


Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

Welcome Titus and His Companions

¹⁶I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus [Tīe-tüss] the same concern I have for you. ¹⁷For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative.

Q1. Was Titus well-regarded (of good reputation, respected, trusted) by the Corinthian Church?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? }

2 Corinthians 2:13 [NIV-1984]

¹²Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, ¹³I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So, I said good-bye to them and went on to Macedonia.

2 Corinthians 7:5-7 [NIV-1984]

⁵For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn — conflicts on the outside, fears within. ⁶But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

Lesson 10: 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 & 9:1-15

¹⁸ And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. ¹⁹ What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help.

Q2. (Verse 18) (Speculation) Who is “the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel”?



It would be easy for us to get sidetracked into identifying the unnamed brother. Many commentators opine that the Apostle Paul is referring to Doctor Luke, who wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

We are sending along with him the brother: Commentator Albert Barnes provided this analysis: “It has been generally supposed that this anonymous brother was Luke. Some have supposed however that it was Mark, others that it was Silas or Barnabas. It is impossible to determine with certainty who it was; nor is it material to know. Whoever it was, it was someone well known, in whom the church at Corinth could have entire confidence. It is remarkable that though Paul mentions him again [in] 2 Corinthians 12:18, he does it also in the same manner, without specifying his name. The only circumstances that can throw any light on this are:

“(1) That Luke was the companion and intimate friend of Paul, and attended him in his travels. From Acts 16:10-11, where Luke uses the term ‘we,’ it appears that he was with Paul when he first went into Macedonia, and from Acts 16:15 it is clear that he went with Paul to Philippi. From Acts 17:1, where Luke alters his style and uses the term ‘they,’ it is evident that he did not accompany Paul and Silas when they went to Thessalonica, but either remained at Philippi or departed to some other place. He did not join them again until they went to Troas on the way to Jerusalem; Acts 20:5. In what manner Luke spent the interval is not known. [Commentator] Macknight supposes that it might have been in multiplying copies of his gospel for the use of the churches. Perhaps also he might have been engaged in preaching, and in services like that in the case before us.

“(2) it seems probable that Luke is the person referred to by the phrase ‘*who is praised by all the churches.*’ This would be more likely to be applied to one who had written a gospel (. . . [about the] life of the Redeemer) that had been extensively circulated, than to any other person. Still, it is by no means certain that he is the person here referred to, nor is it of material consequence.

Who is praised: “Who is well known and highly esteemed.

Service to the gospel: “Either for writing the gospel, or for preaching the gospel. The Greek will bear either construction. In some way he was celebrated for making known the truths of the gospel.” [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/8-18.htm]

Q3. (Verses 18 & 19) Was this unnamed brother highly-regarded, trusted, respected? How do we know? (Hint: to what did Paul testify?)

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer? Thoughts?
No? }

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²⁰ We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift.
²¹ For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.

Q4. Why is the Apostle Paul so concerned about “criticism” in this situation?


Q5. When transporting money from Corinth to Jerusalem, what are some worries that Paul and his companions must mitigate? (Hints: Should they leave Corinth in secret ^{Y/N}? Can they hire an armored truck ^{Y/N}? Can they be escorted by Roman soldiers ^{Y/N}? Must they worry about embezzlement ^{Y/N}? Or highway robbery ^{Y/N}? Other worries ^{Y/N}?)

Q6. Would they saturate everything (e.g., preparations, safety, selection of couriers, selection of route, etc.) in prayer?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? }

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Day 2


 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.


²²In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. ²³As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. ²⁴Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.


Q7. (Verse 22) ***we are sending with them our brother***: Do we know the name of the brother?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? }

 The commentators had a field day with identifying this “brother”. The following are examples from two different commentators.


 ***We are sending with them our brother***: Commentator Albert Barnes wrote, “Who this was is wholly unknown; and conjecture is useless. Some have supposed that it was Apollos, others Silas, others Timothy. But there are no means of ascertaining who it was; nor is it material. It was someone in whom Paul had entire confidence.” [©1834, Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/8-22.htm]

 ***We are sending with them our brother***: Commentator Matthew Poole wrote, “This brother is uncertainly guessed at, nor is it at all material for us to know whether it were Epenetus, or Apollos, or Sosthenes, or any other; it is sufficient for us to know, that he was a brother, and one of whose diligence and faithfulness the apostle, and the churches where Paul now was, had had experience; and that he was now very ready and forward to be employed in this service, upon the apostle’s recommendation of this church unto him.” [© about 1667, *Commentary on the Holy Bible* by Matthew Poole; Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/8-22.htm]

 One commentator used the word “courier” to describe these men. It is a great word that describes their role as escort, guard, carrier, and emissary.

These couriers would be responsible for transporting and guarding a fortune (by their standards) in contributions from Corinth to Jerusalem. The direct route via air travel from Corinth to Jerusalem is 817 miles (1,315 km). These couriers had to choose: travel by road or by ship. If the couriers chose to travel some or all of the distance via road or, if the ship had to go around some intervening islands or had been blown off-course by a storm, then we must add some unknown number of miles (kilometers) for the detour.

This would be a momentous, difficult, and dangerous trip. Prayers to God for guidance, continued protection, and safe travel would have been critical. The contributions would have to be disguised, because a locked treasure chest would be obvious. Perhaps, the safest and most direct mode of transportation would be by ship across the northeastern Mediterranean Sea to Jerusalem. Even so, the contributions, the fortune, would be subject to theft when loading or unloading the cargo . . . or piracy on the high seas . . . or simply lost in a storm. Overland travel would be anxiety-ridden with marauding thieves menacing the roads by day, or opportunistic thieves stealthily sneaking into their campsites at night and spiriting-away their backpacks, or delayed by a broken wheel on the pushcart (they certainly couldn’t whip-out their cellphone and call an 800-number for tire service).

 An organization named Meander Travel of Turkey (Meander Turizm A.S. in Turkey) wrote an essay which is available at https://meandertravel.com/biblical_asia_minor/biblical_asia_minor.php?details=travelandtransport&m=2&md=sc2. The secular writer describes the possible travel considerations and conditions the Apostle Paul and his team encountered on


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their travel to Jerusalem. It is interesting, speculative reading — especially the writer’s descriptions of the Roman roads in the first century.

Q8. (Verse 22) ***Who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous:*** (Speculation) How might this “brother . . . [have] proved to [them]. . . that he [was] zealous” and that he was trustworthy? Can you imagine any examples that he may have demonstrated? (What qualities do you demonstrate that might prove to another that you are a Believer?)

Q9. (Verse 24) ***Show these men the proof of your love:*** How do you interpret Paul’s request: what is the “proof of your love”?

Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

CHAPTER 9


Collection Arrangements

^{9:1} There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints.

Q10. ***To the saints:*** Who are the “saints” Paul references?

Believers? Nonbelievers? Gentiles? Jews? Others? Please circle your answer(s).

Q11. ***This service:*** What is the “service” Paul references?

 “The duty of ministering to the saints is so plain, that there would seem no need to exhort Christians to it; yet self-love contends so powerfully against the love of Christ, that it is often necessary to stir up their minds by way of remembrance.” [©1706, Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible by Matthew Henry; https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/9-1.htm]

Q12. How do you define “charity”? [see next page]

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Charity defined

1. donations or generous actions to aid the poor, ill, or helpless.
2. a charitable act or work.
3. a charitable fund, foundation, or institution.
4. benevolent feeling, esp. toward those in need: to do something out of charity.
5. leniency in judging others; forbearance.
6. alms.
7. Christian love; agapé.

[Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary, © 2010 K Dictionaries Ltd. Copyright 2005, 1997, 1991 by Random House, Inc. All rights reserved. Copyright © 2003-2025 Farlex, Inc, <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/charity>]

Q13. *This service to the saints:* Paul has been emphasizing benevolence to “the saints”. Do Believers also have an obligation of charity to nonbelievers? How about charity for the: Victims of disasters (e.g., tornadoes, earthquakes) ^{Y/N?} Needy in your local church ^{Y/N?} Needy in your community ^{Y/N?} Needy in foreign countries (if you say “no”, do you contribute to Samaritans’ Purse) ^{Y/N?} Missionary work ^{Y/N?} Victims of famine ^{Y/N?} Red Cross emergency blood drives ^{Y/N?} Other examples?

Do Believers have an obligation of charity? Y/N? Thoughts?

For victims of disasters Y/N? Thoughts?

For the needy in your local church Y/N? Thoughts?

For the needy in your community Y/N? Thoughts?

For the needy in foreign countries (if you say “no”, do you contribute to Samaritans’ Purse) Y/N? Thoughts?

For missionary work Y/N? Thoughts?


For victims of famine Y/N? Thoughts?

For Red Cross emergency blood drives Y/N? Thoughts?

Other examples?

Deuteronomy 15:11 [NIV-1984]

There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be openhanded [i.e., generous, unselfish] toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.

 “God told the Israelites to help the poor among them when they arrived in the Promised Land. This was an important part of possessing the land. Many people conclude that people are poor through some fault of their own. This kind of reasoning makes it easy to close their hearts and hands to the needy. But we are not to invent reasons for ignoring the poor. We are to respond to their needs no matter who or what was responsible for their condition [we are not to judge (James 2:9-10; 1 Corinthians 5:12-13)]. Who are the poor in your community? How could your church help them? If your church does not have a program to identify the poor and assist in filling their needs, why not start one? What can you do to help someone in need?” [©1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, *The Life Application® Study Bible - NIV*, published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved. Page 302]

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Psalms 41:1 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble, the Lord delivers him.

Proverbs 14:21 [NIV-1984]

He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.

Proverbs 29:7 [NIV-1984]

The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

Galatians 2:10 [NIV-1984]

[In his letter to the Galatian church, Paul repeated a request he received from an Apostle of the Jerusalem church.]

All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

James 2:5-8, 26 [NIV-1984]

⁵ Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? ⁶ But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong? ⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. . . .

²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Q14. How does your church demonstrate "Love thy neighbor"? To Believers? To nonbelievers?

To Believers?

To nonbelievers?

Mark 20:28-31 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came to Jesus. He heard Jesus arguing with the Sadducees and the Pharisees. He saw that Jesus gave good answers to their questions. So, he asked Jesus, "Which of the commands is most important?"

²⁹ Jesus answered, "The most important command is this: 'Listen, people of Israel! The Lord our God, he is the only Lord. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' [Deuteronomy 6:4-5]. ³¹ The second most important command is this: 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' [Leviticus 19:18]. These two commands are the most important commands."

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Q15. If your government reduces contributions of food and aid to famine-ravaged countries/regions, how do you as a Believer (perhaps through your church) fill the void? Thoughts?

Mark 14:7 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

[Jesus said,]

For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me.

Matthew 26:11 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus said,]

The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me.

Q16. When Jesus was active in His earthly ministry, did He limit His mercy and charity to Believers, only?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? }

Q17. Do these Words of Jesus (“you always have the poor with you”) free you from any obligation to help alleviate the sufferings of the poor, those dying from famine?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? }



“Our Lord's words also show, that there will be always poor persons in the world; that there will be always such with his people, and in his churches; for God has chosen, and he calls such by his grace; so that men may always have opportunities of showing kindness and respect to such [people]: in Mark it is added, "whenever you want, you can do good for them", Mark 14:7 [↑]; by relieving their wants, and distributing to their necessities”. [©about 1760, *Exposition of the Entire Bible* by John Gill. Text Courtesy of Internet Sacred Texts Archive. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/26-11.htm>]



If someone is dying of starvation, how does a member of the greater Church of Christ Jesus ever hope to convince that person in the saving grace of Christ Jesus? If my belly is empty, I don't care about my salvation! I barely have the energy to raise my head. I cannot think clearly. I am only focused on the dull-ache in my belly; in my fitful slumber my dreams picture a few morsels of food and drops of water. . . and then I awaken. If I am a mother with a baby, I am worried that my breast milk is not enough and my poor precious baby will slowly starve to death here in my arms.

Jesus gave us Believers the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20 ↓). What talents has God given you, given me? What am I doing today? What can I do tomorrow? Personally, what am I doing to fulfill the Great Commission?

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Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV-1984]

[The Great Commission]

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 25:35-40 [NIV-1984]

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Luke 10:25-37 [NIV-1984]

[The story of the Good Samaritan]

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷ He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' ; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

³¹ A [Jewish] priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite [a member of the lineage of the Jewish priestly tribe of Levi], when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

³³ But a Samaritan [a non-Jew, a Gentile], as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

³⁶ "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

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2 Thessalonians 3:10-13 [NIV-1984]

[From the Apostle Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians. Apparently, some Believers were capable of work, but lazed-around, living day-to-day out of the generosity of their brothers and sisters. Other Believers judged — the ones working — and came to resent the 'free-loader'. Remember, we are to judge those inside the church, not those outside (1 Corinthians 5:12 ↓).]

¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."
¹¹ We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. ¹² Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. ¹³ And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13^a [NIV-1984]

¹² What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?
^{13a} God will judge those outside.

Luke 3:11 [NIV-1984]

John answered, "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same."

Matthew 5:40-47 [NIV-1984]

⁴⁰ And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?

Luke 6:27-33, 36, 38 [NIV-1984]

²⁷ "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. . . .


³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. . . .

³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Q18. (Personal) How do you demonstrate "Love thy neighbor"?


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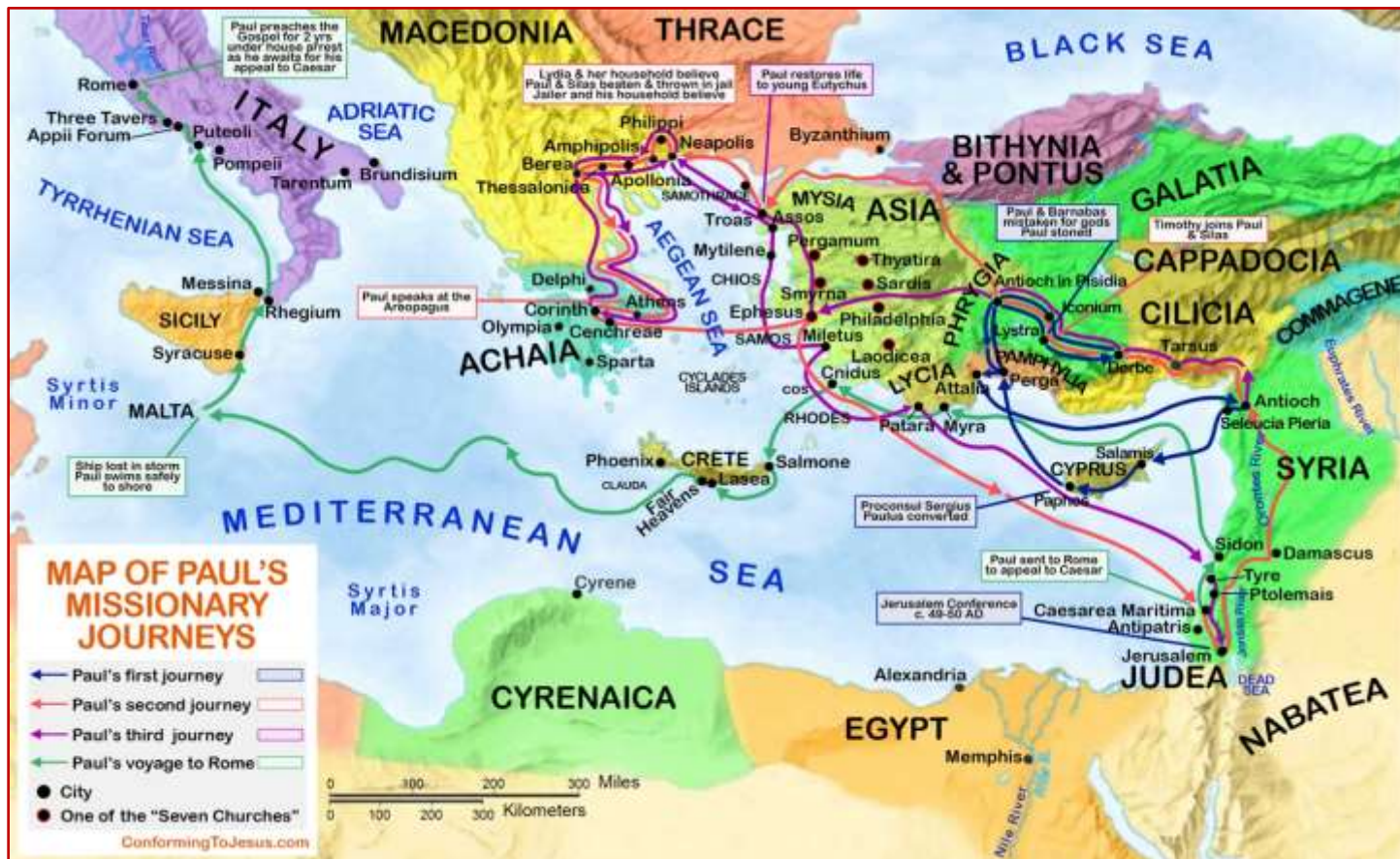
Q19. *There is no need for me to write:* Why is Paul acknowledging that “there is no need . . . to write”?

 The Apostle Paul seems to be acknowledging that he has exhausted his arguments in favor of collecting benevolent offerings, of which the total would then be transported to Jerusalem for the purpose of maintaining the Jerusalem Church, the ministry of the apostles, widows, and orphans. Paul knows human nature and has mixed emotions: on one hand Paul is filled with a hopeful certainty that the Corinthians will abundantly give to the Jerusalem church, while on the other hand is anxious that human nature — out of sight, out of mind — will reduce their giving.

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Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.



Near the left-center of the map is the City of Corinth, which is part of Achaia (Greece).

North of Achaia is Macedonia, including the cities (and churches) of Berea, Thessalonica, and Philippi.

Across the Aegean Sea to the east is Asia (Mysia) and the City of Ephesus, which is one of the seven churches listed in Revelation 2-3.

© https://www.conformingtojesus.com/images/webpages/pauls_journeys_map1.jpg

²For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians [Mäss-ě-dōugh-knēē-āns], telling them that since last year you in Achaia [Āh-kāy-āhh] were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action.

^{3a}But I am sending the brothers in order ^{3b}that our boasting about you ^{3c}in this matter should not prove hollow, ^{3d}but that you may be ready, ^{3e}as I said you would be.

Q20. Please locate Achaia and Macedonia on the map.

Thoughts?

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Q21. (Verse 3) While Paul continues to encourage the Corinthians, in each phrase (verses 3c and 3d) Paul expresses a concern. What are the concerns?

3c:

3d:

⁴For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we — not to say anything about you — would be ashamed of having been so confident.

⁵So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

Q22. (Verse 5) Do you give to the Lord (and to your church) from a sense of obligation or from a cheerful generosity?

Q23. (Personal) You work hard for your income (maybe you even work two or three jobs); sometimes work itself is a struggle; sometimes trying to find that balance between work and family feels insurmountable; sometimes life itself feels like an endless, joyless merry-go-round. With all of the competing pressures for your attention, your time, your skills, your presence: Do you thank God? For Him? For your family? For your friends? For your employment? For your retirement income? For your skills (talents)?



When we face pressures of life, we can lose focus on what is important. It would be easy to list Bible verses; but that doesn't really help when we are in the fog of despair. This commentator readily admits that the struggles of life are real and at times insurmountable — 'been there, done that'. There always seems to be a lack of money for the things either I need or the needs of my family. The car has an insatiable thirst for expensive gasoline; the kids are outgrowing their sneakers; it seemed that yesterday the bottoms of their trousers brushed their shoe laces, now those same trousers look like Bermuda shorts; there never seems to be enough food in the refrigerator; my son, my daughter just exclaimed that he/she needs a new video game, a new Barbie doll, and will just 'die if he/she doesn't get it'; allowances; lunch money; school fees; rent/mortgage, auto/home/health/life insurance payments; doctor and prescription co-pays; and on and on. The pressure is real!

We need to seek God through our prayers. We are tempted to pray, "God, if I can get just a little more money, my problems will be so much easier to handle. Amen." God wants — more than anything — for us to trust Him, to love Him. Our trust demonstrates our love to Him! And, if I pray a prayer of 'trust' on one particularly stressful day, does that single prayer demonstrate 'trust'? Or is it a hoped-for plea of last resort?

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Frankly, we need to thank God for everything in all circumstances as the Apostle Paul exhorted the Philippians in Philippians 4:6-7 “Do not worry about anything. But pray and ask God for everything you need. And when you pray, always give thanks. [ICB]”. Sometimes, in our hearts we believe that our circumstances must change, but God in His infinite wisdom and in response to our prayers may simply change our hearts, while the physical circumstances remain the same — we now see things differently!

Despite television advertisements that promote the ‘Easy Button,’ life is not ‘easy’. If only I could press an ‘Easy Button’ when my monthly income falls short; or I have disagreements with my spouse, my teenager, my boss. If only . . .



Life is not easy. Our belief in the Lord Christ Jesus is not easy. We are not promised ‘easy’! God uses circumstances in this world, in our lives, to grow our faith (if we look for it, we’ll see the results). Jesus promised that “In this world [we] will have trouble [John 16:33 (↓)]”. And then He added, “But take heart! I have overcome the world!”. He can use the deepest, blackest times in our lives to further His glory. A new Believer, who is a former nonbelieving drug addict, can use his/her bleakest experiences to minister to another; to help that person see God’s Light. My convoluted faith journey can demonstrate to another God’s abundant patience and love. God’s forgiveness of my sins demonstrates to another that his/her excuse of “My sins are too many, too terrible; God would never forgive me” is a lie.

God is a gentleman and will not force Himself upon anyone. Faith is a choice. Faith is demonstrated through action, a gentle conversation, listening, helping, ministering, understanding, being present, showing mercy, demonstrating compassion, being a non-judgmental moral rock.

“Co-incidence is a God-incidence in disguise.” [\[https://www.tremain.us/index.html\]](https://www.tremain.us/index.html)

“Coincidence is God’s way to remain anonymous!” [generally attributed to Albert Einstein]

John 16:33 [NIV-1984]

³³ "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

2 Peter 2:9 [NIV-1984]

if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

James 1:2-4 [NIV-1984]


² Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 2:17, 26 [NIV-1984]

¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. . . ²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Lesson 10: 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 & 9:1-15

Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

God Loves a Cheerful Giver

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Q24. How would you simply restate verse 6?

^{8a} And God is able to make all grace abound to you, ^{8b} so that in all things at all times, ^{8c} having all that you need, ^{8d} you will abound in every good work.

Q25. What promises do you find in the following phrases of verse 8?

^{8a}:

^{8c}:

^{8d}:

Lesson 10: 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 & 9:1-15


⁹ As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." ¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

Q26. What is the difference between parsimony [pär-sĩ-mōe-knēē] and generosity?

Define parsimony:


Define generosity:

Difference?

 Definition for parsimony (pär'sə-mō'nē)

extreme or excessive economy or frugality; stinginess.

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 Definition for generosity (jēn'ə-rōs'ĩ-tē)

1. willingness and liberality in giving away one's money, time, etc; magnanimity
2. freedom from pettiness in character and mind
3. a generous act
4. abundance; plenty

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Q27. ***He has scattered abroad his gifts:*** Does the word “gifts” always refer to money? (See verse 10)

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer? And if no, please provide examples:
No? }

 ***As it is written:*** refers to Psalm 112:9 (↓). “The [Apostle Paul’s] idea is, ‘in this way will the saying in the Scriptures be verified, or the promise confirmed.’ The psalmist is describing the character of the righteous man. One of his characteristics, he says, is, that he has scattered abroad, he has given liberally to the poor. On such a man a blessing is pronounced Psalm 112:1 (↓); and one of the blessings will be that he shall be prospered.

“Some difficulty has been felt by commentators to see how the quotation here made sustains the position of Paul that the liberal man would be blessed of God, and would receive an increase according to his liberality. In order to this, they have supposed . . . that the word ‘righteousness’ means the same as almsgiving, or that ‘he would always have something to bestow.’

“But I would suggest that perhaps Paul quoted this, as quotations are frequently made in the Scriptures, where a passage was familiar. He quotes only a part of the passage, meaning that the whole passage confirms the point under consideration. Thus, the whole passage in the psalm is, ‘He hath dispersed; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth forever; his horn [dignity, honor] shall be exalted with honor; [KJV]’ that is, he shall be abundantly blessed with prosperity and with the favor of God. Thus, the entire promise sustains the position of Paul, that the liberal man would be abundantly blessed. The phrase ‘he hath dispersed’ Ἐσκόρπισεν Eskorpisen, may refer either to the act of sowing, as a man scatters seed on the earth; or there may be an allusion to the oriental custom of scattering money among an assembled company of paupers; compare Proverbs 11:24 (↓).” [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/9-9.htm]

Lesson 10: 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 & 9:1-15

Psalm 112:9 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; his horn is exalted in honor.

Psalm 112:1 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

Praise the Lord! Happy is the person who fears the Lord. He loves what the Lord commands.

Proverbs 11:24 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.

Q28. Are we, who believe, to judge the worthiness (merit) of the recipient(s) of our generosity?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? }

1 Corinthians 5:12-13^a [NIV-1984]

[The Apostle Paul writes:]

¹² What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?

^{13a} God will judge those outside.

Q29. (Even though this is an imaginary situation, 'my brother' could represent any person: a Believer, an unbeliever, your adult child, your cousin, a destitute mother, a 'neighbor'.) This is a 'thorny' scenario: my brother, who does not believe in the saving grace of our Lord Christ Jesus, is always asking me for money. I have given him money in obedience to Matthew 25:35-40 (↓). Should I cut him off? If yes, when? Do any Bible verses provide guidance? Does 2 Thessalonians 3:10-13 (↑ page 10) provide guidance?

Matthew 22:35-40 [NIV-1984]

³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."



A person through no fault of their own can find themselves in dire financial straits due to an unforeseen medical expense, loss of employment, storm damage, or a major car repair. God can use these experiences to cause a person, who has exclaimed, "I will never take a handout!", to humbly ask for assistance or for the miserly to open their wallet in compassion and generosity.

Lesson 10: 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 & 9:1-15


A pastor provided this insight into the administration of their church's 'care fund' charity, which is the church's charity to the destitute within the church and in the local community. The charity, including its funding, requests for assistance, discussions surrounding the requests, and approved gifts are saturated in prayer.

The gift approvals are generally determined by a committee of five members. Normally, each week the committee members meet, pray, and collectively, with much care and compassion, discuss how best to meet the needs and circumstances of those requesting assistance. (It should be noted that each committee member carries small gift cards for grocery or gas, which may be given to someone who is experiencing an immediate need; the gift is given on-the-spot and does not require the pre-approval of other committee members.)

The committee will also review the requesting person's budget of income and expenses, and, if needed, provide budget training, or recommend that a particular non-profit organization or governmental service might provide additional on-going assistance.

The committee members recognize that there are unlimited needs, to be answered with limited funds. If they do not carefully administer the funds entrusted to their oversight, one person, who is allowed to become dependent upon the generosity of the 'care fund', could single-handedly overwhelm the fund with endless, urgent needs.

Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

¹¹ You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

¹² This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.


Q30. ***You will be made rich:*** Is the Holy Spirit, through the writings of Paul, promising to you and me that we will become wealthy?

Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

.....

.....

.....

 The design of the apostle is to state to [the Corinthians] the true reason why wealth was bestowed. It was not for the purposes of luxury and self-gratification; not to be spent in sensual enjoyment; not for parade and display; it was that it might be distributed to others in such a way as to cause thanksgiving to God. At the same time, this implies the expression of an earnest wish on the part of Paul. He did not desire that they should be rich for their own gratification or pleasure; he desired it only as the means of their doing good to others. Right feeling will desire property only as the means of promoting happiness and producing thanksgiving to God. They who truly love their children and friends will wish them to be successful in acquiring wealth only that they may have the means and the disposition to alleviate misery, and promote the happiness of all around them. No one who has true benevolence will desire that anyone in whom he feels an interest should be enriched for the purpose of living amidst luxury, and encompassing himself with the indulgences which wealth can furnish. If a man has not a disposition to do good with money, it is not true benevolence to desire that he may not possess it. [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/9-11.htm]

Lesson 10: 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 & 9:1-15

Q31. Supplying the needs of God's people: Who are “God's people”?



Satan spreads lies. He is the father of lies! [John 8:44] What are some lies he spreads? This list is a sample: When I die, I die; there is no life after death? God grades on a curve? I'm not as bad as my neighbor? I'm a pretty good person and I just feel that I'm going to Heaven? God is a liar? Followers of Christ Jesus are the worst hypocrites? If there is a God, why does He allow such horrific misery in this world? Evolution is a scientific fact, not a theory? The Bible is fiction? I'm not good enough?

We, who believe, are God's hands, feet, and voice in this world. God loves you and me (1 John 4:9-10)! God wants all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). It was God's choice to give us humans a free-will choice to love and accept Him (and His plan of salvation), or to reject Him. Many will accept His loving offer of salvation; others will reject the Savior outright; while others will make no choice, which is the same as rejecting the Savior and embracing Satan.

God's plan required that His beloved Son Christ Jesus would introduce the Gospel of salvation to His creation – to you and me, to those who came before us, and to those who will come after. Firstly, God's loving Son Christ Jesus preached and demonstrated God's love and His plan of salvation through acts that demonstrated an absolute obedience to His Father (Philippians 2:5-11 ↓ Last page). Secondly, God's plan of salvation uses Believers in Christ Jesus to spread the Gospel message to children born into our families (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4) and to our unbelieving contemporaries (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 1:16, 20; Romans 10:17).

In life we are always confronted with choices. While we humans take pride in our knowledge (1 Corinthians 1:25), wealth, and societal standing, some choices we make are more consequential than others. The most consequential choice to believe in the saving grace of Christ Jesus is a choice made by an individual for the individual (Romans 10:8-11); a parent or loved one cannot make the decision for the person.

We must remember that God will judge us based upon a pass/fail grade: do you, do I, believe in Jesus . . . or not? It is not a difficult decision, it is either yes or no, accept or reject. So many people seem to think the decision is difficult — again, it is either yes . . . or no. Pretty simple. While it is not a difficult choice at all, it does have a profound consequence for your life, for your eternal life!

Luke 16:19-31 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus taught this story about the 'rich man' and a destitute beggar named Lazarus.]

¹⁹ "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day.

²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

²⁵ "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

²⁷ "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

²⁹ "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

³⁰ " 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

³¹ "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

Lesson 10: 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 & 9:1-15

¹³ Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

Q32. *[People] will praise God for . . . [you]*: How do we know that Paul's words came true?

¹⁴ And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Q33. *Surpassing grace God has given you*: what is the “surpassing grace”?

Q34. [Personal] *Surpassing grace God has given you*: Have you received this “surpassing grace”?

Yes? } Why did you circle that answer?
No? }

Q35. *Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift*: what is “His indescribable gift”?

Philippians 2:5-11 [NIV-1984]

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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