

## “Give-and-Go” (1 Corinthians 16:1-12)

This past month, basketball season began. One of the most familiar plays in basketball is called “give-and-go.” The “give-and-go” is a basic offensive play in which a player simply “gives” the ball to a teammate and “goes” to the basket. The goal is to break free of one’s defender, receive a return pass from a teammate, and score a basket. The great thing about the “give-and-go” is that anyone can run it, regardless of size, strength, or experience.

The “give-and-go” is not only a great basketball play, it is also an excellent play for the church to run. If we are to score for the kingdom of God, we must master a critical “give-and-go” play. Coach Paul is going to the chalkboard to design a “give-and-go” play for the Corinthians to utilize. I would like us to imagine that we are in a locker room while Coach Paul draws up this play. As we listen to his words, may we prepare to execute the “give-and-go” play that he has designed to score points for God’s kingdom. In 1 Cor 16:1-12, Paul will challenge us to “give-and-go till glory.”

**1. Give to the Lord’s Work (16:1-4).** In these first four verses, Paul shares his practical philosophy of giving to the church.<sup>1</sup> He writes, “**Now concerning<sup>2</sup> the collection<sup>3</sup> for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside<sup>4</sup> and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; and if it is fitting<sup>5</sup> for me to go also, they will go with me.**” In these four verses, Paul provides six guidelines as to how we should give.<sup>6</sup> But before I share with you these biblical guidelines, you must accept the Bible’s premise: you and I don’t own anything! Our home, cars, possessions, and money all belong to the Lord.<sup>7</sup> We are merely stewards of the resources that God has entrusted to us.<sup>8</sup> If you accept this premise, you will not have any problem with anything that I will say. If you do not, this could be a very long message.

**Guideline #1: Biblical giving is not optional but mandatory (16:1).** The word translated “directed” is a strong word that is frequently translated “command” or “order.”<sup>9</sup> Paul is speaking with apostolic authority<sup>10</sup> and calling for the church in Corinth to do what he has already directed the Galatian churches to do. Generous financial giving is one of the key characteristics of a mature Christian. This ties in rather nicely with the previous verse (15:58), where Paul commands the Corinthians to be “always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.” It’s like he’s saying, “Speaking of giving yourselves fully, let’s talk about financial giving...”

**Guideline #2: Biblical giving starts with meeting the basic needs of believers (16:1, 3).**<sup>11</sup> Typically, when a pastor preaches a message on money, it’s in order to generate pledges for the annual budget, buy land, or build a new building. This is to be expected. Such matters concern most congregations at some point in their church history. But that is not where biblical giving *begins*. It begins with a heart that cares about the basic needs of other Christians for food, shelter, and clothing. That’s what the collection here in 1 Corinthians 16 is all about—sending a gift to Jerusalem so the believers there can survive (16:3). Their financial plight was due to famine, persecution, and economic sanctions against them, making it difficult for new converts to hold anything but the most menial jobs.

The above guideline indicates that we who are wealthy (every American, from a world perspective) have an obligation to help the poverty-stricken believers in the inner city as well as the persecuted church in foreign lands. Such support should never be treated as optional. Instead, the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ should be an essential part of our financial giving. This Christmas, what will you give to brothers and sisters in Christ who are less fortunate?<sup>12</sup> When you think about giving to others, think about all God has given you. This ought to compel you to give generously to those who are less fortunate. May you “give-and-go till glory.”

**Guideline #3: Biblical giving is the believer's #1 financial priority (16:2).** Notice that giving is to be done "on the first day of every week."<sup>13</sup> This implies that people got paid once a week in the first century, and that's why they are encouraged to give once a week. If you get paid twice a month I'm sure God will accept your giving twice a month. The important point is that you give on a regular basis.

Tragically, many Christians don't give at all, and often those who do give do so sporadically. They might give two months in a row, skip three months, give one, and skip two more. Some people don't give when they are on vacation, sick at home, or snowed in. Some don't give if they miss the offering plate. Imagine standing before the Lord and explaining why you disobeyed His command to give: "Lord, I could never find a pen before the plate got there." That's crazy! We don't think that way about anything else. If my house payment comes due while I'm on vacation, I don't say, "Well, that's no big deal, my mortgage company will understand. I'll pay my mortgage next month." No way! Those of us who are wise pay our house note *before* we go on our vacation.<sup>14</sup> If we are that serious about our house, should we not be equally serious about the God of the universe?

Today, you may need to reevaluate your financial giving. God's Word is clear from cover-to-cover, we are to give to the Lord *first*, not last. This implies that giving to the Lord's work should take place *before* other obligations are met. Every once in a while I hear someone say, "Well, I had to take a pass on giving for a couple of months because we had some unexpected medical expenses, house expenses, etc." I don't think Paul would buy that. If we would give the first part of our paycheck, then maybe we wouldn't get into those tight spots in the first place. That's the point of the Old Testament prophet, Haggai, who told the poverty-stricken Israelites that God was putting holes in their pockets because their financial priorities were amiss.<sup>15</sup> Giving should come *before* bill paying, before pursuing hobbies, before eating out, even before repaying debt.<sup>16</sup> Does giving have this priority in your life? If so, I can assure you that God will meet all of your financial needs.<sup>17</sup>

**Guideline #4: Biblical giving is every believer's responsibility (16:2).** Still in 16:2, we read "*each one of you* is to put aside and save..." Notice that Paul doesn't excuse the poor, the slaves, the pastors, or the large family with three kids in college. Giving is *every* believer's privilege and responsibility. We are all to be involved in giving regularly, whether we have a lot of money or we're impoverished, whether we're children or the most senior adult.

I believe that we must help our children learn when they are very small how to give back a portion of what they have to the Lord. Our children give at least 10% of the money that they earn. My parents and Lori's parents raised us this way and we have never thought about giving less than 10%. Furthermore, it is important to communicate the importance of giving to your family. This weekend, we discussed with our children what types of ministry projects we are going to give to this Christmas. We want our children to understand where our money is going. We also want their input because we value them and want them to have ownership in the giving process. As parents, we bear a huge responsibility in raising our children in the Lord. Since Jesus talked about money more than any other subject, how can we fail to instruct our kids in giving to the Lord? If they learn to give, they will be blessed in every sphere of their lives. More importantly, they will please the heart of God.

Unfortunately, many of us have erroneously assumed that if we don't have a lot of money or are in debt, we don't have to give. Nothing could be further from the truth! The greatest examples in Scripture of sacrificial giving come from those who are in the midst of poverty and persecution.<sup>18</sup> God wants and expects us to give in spite of our circumstances or lack of wealth. Last month, after one of my lectures at Ecola Bible School, a student approached me and said, "I am in a truckload of debt. Should I give to the Lord even though I am in debt?" "Absolutely," I responded. "The quickest way to get out of debt is by giving to the Lord, not by holding back what is rightfully His." I then explained to this young man that the Lord will honor even a meager attempt to prioritize giving.

A man once said, “I don’t believe in giving. I can be a good Christian without giving. After all, the dying thief never gave anything.” To which his friend replied, “Well, there is one difference between you and the dying thief: he was a dying thief; you are a living one.” Are you a living thief? If so, don’t continue to rob God. Begin giving to the Lord’s work today. Don’t delay; give today.

**Guideline #5: Biblical giving should be proportionate (16:2).** Paul says that a believer’s giving should be “as he may prosper” or “in keeping with his income” (NIV). In other words, the more we are blessed,<sup>19</sup> the more we should give. There are two ways one can approach this matter. If you are giving a set percentage of your income, let’s say 10%, as your income rises your giving will automatically rise proportionately. But a more generous approach to proportionate giving is to increase the percentage of your giving as your income increases. In the case of a substantial raise, you will still be left with more than you had before the promotion.<sup>20</sup> The issue is: where does your heart lie?<sup>21</sup>

I am occasionally asked by curious Christians, “What do you think of the tithe?” Since I know that there are questions on this subject, let me attempt to answer this debated question. The New Testament does not advocate flat 10% giving. The tithe was an income tax system in the Old Testament. There were three tithes—two tithes per year for two years and on the third year an additional tithe of 10%, making it 30% for that year. The tithes for the third year were for the poor. Tithes are always in the plural, not the singular. If you want to give tithes, make sure you give at least 23<sup>1/3</sup> % of your income over a three-year period! In addition to this you are to give “offerings.” Israelites gave both tithes and offerings. All this was done for the national entity of Israel. A national entity needs an income tax system, so that was the purpose of the tithe. The New Testament does not command tithes for the church. The idea for the church is an offering of proportional giving or as God has blessed the believer financially. There is no percentage in this system of giving.

With that said, my personal conviction is that 10% of one’s income is a good place to start for most people. Yet, I acknowledge that some people may need to build up gradually before taking a step of faith. That’s fine. Giving is ultimately a matter between the individual believer and God. However, I believe the tithe is one of the greatest misnomers in Christianity today. Many well-meaning Christians assume that if they are giving 10%, they are doing great. I would suggest that the vast majority of American Christians can and should give far more than 10% of their income to the Lord. Sadly though, many Christians are more concerned with their standard of living than their standard of giving. For many of us, prosperity has become a greater test of character than poverty. So the issue is: how has God prospered you? To what degree do you want to express your gratitude to Him for all that He has given you?

One Sunday afternoon, a family was driving home from church. The father was complaining, “That church service was awful. The sermon was too long, the music was too loud, and the building was too hot.” His son in the back seat replied, “I don’t know, Dad, I thought it was a pretty good show for a buck.” This illustration would be far funnier if it wasn’t so true. Often, those who give the least complain the most. There are at least two reasons for this: (1) God will not let stingy Christians experience joy and contentment. (2) Those Christians who give sense great ownership and personal responsibility for the church and their own lives.

**Guideline #6: Biblical giving should not be motivated by pressure (16:2).** Looking again at 16:2 we see that the apostle is asking that the collection be made each week so that there doesn’t have to be a fund drive when he arrives. He is in Ephesus as he writes this letter, and he has plans to come to visit Corinth in the future. He knows that his credibility and charisma is such that he could generate a huge offering with his personal presence. But he doesn’t want them to give under that kind of pressure. He says in effect, “Do what you’re going to do *before* I arrive.” Pressure, of course, works. Countless churches and ministries have funded vast building projects through high-pressure fund-raising efforts. But everything that works isn’t necessarily right.

In addition to the above six guidelines, there is a concluding principle that has more to do with how offerings are handled than with how they are given.

***Biblical givers have a right to expect integrity and accountability from those they give to (16:3-4).***

Verses 3-4 explain that it is the responsibility of every congregation to entrust its funds into the hands of trustworthy members. Paul doesn't say, "Give your money to *me* and I will handle it for you." Instead he urges the church to choose their own representatives to disburse the gifts. Obviously, integrity matters, and I want you to know that we are committed to the highest level of financial accountability at EBF. If you have any concerns or questions, contact our office and we will put you in touch with the right person.

In light of all that we have considered, I challenge you to either continue or begin giving generously and cheerfully. Not only does gracious giving please the Lord, but there are also legitimate personal blessings as well.

[We have seen that we are called to give to the Lord's work. Now we will be exhorted to...]

**2. Go to the Lord's People (16:5-12).** In this section, Paul shares his own travel log and that of two of his coworkers. These verses explain how Paul and his ministry partners were willing to go to minister to believers and unbelievers alike. Paul writes, **"But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia; and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go. For I do not wish to see you now just in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.<sup>22</sup> But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. Now if<sup>23</sup> Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid,<sup>24</sup> for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am. So let no one despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren. But concerning<sup>25</sup> Apollos our brother, I encouraged him greatly to come to you with the brethren; and it was not at all his desire to come now,<sup>26</sup> but he will come when he has opportunity."** There are at least five observations worth making from these eight verses. First, Paul had plans and goals to share the gospel with unbelievers and build up the church (16:5-9). Even before Day Timers, Palm Pilots, and Blackberries, Paul had a schedule mapped out. He didn't just trust God and sit on his hands. He took initiative and moved forward with holy ambition. Do you have a plan to share Christ and build up His body? If not, why not? Today, make a holy resolution and write down the names of three unbelievers and three believers. Then develop a game plan to share Christ with these individuals.

Second, Paul submitted his plans and goals to Christ. Words and phrases like "perhaps," "wherever I may go," and "I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits" reveal Paul's sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. Although he had plans and goals that he wanted to accomplish, he was always striving to make sure that he was doing what God wanted him to do. Are you willing to relocate and change jobs if God calls you to? Would you be willing to take on a new ministry? God longs for willing hearts.

Third, God eventually opens a door of ministry for faithful believers. Admittedly, sometimes it takes many years but God has a way of blessing our meager efforts. In 16:9, Paul writes **"for a wide door for effective service has opened to me,<sup>27</sup> and there are many adversaries."<sup>28</sup>** This "open door" in Ephesus brought great evangelistic fruit. However, with the fruit there were many adversaries. This is to be expected. Where there is light there are bugs. When God pours out His blessing, Satan sends adversaries to destroy God's work. If you are a pastor, elder, deacon, or ministry leader, you must learn to expect opposition. It is important then to recognize "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:13).

Fourth, Paul values ministry partners. In this section, he spends three verses talking about Timothy and Apollos (16:10-12). In the passage that follows he will mention five more valuable coworkers.<sup>29</sup> The point is: Paul recognized how important other ministry leaders were to his ministry and to God's kingdom. God uses teammates (brothers and sisters) to help us to accomplish His purposes for our lives. More importantly, He uses the purposes He works in us to accomplish His kingdom agenda in the world. Have you expressed gratitude to God for all that He has accomplished in your life? Have you said "thank you" to your Christian teammates?

My wife, Lori, loves to watch football. Recently, she told me that watching college football has become her favorite pastime. I am a very blessed man! God is good! Furthermore, Lori and I share a favorite football player—University of Florida quarterback, Tim Tebow. We have followed this amazing athlete for the last two years.<sup>30</sup> Much to our relief, Tebow won the Heisman trophy yesterday. The Heisman is the award for the top collegiate football player. Tebow, a sophomore, is the first underclassmen to win this award in the Heisman's illustrious seventy-three year history. What is even more astounding is that Tebow had not even prepared a thank you speech, yet he rattled off the names of nearly everyone that has impacted his life. He started by thanking his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and then he mentioned his parents, his coaches, his teammates, and the Florida fans. What impressed me is that he always deflected praise and expressed gratitude for others.

As we conclude 2007 and ramp up for 2008, God wants us to work on the "give-and-go" play He has designed for us. Today, will you commit yourself to fulfilling God's plans for your life? Will you submit yourself to Him in the areas of giving and going? Will you seek to ensure that your life will make an eternal impact?

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**Scripture Reference**

1 Corinthians 16:1-12

Romans 15:25-27

Acts 2:44-46; 4:32-35; 20:33-35

Philippians 4:10-19

Matthew 6:19-21

Luke 16:1-12

2 Corinthians 8-9

**Study Questions**

1. What is my current practice with giving to the church (16:1-4)? Do I have convictions on the importance of giving individually, proportionately, and regularly? If so, how would I explain my convictions to others? How have my views changed over the years? Have I progressed or slipped in the joy of giving generously?
2. How have I seen my financial generosity bless other believers (16:1, 3)? In what specific way has this inspired me to give generously and cheerfully? When I have stepped out in faith and given generously, how has the Lord met my needs? Have I shared these accounts of God's faithfulness with others?
3. Why is financial giving such a misunderstood and neglected topic? What can I do in my sphere of influence to help others understand the importance of giving? What is the responsibility of our church to help children, teens, and adults learn the blessing of giving to the Lord's work?
4. Do I have plans and goals to share the gospel with unbelievers and build up the church (16:5-9)? If not, why not? How do I submit my plans to God's program (16:7)? Am I praying and listening to God through the Scriptures so I know how I should proceed to minister in His name?
5. Who are the ministry partners that God has used to help me accomplish His program and my purpose (16:10-12)? When and how have I expressed appreciation and gratitude to these individuals? Am I humble about my accomplishments and how God has worked in and through me? Am I careful to deflect accolades to my ministry teammates?

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> My mentor, Verlyn Verbrugge, has written an excellent doctoral dissertation on this passage (Ph.D. Notre Dame). See Verlyn D. Verbrugge, *Paul's Style of Church Leadership Illustrated by His Instructions to the Corinthians on the Collection* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> The use of "Now concerning" (*peri de*) in this section (16:1-4) may deal with another question the Corinthians had asked Paul (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:12; cf. 8:4).

<sup>3</sup> The word "collection" (*logeia*) is found only in papyri and inscriptions and here in the NT. Verbrugge notes, "Paul's favorite term for the collection is *charis* ('grace-gift,' used in 16:3; see also 2 Cor 8:6, 7, 19; cf. 8:1, 4; 9:8, 14, 15). Verbrugge, '1 Corinthians.'"

<sup>4</sup> The present active imperative *titheo* ("put aside") could be iterative pointing to the repeated acts, or it could call for a habit of life. Cleon L. Rodgers Jr. & Cleon L. Rodgers III. *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 389.

<sup>5</sup> Morris follows Moffatt in thinking "fitting" (*axios*) here refers to the gift. In the translation of Moffatt, "If the sum makes it worth my while to go, they will accompany me" (see also NIV). Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, [1958] 1990), 232. Others see the reference merely to Paul's uncertainty regarding his timetable, or regarding circumstances at Jerusalem. "By the time he wrote 2 Cor 1:15-16, Paul had firmly decided to accompany the party, and according to Rom 15:26-27 'the collection' was duly made ready." Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1326.

<sup>6</sup> I have benefited from the following resources in preparing these guidelines: Michael P. Andrus, "Spreading the Flame by Giving and Going" (1 Cor 16:1-9): unpublished sermon manuscript, March 3, 2002. Charles R. Swindoll, *Calm Answers for a Confused Church* (Fullerton, CA: Insight for Living, 1988), 74-78.

<sup>7</sup> Ps 24:1 says, "The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it."

<sup>8</sup> See the parable of the unrighteous steward in Luke 16:1-13.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *diatasso* in Luke 8:55; 17:9, 10; Acts 18:2; 23:31; 24:23; 1 Cor 7:17; 9:14; 11:34.

<sup>10</sup> See also 1 Cor 4:15; 11:16; 14:33-34.

<sup>11</sup> MacArthur writes, "As the original apostles (Peter, James, and John) validated Paul's early ministry, they taught him to have a heartfelt concern for poor believers: 'They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do' (Gal 2:10; cf. 2 Cor 6:10). Paul dearly loved the impoverished saints in Jerusalem as brothers and sisters in Christ and God wanted their needs met. He saw that they would not be able to sustain themselves in the face of increasing persecution and in view of the ongoing needs of the pilgrims and widows. Therefore Paul made the needs of the Jerusalem church the object of a special offering project. The project was first referred to generally in Acts 11:29-30, 'And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders' (cf. Acts 18:23-21:16). That effort became a high priority for Paul. John MacArthur, *Whose Money Is It Anyway?* (Nashville: Word, 2000), 74.

<sup>12</sup> The biblical emphasis seems to be on giving to Christians above and beyond unbelievers (see esp. Gal 6:10).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1. Morris writes, "This is the first piece of evidence to show that Christians observed that day, though there is no reason to doubt that it was their custom from the first (cf. Jn 20:19,26; Acts 20:7; Rev 1:10)." Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 232. Naylor goes even further, "'The first day of the week' translates *kata mian sabbatou*, literally, 'according to one [day] from the Sabbath'. Cf. Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1,19; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10. The seventh day of the Jewish week was, of course, the Sabbath, and the Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week following that in which he died (cf. 15:4). It seems from Acts 20:7 and Revelation 1:10 that the early churches honoured the Sabbath day plus one as the day of the week when they would assemble for worship. Here, not only does Paul indicate that the collection for Jerusalem is an act of worship, but immediately after his exposition of the resurrection in chapter 15 he introduces the first day as the appropriate occasion for a financial response to the Lord's triumph. The Corinthians would not have missed the not-so-subtle point." Peter Naylor, *1 Corinthians* (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2004), 473.

<sup>14</sup> This has been revised from Randy Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, revised and updated (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2003), 198-199.

<sup>15</sup> See Haggai 1.

<sup>16</sup> See Prov 3:9: "Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce."

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<sup>17</sup> Jesus said, “But seek first His [God’s] kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt 6:33). Due to the financial generosity of the church at Philippi Paul promised them, “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19).

<sup>18</sup> E.g., Mark 12:42-44; 2 Cor 8:2, 12.

<sup>19</sup> See the NET: “On the first day of the week, each of you should set aside some income and save it to the extent that God has *blessed* you, so that a collection will not have to be made when I come.”

<sup>20</sup> Tozer wrote, “Before the judgment seat of Christ, my service will be judged not by how much I have done, but by how much I could have done. In God’s sight, my giving is measured not by how much I have given, but by how much I could have given and how much I had left after I made my gift.” A.W. Tozer, *Incredible Christian* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1964), 105.

<sup>21</sup> Jesus declared the converse, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt 6:21).

<sup>22</sup> On “*if the Lord permits*” compare 4:19; Acts 18:21; Heb 6:3; James 4:13-15. “He is the Lord’s servant. He must go where the Lord wills. All his plans must therefore be subject to the proviso (expressed or not) that the Lord may intervene and direct him elsewhere.” Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 235.

<sup>23</sup> Paul explicitly states that he has sent Timothy to Corinth (4:17), the indefinite construction refers to the uncertainty not of the event, but of his time of arrival. With some support from BAGD they propose, “Whenever Timothy comes,” which is surely right.

<sup>24</sup> Morris observes, “From this very letter we may infer that there were some among the Corinthian believers who were confident and self-willed. Paul evidently feared that Timothy might not be adequate for a confrontation with such people, a fear which subsequent events were to show was well-founded.” Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 236. Since Timothy would come as Paul’s representative and would continue Paul’s work (cf. also 4:17), any hostility toward Paul would be likely to rub off on Timothy as Paul’s co-worker. They may perhaps have preferred to welcome Apollos rather than Timothy.

<sup>25</sup> This verse may contain Paul’s final response to the questions the Corinthians had asked him. It is the sixth instance of that key phrase “Now concerning” (*peri de*).

<sup>26</sup> Either Apollos was currently too busy or he did not believe that this was an opportune time for him to visit. He may have been sensitive to the divisions at Corinth and have thought that a visit at this time might only exacerbate the difficulties.

<sup>27</sup> The perfect has the force “it stands open.” For this metaphor cf. 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3.

<sup>28</sup> “Many adversaries,” probably refers to unconverted Jews and Greeks, and possibly Christian Judaizers (cf. Acts 19:9, 13-16, 23-28; 20:29-30). “Paul’s abrupt reference to them [opponents] reminds us that the Christian is not usually left to pursue his work unhindered. It is part of the condition under which we serve God that when we have great opportunities of service we have also serious difficulties. Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 235-236. See Acts 19 for the opposition to Paul at Ephesus, also reference in this epistle at 15:32.

<sup>29</sup> Paul mentions Stephanus, Fortunatus, Achaicus, Aquila, and Prisca (16:17, 19).

<sup>30</sup> For more information on Tim Tebow see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim\\_Tebow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Tebow) or <http://www.tebowzone.com/>;