

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be made bold or numbered for emphasis.

I Corinthians 16: What Does Labor With God Look Like?

I Corinthians 16 addressed final issues in godly labor. For example, a guideline was given to the Corinth Church on how to financially support ministries: *"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."* (Vs. 2)

If they chose to prepare ahead, it would relay a purposeful attitude of steadfast love, freely given. This is liberality, laboring together with the Father, through the Lord Jesus. A few additional things can be noticed in this verse: 1) 'Every one of them' had opportunity to partake. 2) God was the one 'who had prospered them' in all they had. 3) Paul did not want any collections done when he arrived. Why? He wanted it to be a grace motive. The flesh would tend to do it, in order to be seen of men or for other fleshly reasons.

Chapter 16 winds up this book with a summary statement: *"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."* (Vs. 13) To get firmly on the right path, these saints needed to stay strong in sound doctrine and begin living their convictions in the Word, walking by faith in selfless love. In *Verses 15-18*, a final, powerful example was set before the Corinthians. It was the house of Stephanas, a group of faithful ministers helping and laboring with Paul, even being addicted to the ministry.

To Do: How can *I Corinthians 16* help you to live out your faith, putting aside the never-ending fleshly issues? There are a multitude of opportunities. Reflect on your personal labor.



Author's Note: New Things Ahead



Over the last few years, this newsletter surveyed *Romans* and *I Corinthians*. Starting next month we will double back to take a second look at these books with more of a practical application approach. The reason is to concretely lay forth how it is functionally helpful for daily living. It is easy to read, even Paul's epistles, and think, That was written to Rome or Corinth, it doesn't apply to me. Yet, Scripture is very practical for you. Actually, God's process to form Christ within you is also contained in *Romans* thru *Philemon*.

We will, therefore, move forward in confident expectation that it is exceedingly applicable! So, the thrust of the newsletters will transition to relay how Scripture is our life training manual, encouraging saints how to live it. We pray this is edifying. Feedback is welcome.

A Clear And Present Motive

Paul concludes his first book to Corinth by also reminding the Church and believers today to live in godly love: *"Let all things be done with charity."* (*I Corinthians 16:14*)

This is God's work within, not something we can manufacture on our own. *"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."* (*Rom. 7:21*) It's not natural to our fleshly ways. Until we mature, we will live as the natural man, who will struggle to put others first, above our own self-centered desires.

Learn and grow in sound doctrine to walk by faith and then, yield to serve in love. *"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."* (Vs. 12:10) and *"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."* (Vs. 13:10)

Once saved, a believer must purpose to grow and yield unto God. It will not automatically happen. *I Corinthians* will help us to correct carnal thinking, use our time and energy to walk by faith, and labor with God in love. To do this, follow the form of doctrine in Paul's epistles 'to us,' Romans through Philemon.

Satan designed this world to entice our flesh to be distracted and stay in the dark, functioning carnally as babes, just like Corinth (*I Cor. 3:1-2*). Don't let this interference happen to you! Choose God's work in you.

Think: *I Corinthians* can help you yield and put away childish ways to respond in charity. This can enable you to get on with the privilege of living your new identity in Christ: How will you respond?



Search it out!

I Corinthians 16: Functioning in Godly Labor

Examine verses!



A new study tool will be introduced to display another way to examine this chapter. The tool will be taken from, "Exploring the Bible Using Study Tools," a new booklet to be available later this year. This book can help you find ways to search things out in your study.

Ask yourself questions: Think, meditate, and pray about what's taught and what you know. Then, ask yourself questions to analyze verses. Also, look at the passages from a practical application point of view. Below you will find two examples in I Cor. 16:

1. Read through the first section, Vs. 1-4. Ask yourself questions: a) What is the general topic being taught? It will be easy to observe that Paul is instructing this Church with a clear process when collecting money to support others. A designated amount of money is to be taken, as God has provided, and it is to be put in a safe place on the first day of the week. They were not

to wait until Paul arrived to collect money to avoid any appearance of evil. Transport of the money: Approved men were to take the savings unto Jerusalem to the poor saints who were displaced and sold all (Acts 2:45). Paul may be an escort, if they approved. b) Is this a giving process to follow today? Yes, Paul gave this as an guideline to all the Body of Christ.

2. Scan through section two, Vs. 5-9. a) What was Paul's purpose for using the phrase 'I will' four times? Think on why he repeatedly used this phrase. He may have been teaching about grace choices, but also, Paul was very organized and methodical about what he did spiritually. He may have been teaching about setting ministry goals. b) Why did Paul seem to avoid visiting Corinth? Though he clearly had plans to go, they were still quite carnal. If timing was not done well, he may have needed to openly rebuke them (*I Cor. 4:21*).

To Do: Try this study skill for yourself using the remainder of the chapter, Sections 10-14, 15-18, and 19-24.

A Healthy Addiction

By Jill Nelson



A common theme among Paul's epistles is being thankful for his fellow saints. Paul was appreciative of all souls, both babes in Christ (the Corinthians) and mature saints like Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus (*I Corinthians 16:15-18*). These men and their households were instrumental in Paul's ministry and the spiritual growth of the Corinthians, "...for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours..." (*I Corinthians 16:17-18*)

This is an example of how the Lord designed the Body of Christ (BOC) in supporting each other. Paul ministered to the Corinthians and neglected himself, while Stephanas cared for Paul so he could continue his ministry. "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." (*I Corinthians 12:25*)

Paul describes how Stephanas and his household edified him and the Corinthians, "...they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." (*I Cor. 16:15*) This implies that they were faithful, habitual, and had an attitude of servitude and passion in the work of the Lord. Because of their labor in the ministry many members of the BOC were edified, including us today. If you are going to be addicted to anything, making it the ministry is the way to go! As a saint, I cannot think of a better description of one's character.



Stephanas fueled his 'addiction' by responding to the love of our dear, glorious Savior who died for us on the cross. His free will was a key component to his service to the ministry. Paul describes the liberality of other faithful saints, including some at Macedonia, "...they were willing of themselves;" (*II Corinthians 8:3*) and at Berea, "...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily..." (*Acts 17:11*) Studying His Word and learning about the hope we have in Him will help you develop a spiritual addiction to what God is doing today, through members of the Church, the Body of Christ.





Lord, How Can You Use Me?

As saints, we do not need to wander aimlessly, not knowing how to serve or live as God desires. Observe that even the Lord Jesus Christ was given particular things to do. At age 12, he responded to his parents: *“And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49)* He was doing the business the Father desired.

Romans 12 begins teaching about service for the Body of Christ. Up to now, the focus in *Romans* was learning the basics: **1) Justification** is being made righteous by the blood of Christ (*Chapter. 1-5*). **2) Sanctification** is learning our new identity to live and be empowered to access Christ within (*Chapter 6-8*). **3) Exaltation** is provided next and explained by God in *Chapter 9-11*. He set Israel aside to form the Body of Christ to work His purpose in this exalted vessel of honor.

Finally, *Romans 12:1* begins to instruct believers in godly labor, simply act in love & serve. *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* Paul relays that we are His temple, bought with Christ’s precious blood to be this sacrifice unto Him: *“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (I Cor. 6:20)*

Saints are to have a unified mindset to work together with our Father: *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8)*

To Do: Practically, take mini-breaks throughout the day to observe needs around you. God is asking you to respond in selfless love. Yield to His business, putting aside ‘self-serving priorities.’ Ministry takes time and effort. As you help others, share the glorious Truth of the gospel!



Sometimes we encounter long and demanding challenges while we reside on earth. Staying focused to live unto the Lord can take some serious endurance and focus. How do we stay refreshed and energized to serve? It is NOT by concentrating on the problems and fears!

As good soldiers, we’re to stay free from the world, including anticipated or past troubles and fears. Instead, press forward: *“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” (II Tim. 2:4)* How is this done? Live above to allow the Lord to magnify His Word in you, even when you feel fear or are trembling. It’s walking by faith. Our tendency is to become ensnared in the course of this world. Satan’s ways will lure us off track, blinding us to opportunities and God’s true purpose.

Galatians 6:9 provides a caution as we proceed, *“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”* The flesh will experience fatigue, it’s a natural part of this sin-cursed world and getting older, but recall that we have the Godhead within us.

God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, is our strength, wisdom, and anchor. This is helpful to remember. Though unseen, the Father is real and living in us. At every moment, He earnestly cares for us individually, especially as we go through difficulties. God has great compassion.

Refreshment of spirit happens as we reflect on the wondrous power of the Godhead manifest within us, even while angels are observing and learning (I Cor. 4:9). Knowing this can motivate us to choose to access His power, and press onward to do the Father’s will, even when tired!

If we sow to the Spirit, we reap life everlasting. (*Gal. 6:8*) What a glorious hope and refreshment! We shall reap, yet now, we need to stay fixed on what’s important, not tripping over the things of this world. Allow God to focus you!

Christian Life Coach Support Services
 Writers/editors: Brian and Deborah Johnson
 (804) 519-1210 - lifecoachesdjbj@yahoo.com
 Website: Christianlifecoachsupport.squarespace.com

Stamp

To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)

Four Examples of How to Find Context in a Passage



Context can be defined as a key tool to study the Bible. Observe the text surrounding a word or passage, but also evaluate the surrounding conditions. Determine who is writing, to whom, the time period, changes in topic, etc.

1. Notice the recent context: Romans 7:8 *“But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.”* Romans 7:7, the prior verse, shows the context. When Paul tried to live by a law, *“Thou shall not covet,”* sin thrived in his members. It revealed that applying a law can cause concupiscence (a longing/lust to do the sin).

2. Look Back to the beginning of a book: Galatians 3:1 *“O Foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”* Look back to realize what Paul already told readers about the Galatians. Observe in the first chapter: Clearly, they had already believed this gospel (Verse 2). He felt they were foolish to be removed from the truth of the grace of Christ (Verse 6). They were bewitched to obey perversions of the gospel of Christ (Verse 7).

3. Observe the surrounding context of a verse: Genesis 15:6 *“And he believe in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”* Paul used Abraham as a faith example for the Body of Christ. Many say he made many mistakes, not believing very well. Look at the context of Abraham’s life from Genesis 12-22. One will discover a man of faith. God allowed him in grace to make mistakes i.e. Gen. 15:2,16:2, yet learn and grow from them. The end of his learning shows this worked a mighty faith: able to even sacrifice his own son. (Gen. 22)

4. Scan through a book to find who is being written to: Matthew: Notice the cumulative evidence: Matthew 1 gives the lineage of Christ back to Abraham, the father of circumcision. Jesus came to save ‘His people,’ Israel (1:21). He was called, ‘King of the Jews’ (2:2). The Priests/scribes knew where to find their Messiah born (2:5). Jesus sent the twelve with a command: *“...Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* (10:5-6) Matthew was clearly written to His Nation, Israel. (These are ways to rightly divide. II Tim. 2:15)

Christian Life Coach Support Services

Writers/Editors: Brian/Deborah Johnson
 Certified Christian Life Coaches
 (804) 519-1210
 lifecoachesdjbj@yahoo.com
Website: Christianlifecoachsupport.squarespace.com

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