

"The Heart of an Apostle" - Part 14

2 Corinthians 8:16-24



"Unknown Men of Integrity"

In this morning's passage, Paul describes for us the means of accountability that he used to assure godly integrity with regard to money.

Big Idea: "since God has called us to generosity, we are responsible to handle these funds with focused integrity"

Smitten in the Heart (8:16-17)

"I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative." (2 Cor 8:16-17 NIV)

- Paul says that Titus' heart literally "is being smitten" by God.
- When God has our hearts, there is unity of direction and purpose, and spirit motivated enthusiasm for ministry.

Renowned in the Word (8:18-19)

"And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. 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." (2 Corinthians 8:18-19 NIV)

- This brother, whose name is not given, is credentialed only by his preaching of the gospel.
- God's Word and God's Wisdom are one and the same.

Prudent in the World (8:20-21)

"We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. 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." (2 Cor 8:20-21 NIV)

- Paul's priority in everything is to proclaim the gospel in a pure, blameless, unobstructed way. This is why he takes special pains to make sure even the appearance of what is unethical is removed.

Proved in the Church (8:22-24)

"In 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. As 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..." (2 Cor 8:22-24 NIV)

- The biblical method for producing church leadership is not to bring qualified men in from the outside, but to grow them slowly and methodically from the inside.

So What?

God has called us to generosity. How do we handle this generosity with integrity?

1. With a heart that has been "smitten" or controlled by God.
2. With a burning desire to know and live by God's Holy Word.
3. With a zealous desire to remove any obstacles from our lives that would impede the preaching of the gospel.
4. With a desire to be tested and qualified to go forth and be a representative of this local church and thus bring honor and glory to Christ in our circles of influence.

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