

Maintenance Required
Week 12
1 Corinthians 16

Intro: If you have ever owned a car, you have had to set aside money for a category called, “Preventative Maintenance”. It is what you do for your car to continue operating as it should and is in addition to any repairs it may require in the future.
Oil changes, tires, wiper blades, etc.

As Paul brings this letter to a close, he closes out with several “preventative” items to help them stay on track (after they make the corrections to their assembly he has called out in the letter).

Remember the many problems Paul has addressed throughout this letter. The church had been plagued by **division, carnality, disorder, and other problems**, yet Paul expected them to receive his correction, move forward as a church, and continue fulfilling their God-given responsibilities.

In his closing, Paul highlights how to “keep on track” with simple decisions and examples.

I. Money Matters Matter for Every Member- Vs. 1–4

- In the opening verses of this chapter, Paul is exercising his apostolic authority concerning the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem.
 - In **2 Corinthians 11**, Paul spoke of his many hardships and trials and then said that, besides all these things, he had “*the care of all the churches.*” This was part of his responsibility as an apostle.
 - The specific context here is the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem.
 - The church at Jerusalem was the first church and, at one time, was large and prosperous. **Acts 2:44–45** shows believers bringing their possessions and giving to meet one another’s needs. However, **Acts 8:1** records the great persecution that scattered the church. As a result, the believers in Jerusalem experienced tremendous hardship.
 - The churches of Galatia and Macedonia were working together to help the Jerusalem church during this time of need.
- Although Paul is addressing a particular collection for a particular situation, the principles he gives concerning giving are applicable to churches today.
 - **Give With Regularity-** “Upon the first day of the week...”
 - **John 20:19**
 - **Acts 20:7**
 - These passages, along with the historical record of early Christianity, demonstrate that the first day of the week became the regular day of assembly for believers—the Lord’s Day.
 - **Give According to Prosperity-** “As God hath prospered him...”

- **God should get His first.**
 - **Proverbs 3:9** “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase.”
 - This means: God gets His before Uncle Sam gets his. God gets His before anyone or anything else. Giving to God should be a priority, not an afterthought.
- **How much should we give?**
 - Paul teaches that giving should be **proportionate to how God has blessed and prospered us** and in a manner that demonstrates sacrifice and a need for grace.
 - It shouldn’t be about “how much I have to” but “how much can I possibly”.
 - **2 Corinthians 9:5–8**- “As a man purposeth in his heart, so let him give...”
 - A person who is genuinely concerned with God's will should prayerfully determine what he will give.
- **Giving Through the Church**
 - Paul was writing to the **church at Corinth** about an offering involving the **churches of Galatia** and the **church at Jerusalem**.
 - The churches were involved in collecting, managing, and distributing the offering.
 - **Everyone was expected to participate.**- “Let every one of you...” This was a **total church effort**.
 - It was not just the responsibility of a few wealthy people. Everyone was to participate.

II. Receptivity to Church Leadership is Normal- Vs. 5–12

- Paul now moves from the matter of giving to his plans, his fellow workers, and the Corinthians' attitude toward leadership.
 - Remember that Paul is writing from **Ephesus**.
 - Paul planned to come to Corinth, but he did not know exactly when he would arrive or how long he would stay.
 - He might remain through the winter—or he might not.
 - Why was Paul uncertain about his plans? **Verse 7**-“...if the Lord permit.”
 - Paul was willing to submit his plans to the will of God.
 - **Group Leader Remind:** Never become so committed to your own schedule and plans that you leave no room for God to intervene.
 - We should plan, but always remain willing to say:
 - James 4:13-17- “If the Lord permit.”

- Why Paul did not immediately come — verses 8–9
 - Paul remained at Ephesus for two important reasons.
 - **A great opportunity was before him.**- “For a great and effectual door is opened unto me...”
 - Paul saw a tremendous opportunity to reach people with the Gospel.
 - Ephesus was one of the great cities of the ancient world and was a major center of the worship of the goddess Diana.
 - Many people would have looked at Ephesus and seen an intimidating, difficult place.
 - Paul looked at it and saw **an opportunity**.
 - **There were many adversaries.**-“...and there are many adversaries.”
 - To some people, opposition would have been a reason to leave Ephesus.
 - To Paul, opposition did not automatically mean he was outside the will of God.
 - Wherever Paul followed God's leading, he encountered adversity.
- Paul's Words Concerning Two Fellow Laborers- Vs.- **10–12**
 - Concerning Timothy — verses 10–11- Do not give Timothy reason to be afraid.
 - Paul tells the Corinthians to make sure Timothy could minister among them without fear.
 - No doubt this connects with the divisions Paul had already addressed concerning their attitudes toward different preachers.
 - Paul had already confronted their tendency to identify themselves with different leaders:
 - “I am of Paul.”
 - “I am of Apollos.”
 - “I am of Cephas.”
 - Paul does not want Timothy to become another source of division.
 - **Treat Timothy respectfully**- Paul tells them to receive Timothy as they would receive Paul himself.
 - Why? Because both Timothy and Paul were serving the same Lord.
 - **The servant may be different, but the Lord is the same.**
 - **Concerning Apollos — verse 12**- Paul also speaks concerning Apollos.
 - Notice Paul's respect for Apollos and for Apollos' own decisions.
 - Paul did not demand that Apollos do exactly what he wanted or see him as “competition”.

- He expected the Corinthians to respond to his spiritual care as they should and would his own as the apostle.
- **Group leader ask:** What should our attitude be towards the pastors in our church or the older saints when they help us spiritually?

III. Unwavering Commitment- Vs.-13–24

- Paul concludes the chapter with several brief but powerful exhortations.
- **A Call for Steadfastness — verses 13–14-** “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”
 - These believers had experienced division, carnality, doctrinal confusion, and moral problems.
 - Paul's closing challenge is not- “Give up.”
 - It is: **Stand fast. Be strong. Remain faithful.** “Let all your things be done with charity.” Stand firmly, but do so with love.
 - His expectation, due to God’s grace, is that they will endure any hardships, make any changes necessary, and adapt to whatever is needed for the Gospel.
- **A Family Addicted to the Lord's Work — verses 15–16**
 - Paul commends the household of Stephanas and uses them as an example for the Corinthians to follow.
 - They had **“addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.”**
 - This is the kind of commitment every church needs.
 - They were not merely church attendees.
 - They had given themselves to serving others.
 - Group leader remind: The church needs people who are committed, dependable, willing to serve, willing to sacrifice, and willing to put the needs of others ahead of themselves.
- **Final Words of Encouragement— verses 17–24**
 - Paul closes with personal greetings and final words of encouragement.
 - Even after dealing with serious problems, Paul closes this letter with love and grace.
 - He has corrected them because he cared about them.
 - He expected them to respond to the correction and continue serving the Lord together.

Conclusion: Paul closes 1 Corinthians by reminding the church of several practical truths:

Give faithfully and consistently.

Give according to how God has prospered you.

Support the work of the church through the church.

Remain receptive to godly leadership.

Be willing to follow God's leading, even when the future is uncertain.

Do not mistake adversity for evidence that you are outside God's will.

Respect fellow servants of Christ, even when there are differences.
Stand firm in the faith.
Let everything be done in love.
Give yourself to the work of the Lord.

The Corinthian church had problems that required correction, but Paul believed those problems could be addressed and the church could move forward.

Maintenance was required—but the purpose of maintenance was not to tear the church down. It was to get the church healthy, functioning, faithful, and useful for the Lord.