of this idol symbolizes everything phony, shallow, empty, and inhuman about our culture. The cult of the beautiful people described in TV commercials who consume cosmetics, beer, cigarettes, soap, and crunchy breakfast food, who wear smart clothes, drive flashy cars, and “get ahead” in life is the great false religion of our day. A great many Christians and a great many pastors are secret adherents of this religion, but few will admit it; and many are torn apart inside because, although they profess a slushy form of Christianity, they know that deep down they really want more than anything else to be young, rich, beautiful, strong, and sexy.

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(Spiritual Awakening, Sherwood Eliot Wirt, editor)

No view of the ever-varying character and success of mankind in their expectations of happiness, and their efforts to obtain it, can illustrate this doctrine more satisfactorily than that of the progress and end of a class of students in this seminary. At their first appearance here they are all exactly on the same level. Their character, their hopes, and their destination are the same. They are enrolled on one list, and enter upon a collegiate life with the same promise of success. At this moment they are plants, appearing just above the ground, all equally fair and flourishing. Within a short time, however, some begin to rise above the others. They indicate by a more rapid growth a structure of superior vigor, and promise both more early and more abundant fruit.

Some are studious, steadfast, patient or toil, resolved on distinction, in love with science, and determined with unbroken ambition never to be left behind by their companions. Of these a part are amiable, uniform in their morals, excellent in their dispositions, and honorable by their piety. Another part, although less amiable, are still decent and reputable in their character.

Others are thoughtless, volatile, fluttering from object to object, particularly from one scene of pleasure to another, alighting only for a moment, never settling, regardless of everything except the present gratification, and most regardless of their time, their talents, their duty, and their souls. Others still are openly vicious, idle, disorderly; gamblers, profane, apparently infidels; enemies to themselves, undutiful to their parents, corrupters of their companions, and disturbers of the collegiate peace.

--Timothy Dwight

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in all plans and all labors the supreme object is to become happy. Yet when men have actually acquired riches and honor, or secured to themselves popular favor, they still find the happiness which they expected eluding their grasp. Neither wealth, fame, office, nor sensual pleasure can yield such good as we need. As these coveted objects are accumulated, the wishes of man always grow faster than his gratifications. Hence whatever he acquires, he is usually as little satisfied as before, and often less.

A principal design of the mind in laboring for these things is to become superior to others. But almost all rich men are obliged to see, and usually with no small anguish, others richer than themselves; honorable men, others more honorable; voluptuous men, others who enjoy more pleasure. The great end of the strife is therefore unobtained; and the happiness expected never found. Even the successful competitor in the race utterly misses his aim. The real enjoyment existed, although it was unperceived by him, in the mere strife for superiority. When he has outstripped all his rivals the contest is at an end, and his spirits, which were invigorated only by contending, languish for want of a competitor.

--Timothy Dwight

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Suppose you have forty years to live. If so, you are faced with an incredibly crucial question. And I frankly believe this is the question that you – and I – must wrestle with now if we are going to finish our lives satisfied. The question is this: When you come to the end of your life and have nothing but death to look forward to and nothing but memories to look back upon, what will you need to see to conclude that your life was a success and you are satisfied?

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In the twelfth chapter of this gospel, Luke recounts his Lord's description of a businessman who thought he had answered the satisfaction question. Mr. Businessman/Farmer was an agricultural tycoon. He belonged to the Million Dollar Round Table. Undoubtedly his Dun and Bradstreet rating was superb, his line of credit in six figures. A well-balanced financial portfolio adequately covered all the bases for the rest of his life. His pot was full!

But the Master Teacher describes the "mid-life crisis" which caught this wealthy entrepreneur by surprise...and unprepared. The agricultural business had treated him well. Because he had reaped bountifully, he anticipated a satisfying second half of life. "You've got it made!" the man told his soul. "Bank account's bursting, future's wired...and you're rolling in the chips. So relax. Enjoy. Prepare yourself for the 'good life.' You've worked hard, it's your turn." Didn't he deserve it? He had worked hard@ It was time to cash in and turn on.

Almighty God, however, put his life on fast forward. There would be no second half. No time to build new barns. No time to contemplate a new chariot and a sun-splashed retirement. Eminently prepared to live, Mr. Farmer was unprepared to die.

And God called the man a fool.

Unexpectedly, in the midst of the night, a terrible pain rips through his chest. He cries out in pain and fear. A heart attack? Is this it? The end? It is. A sad voice rings out through the misty darkness settling over his soul, "You fool, this very night your soul is required of you."

p. 17

Paul in chapters 8 and 9 has been dealing primarily with the subject of giving, and the primary focus of these chapters is upon the offering being taken for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

The apostle in the first part of chapter 8 uses the churches of Macedonia as an example of sacrificial giving in first giving themselves to the Lord and then also the offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

"thirty dollars isn't very much when you consider what Jesus gave, but I think he'll understand."

Bobby Anderson
1800 Hankerson
Tyler, Texas 75701

He brings Titus into the picture as he challenges the Corinthians to also get their act together and get an offering prepared to be taken to Jerusalem as well.

He commends them in the other areas of their faith and asks them to give earnestness to this gracious work as well.

He then uses an illustration of the Lord Jesus Christ: "that He bring rich, for your sake became poor, in order that you through His poverty might become rich."

Paul in verse 13 says, "For this is not for the ease of others and difficult circumstances for you, but as a matter of equality."

In the last verse of our previous study, verse 15, he uses an illustration from the children of Israel, recorded in Exodus 16:18.

Even as it has been written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and He who gathered little had no lack."

A big question that we ask ourselves about this section of 2 Corinthians is: Why is all of this in the Scripture? I think the answer to that is: The gospel penetrates to the practical areas of our lives as well.

Verses 16-24 are a letter of commendation to the brethren about the men who are involved in this offering project.

There are three of them:

1. TITUS – Verses 16-17
2. THE SECOND BROTHER – Verses 18-21
3. THE THIRD BROTHER – Verses 22-24

v. 16 But thanks be to God, who is putting the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

The word BUT takes us back to verse 15:

2 Cor. 8:15

Even as it has been written: “He who gathered much did not have too much, and He who gather little had no lack.”

2 Cor. 2:14

But thanks be to God who is always leading us in His triumph in Christ and is making known through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

“BUT THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO IS PUTTING THE SAME EARNESTNESS ON YOUR BEHALF IN THE HEART OF TITUS.”

God is in the business of putting things in our heart and He has put an earnestness in the heart of Titus for the Corinthians. It is the same earnestness which Paul feels also for them.

Plummer translates this 16th verse:

But thanks be to God, who is putting into the heart of Titus the same eager zeal that I myself always entertain.

Phillips translates it:

Thank God Titus feels the same deep concern for you as we do!

The Living Bible paraphrases it:

I am thankful to God that he has given Titus the same real concern for you that I have.

Titus has been the ambassador to Corinth, who has been representing the apostle Paul in the ministry there. He has gotten deeply involved with the Corinthians and has the same earnestness as the apostle for the Corinthians.

- v. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he went to you of his own accord.

The reason Paul gives an outburst of praise in verse 16 and is thankful to God for Titus is now stated in the 17th verse: “FOR HE (Titus) negatively: NOT ONLY ACCEPTED OUR APPEAL, BUT (positively): BEING HIMSELF VERY EARNEST, HE WENT TO YOU OF HIS OWN ACCORD.”

Phillips translates this:

He accepts the suggestion outlined above, and in his enthusiasm comes to you personally at his own request.

The Living Bible paraphrases it:

He is glad to follow my suggestion that he visit you again – but I think he would have come anyway for he is very eager to see you!

There are three things that we can learn about Titus here in this verse:

1. He's SENSITIVE.
2. He is SELF-MOTIVATED.
3. He's a SERVANT.

He is SENSITIVE to need because he accepted Paul's appeal about the Corinthian situation.

He is SELF-MOTIVATED in that being himself very earnest.

He is a SERVANT. “He went to you of his own accord.”

- v. 18 And we sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches.

Whereas it was Titus in verse 16 & 17, we now have the SECOND BROTHER in verses 18-21.

“AND WE” refers to Paul and the rest of the team.

“SENT ALONG WITH (Titus) THE BROTHER”

It is believed by quite a number that this might be Dr. Luke that is referred to here, and who is joining Titus on this occasion.

Paul sent these men so that he would not have to be involved in this project personally.

Acts 16:10

And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Acts 20:4-6

And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus; and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians; and Gaius or Derbe, and Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas. And we sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days.

“AND WE SENT ALONG WITH HIM THE BROTHER WHOSE FAME IN THE THINGS OF THE GOSPEL HAS SPREAD THROUGH ALL THE CHURCHES.”

How would you define “FAME” in this verse?

I have defined it in the following four ways:

1. CHARACTER
2. COMMITMENT
3. COMPASSION
4. COURAGE

In Our Daily Bread booklet for April 22, we read these words:

The Scriptures do not identify the man who accompanied Titus on his errands of mercy. Paul merely describes him as “the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches.” Some Bible teachers have speculated that he might have been Barnabas or John Mark. Others think he was Luke or Apollos. Whoever he was, he had been commissioned by the Christians to go with the apostles as they spread the good news of salvation to others. It is worthy of note that the apostle did not hesitate to single him out as one who led an exemplary life.

We often fail to give due credit to other believers and to commend them for their good works. We need to follow Paul's example and express appreciation for those who are diligent in serving the Lord. This unknown brother was not the only one for whom the apostle thanked God. He spoke highly of Epaphras for his fervent prayer, Epaphroditus because of his sacrificial living and giving, Onesimus for his faithfulness, the women of Philippi because of their labors in the gospel, the Thessalonians for their evangelizing zeal, and Onesiphorus because of his true Christian charity and friendship. These servants of God were not perfect, but the apostle's love for them looked beyond their faults and caused him to praise their virtues.

How long has it been since you went out of your way and spoke a word of commendation to your pastor, a Christian teacher, or a loved one? Your encouragement will strengthen them in the work of the Lord!

--H.G.B.

Someone gave me a cheering word
Of which I was in need;
And faith was bolstered once again
By just that tiny deed.

When it comes to praising others, some people stop at NOTHING!

1 Thess. 5:11-18

Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing. But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men. Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

(The Be (Happy) Attitudes by Roberts Schuller)

..."I found out very early in my business that no matter who you are and no matter what business you're in, all of us go through five stages in life. Let me put it to you this way. The first stage is: Who is Hugh O'Brian? This is where you begin your journey—when you sow the seeds for success.

"The second is: Get me Hugh O'Brian. That's when you have your first taste of success.

"The third state is: Get me a Hugh O'Brian type. That's when you're really successful—when you are at the top of the ladder, when they can't afford you but they want somebody like you.

"The fourth stage is: Get me a young Hugh O'Brian. We all grow old. We'll all go through the fourth stage. It all depends on how you handle it. Stay active and productive during this period. Maintain a purpose.

"The fifth stage is: Who is Hugh O'Brian?

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- v. 19 And not only this, but he also was appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness,

This 19th verse continues with the descriptions of the second member of the gift delegation.

The verse has a negative and a positive in it:

“And (negatively) not only this (that is, he is a man whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches) but (positively) he also was appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work.”

This is the way Paul speaks about the gift and giving responsibility. It is a gracious work.

“WHICH (gracious work) IS BEING ADMINISTERED BY US”

Paul wants the Corinthians to know that the whole team is involved in the project. And then he gives them reason why the project came into existence in the first place with a two-fold reason:

“FOR THE GLORY OF THE LORD HIMSELF, AND TO SHOW OUR READINESS,”

We see BY, FOR< and TO in this 19th verse:

BY US
FOR THE GLORY
TO SHOW OUR READINESS

Paul is saying that all of this is being done so that the Lord Himself would get glory from this generous gift and to demonstrate to the believers in the Jerusalem area the readiness of believers in Macedonia and Achaia and availability to meet needs.

v. 20 taking precaution that no one should discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;

This 20th verse is a good policy when dealing with money. The apostle says, We want this to be for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness. But we also are “taking precaution that no one should discredit us.” How would they do this:

1. PERSONAL BENEFIT
2. LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY
3. PROMOTE THEIR PROGRAM

“TAKING PRECAUTION THAT NO ONE SHOULD DISCREDIT US IN OUR ADMINISTRATION OF THIS GENEROUS GIFT;”

What is involved in the administration of this generous gift? There are five things:

1. NEED
2. EQUALITY
3. EXPENSES
4. RECIPIENTS

5. GUIDELINES FOR DISTRIBUTION

- v. 21 for we are taking into consideration what is morally right not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men.

Here is the reason stated for taking precaution against being discredited in the administration of the gift: "We are taking into consideration what is morally right (negatively) not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men."

This is a fantastic principle upon which financial accountability ought to be built.

"WHAT IS MORALLY RIGHT NOT ONLY IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD BUT ALSO IN THE SIGHT OF MEN."

Acts 24:16

And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.

Phillips translates these two verses:

Naturally we want to avoid the slightest breath of criticism in the distribution of their gifts, and to be absolutely above-board not only in the sight of God but in the eyes of men.

Plummer translates it:

I want to make quite sure that no one shall be able to criticize or suspect our conduct in the matter of this charity-fund which is being administered by us. For I aim at doing what is absolutely honourable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

The Living Bible paraphrases it:

By traveling together we will guard against any suspicion, for we are anxious that no one should find fault with the way we are handling this large gift. God knows we are honest, but I want everyone else to know it too. That is why we have made this arrangement.

- v. 22 And we sent with them our brother, whom we often tested to be diligent in many things but now even more diligent by reason of his great confidence which he has in you.

We come now to the third member of the gift-receiving team.

There is some conjecture that this could possibly be TROPHIMUS.

“AND WE SENT WITH THEM (that is, Titus and Luke, if our other supposition is correct) OUR BROTHER, WHOM WE OFTEN TESTED TO BE DILIGENT IN MANY THINGS.”

This person has gone through a substantial amount of testing, and he has come out being diligent in many things.

I am sure this diligence was demonstrated:

In his WALK
His WARFARE
And his WORK.

“BUT (in contrast) NOW EVEN MORE DILIGENT BY REASON OF HIS GREAT CONFIDENCE WHICH HE HAS IN YOU.”

He shares the same zeal and excitement that the others do, and he is eager to go and be in Corinth.

(Stress Without Distress by Hans Selye)

IT is much more important to work at perfecting yourself and thereby ensure your usefulness no matter what fate does to you. A great economist, artist, or scientist, or first-rate machinist or plumber rarely has difficulty finding a job if some political or religious persecution drives him out of his country penniless. Remember that no matter what your degree or title, your highest rank is the reputation of your name. You are as valuable and secure as past accomplishments and present capabilities have helped to make you; in other words, you are worth as much as your ability to earn your neighbor's love.

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- v. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow-worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.

Paul, in summary fashion, speaks first of Titus again and has two things to say about him:

1. He is my partner.
2. He is my fellow-worker among you.

Titus appears in the Scripture at the Council of Jerusalem, where he gives his testimony as an uncircumcised Greek to the power of the gospel and salvation through Christ.

He is sent on a mission to the island of Crete and has a very successful ministry there. He is then dispatched to Corinth, which is a very difficult assignment and is very successful in his ministry in that place.

It is in this way that he is Paul's "partner and fellow-worker among you (the Corinthians.)"

"AS FOR OUR BRETHREN (the other two unnamed men), THEY ARE

1. MESSENGERS OF THE CHURCHES
2. A GLORY TO CHRIST

What a fitting tribute to these two men that he has already talked about. They have taken the responsibility of being messengers of the churches, and they are a glory to Christ.

One is the glory of another when they manifest His glory.

Philippians 1:20

According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

- v. 24 Therefore openly before the churches be showing them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

The word THEREFORE stands at the beginning of this verse, and Paul is saying, in view of what has been said, and the introduction of this delegation made up of three prominent servants of the Lord, he gives them a two-fold command of what they are to do openly before the churches in the area:

COMMAND #1: Be showing them the proof of your love.

They can do this by their happiness at their arrival their hospitality while they are there, and their help in procuring the gift.

COMMAND #2: of our reason for boasting about you.

Phillips translates this verse:

So do let them, and all the churches, see how genuine is your love, and justify all the nice things we have said about you!

Plummer translates it:

Give them therefore a conspicuous proof of your affection and of the good reason that I have to be proud of you; so that the Churches from which they come may know how well you have behaved.

The Living Bible says:

Please show your love for me to these men and do for them all that I have publicly boasted you would.

The dominant two characteristics of these three men are:

1. EARNESTNESS OR ZEAL
2. DILIGENT

(II Corinthians by J. Vernon McGee)

Paul is asking for proof of their love. You see, friends, if you really mean business, there will be more than verbiage. Giving will be a tangible expression of your love.

I'm afraid there are a great many Christians who are like the young fellow who wrote to his girl: "I would cross the widest ocean for you. I'd swim the deepest river for you. I would scale the highest mountain for you. I'd crawl across the burning sands of the desert for you." Then he concluded with a P.S.: "If it doesn't rain Wednesday night, I'll be over to see you." A great many of us like to talk about how we love Jesus, but we are not willing to sacrifice much for Him.

p. 105

We are turning now to chap. 9 and looking at the first 5 verses. Here we are going to have spelled out the purpose of the delegation being sent on ahead.

v. 1 For it is superfluous for me to be writing to you about this ministry to the saints.

In view of all that has been said, it is superfluous, Paul says, to be writing to the Corinthians about this ministry to the saints. He calls giving to the collection for the poor saints a "ministry to the saints."

Phillips translates this first verse:

Of course I know it is really quite superfluous for me to be writing to you about this matter of giving to fellow Christians,

Plummer translates it:

For, in the first place, with regard to the ministration to the poor Christians at Jerusalem, it is really superfluous for me to be writing to you;

The Living Bible paraphrases it:

I realize that I really don't even need to mention this to you, about helping God's people.

- v. 2 For I am knowing your readiness, of which I am boasting about you to the Macedonians, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal stirred up the majority of them.

The apostle now states the reason for the fact that his writing is superfluous here in the second verse.

Phillips translates this verse:

For I know how willing you are. Indeed I have told the Macedonians with some pride that "Achaia was ready to undertake this service twelve months ago." Your enthusiasm has consequently been a stimulus to many of them.

Paul is saying: "I have been boasting to the Macedonians about you folks," and this forges a powerful argument because he has used the Macedonians back in chap. 8 as a powerful motivation for the Corinthians.

2 Cor. 8:1-5

Now, brethren, we are making known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed into the wealth of their liberality. For I am testifying that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty (earnestly) for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints. And not even as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

The way he used the Corinthians in Macedonia was to tell the folks in Macedonia that the Corinthians in Achaia had been prepared since last year, and then the fact that they had done this, their zeal and enthusiasm had stirred up the majority of the Macedonians to do what they had done.

Our Daily Bread for August 15 points out:

Proper motives are essential in Christian service. This is especially true in the giving of our money. The Lord is more concerned with why we give than with how much we give. We must have a right heart attitude. Therefore we should never give in order to receive the praise of others, but because we love God and desire to see His name honored and glorified.

An experience in the life of English preacher and theologian Andrew Fuller illustrates this truth. James Duff, in flashes of Truth, told of a time when Fuller went back to his hometown to collect money for foreign missions. One of his contacts was an old friend. When presented with the need, the man said, "Well, Andrew, seeing it's you, I'll give you five dollars." "No," said Fuller, "I can't take your money for my cause, seeing it is for me," and he handed the money back. They saw his point. "Andrew, you are right. Here's ten dollars, seeing it is for Jesus Christ." Duff concluded, "Let us

remember, it is not the amount we give toward helping the Lord's work; it is the motive He looks at."

When we have the opportunity to contribute to some worthy Christian cause, may we do so with the right purpose in mind. We should never give just because we feel obligated to organizations or persons, nor because we desire to receive selfish recognition or reward. The apostle Paul said, "every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." We should honestly say, "It's for the Lord!"

--R.W.D.

Give as you would to the Master
If you met His searching look;
Give as you would of your substance
If His hand the offering took.

God sees the heart, as well as the hand; the giver, as well as the gift.

v. 3 But I sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not lose its justification in this case, so that just as I was saying, you may be prepared;

Now the apostle explains why the three brethren are sent ahead of him to them. The purpose is stated here in the third verse:

In order that our boasting about you may not lose its justification in this case,

And then the final result is:

So that just as I was saying, you may be prepared;

Phillips says:

I am, however, sending the brothers just to make sure that our pride in you is not unjustified.

Plummer translates the 3rd verse:

And, in the second place, I am sending Titus and his two colleagues to make sure that my boasting about you is not stultified in this matter of the relief-fund; that you might be quite ready, as I used to tell the Macedonians that you were.

The Living Bible paraphrases:

But I am sending these men just to be sure that you really are ready, as I told them you would be, with your money all collected;

- v. 4 lest if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—(not asking of you)—should be put to shame by this confidence.

He has forged a powerful argument by the fact that the Macedonians have been so sacrificial and generous in what they have given. And now he just makes mention of the fact that there might be some Macedonians with him when he comes.

He then says how embarrassed they would be if they came and found the Corinthians unprepared.

1 John 2:28

And now, little children, abide in Him, so that if He should appear, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

Matt. 25:24-30

“And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away, and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.’ But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does shall be taken away. And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- v. 5 Therefore I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they should go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, that the same might be ready as a bountiful gift, and not a gift that is grudgingly granted by greed.

Here the apostle then summarizes everything with a THEREFORE, and tells us all that is involved in his thinking process:

“Therefore I thought it necessary to urge the brethren (Titus and his two buddies) that they should go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift (this is something that they had promised a year ago, and now it is time for them to get the things together) that the same might be ready as a bountiful gift, and not a gift that is grudgingly granted by greed.”

Phillips translates that last phrase:

I should like it to be a spontaneous gift, and not money squeezed out of you by what I have said.

The Living Bible says:

I want it to be a real gift and not look as if it were being given under pressure. Paul uses the term BOUNTIFUL GIFT twice in this 5th verse.

It is interesting that the apostle, when he is making reference to giving, speaks of it in five different way in the passage:

1. A GRACIOUS GIFT
2. A GENEROUS GIFT
3. A MINISTRY TO THE SAINTS
4. A BOUNTIFUL GIFT
5. A GIFT

(The Disciplines of Life by V. Raymond Edman)

The Discipline of Duty is not easy nor light, its performance is painful and perilous, but its culmination is delight.
p. 253

(Love for All Your Worth by Joseph C. Aldrich)

Richard Revere, a write for the New Yorker magazine for over thirty years, wrote his memoirs which he entitled "Final Reports." His conclusion, written days before his death in 1979, contains these words:

If I were applying for employment, I would have to describe myself as having spent the last year staving off death as a fireman puts down flames.

Oh, but I hate it...and fear it and find few words that reach the depths of my feelings...my character is being altered in ways I find unbearable to record. I seem to myself to become pettier and meaner and more selfish by the hour.

p. 119

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: God is in the business of putting things in our hearts.

LESSON #2: Titus is a SENSITIVE, SELF-MOTIVATED SERVANT.

LESSON #3: Giving is considered a gracious work.

LESSON #4: It is a good policy to be taking precaution when dealing with money.

LESSON #5: An important principle of handling money is to be certain that one is morally right, not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men.

LESSON #6: Are you diligent in your WALK, your WARFARE, and your WORK?

LESSON #7: Are you concerned about being a glory to Christ?

LESSON #8: God is not interest in a gift that is GRUDGINGLY GRANTED BY GREED.

(Spiritual Awakening, Sherwood Eliot Wirt, editor)

Trust then, His word with undoubting confidence; take His hand with humble gratitude, and with all your heart obey His voice, which you will ever hear, saying, "This is the way, walk therein." In sickness and in health, by night and by day, at home and in crowds, He will watch over you with tenderness inexpressible. He will make you lie down in green pastures, lead you beside the still waters, and guide you in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake. He will prepare a table before you in the presence of you enemies, and cause you cup to run over with blessings. When you pass through the waters of affliction He will be with you, and through the rivers they shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle on you. From their native heavens He will commission those charming twin sisters, goodness and mercy, to descend and "follow you all your days."

But if you wish God to be your guide and your friend, you must conform to His pleasure. Certainly you cannot wonder that the infinitely Wise One should prefer His own wisdom to yours, and that He should choose for His children their allotments, rather than leave them to choose for themselves. That part of His pleasure which you are to obey is all summed up in the single word duty, and it is perfectly disclosed in the Scriptures. The whole scheme is so formed as to be plain, easy, profitable, and delightful—profitable in hand, delightful in the possession. Every part and precept of the whole is calculated for this end, and will make you only wise, good, and happy.

-- Timothy Dwight

p. 153

(Make Haste My Beloved by Frances J. Roberts)

He Refreshes
My Soul

The Lord is my Provider, I have no need. He lets me rest in pleasant places. He guides me in a life of contemplation. He refreshes my soul. He teaches me the way of holiness for His glory. Yes, and when sorrow and trouble overtake me, and my life is endangered, He is my comfort and my strength. He disciplines and

instructs me in wisdom and patience. When surrounded by those who misunderstand and malign, He nourishes me with His love and kindness...He pours out His Spirit upon me: My joy abounds. Surely His mercy shall be my companion until I reach the end of my journey and enter the Father's house forever to abide in His presence.

Psalm 23, paraphrased

p. 93

(Days of Glory, Seasons of Night by Marilee P. Dunker)

"There was a time, not long ago, when my father, said to me, 'We'll be united in heaven, Honey. Our family will be together in heaven, all of us, perfectly. But I don't ever think it will happen here on earth.' At that time it had been nearly four years since we had been together as a family.

"But as you listen to what these wonderful men have said about my father, his ministry, and the work God did through him, I think you have to know that God wasn't going to let it end like that. You, see all aspects of life are important to God.

"And he was concerned with that little part of Daddy that belonged to us, too. And four days before Jesus took him home, my family was reunited.

"My father arranged for a beautiful hotel suite and called all of us and said, 'Come be with me.' Oh, it was a holy evening. It was a miracle of God. It was family. We laughed and joked and for the first time in over four years, my parents embraced. For us to see that, the reconciliation, the restoration, the victory over the vicious attempt of the enemy, was a miracle.

"I'm proud of my father. I said to my parents that evening, and I'll say to you and to them once again because I know Daddy's listening, "Thank you for being our parents. More than that, thank you for being willing to be so wounded, to give so much for the kingdom of God.'

"You see, everybody gets hurt. Everybody suffers in this world. But so many people suffer for no reason, for nothing of lasting significance or consequence. I'm proud that what we gave was for this cause, that Jesus might be glorified. And I praise Him for His faithfulness."

pp. 170-71

God Precisely Supplies a Woman's Need

Time was running out. I needed \$153.27 by 2 p.m. and it was already 1:30. I was confident that God would meet my need for this amount when the time came, but this was cutting it awfully close.

I sat in my car outside a restaurant where I had just eaten lunch with several ladies from my church. When it came time to pay for the meal, I picked up the tab of a guest missionary from Romania, using my last \$20.

God will provide my need, I said confidently to myself. But my certainty began to waver as the breeze blew through my car windows. No one else knew about my dilemma.

What should I do? Keys still clutched in my hand, I laid my head back against the headrest and thought of the verse in Matthew 17:27 that tells how Jesus' disciples needed money to pay their taxes. He told them to go out on the lake and the first fish they caught would have a coin in its mouth that would cover the amount they needed.

"Dear Lord," I prayed. "I need a fish soon. Please show me where to find the lake."

There was no doubt in my mind that God had provided the opportunity I'd been given to fly to Indianapolis, Indiana, with a physical therapist friend. We were to attend a workshop on "lymphodema" open only to doctors and physical therapists. I was neither.

But I suffered from this condition that caused tremendous swelling in my arm, a result of surgery for cancer. Because my physical therapist knew of the great interest I had in the subject, she arranged for me to attend with her. On top of that, every expense would be paid, except my plane fare of \$153.27.

I eagerly accepted her invitation and started asking God to help provide the money for me to go. I knew from the start it would take a miracle because our budget was stretched as tight as it could go toward medical bills incurred fighting the cancer. But it wasn't hard for me to believe in miracles – I was living proof!

Since God had chosen to heal me of cancer, but this condition remained, there must be a reason. Maybe he wanted to use me to help find a cure for this problem, which affects millions of people. Before me was a rare opportunity to research and learn more about the condition from a medical point of view.

I was to meet my friend in a half hour at the travel agency to pay for and pick up my plane ticket.

I glanced in my rear-view mirror and saw a small black sports car back out, then pull back into its parking space. As I watched, it backed out again and I recognized the driver as Beverly Easton, a lady from my luncheon group.

I wondered if she was having car trouble when she slowly drove out of the parking lot, circled the restaurant, and pulled back in again. This time she stopped in the middle of the lot, got out, and walked toward my car. Maybe she thinks I'm having car trouble. Beverly stuck her head through my open passenger window.

"I know you don't know me very well and I hope you don't think I'm crazy," she said. "I'm so embarrassed. Please don't be offended by this."

My curiosity was stirred. "What's the matter, Beverly?"

“Well,” she hesitated. “Several months ago God told me to put change in an envelope for you. I’ve just carried it around and been adding to it every day till I got the nerve to give it to you. I hope this isn’t insulting.”

Her face flamed red as she tossed a bulging envelope onto the car seat.

“I just have to obey God,” she mumbled, darting to her car before I could respond.

Makeup smudges and ink smears covered the once white envelope. On the front, my name was scribbled in big letters and there was a card inside explaining that she wasn’t sure why, but God had told her to give me this money. It was dated several months earlier. With tears in my eyes, I carefully emptied the contents out on the seat and started counting. There were bills of all denominations and lots of change.

The Bible says in Hebrews 13:8 that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. If he provided his followers in Bible days with what they needed, he can and will do the same for his followers today. What an awesome God he is.

This time he used a lady named Beverly, and an envelop. One that contained exactly \$153.27.