

# 1 CORINTHIANS 16.1-4

## The Collection

### VSS. 1-4, CONTRIBUTION FOR NEEDY SAINTS

1. Why the need?
  - » Persecution (1Thess 2:14-15)
  - » Famine (Acts 11:28-30)
  - » Resources exhausted? (Acts 4:34-35)
2. Its importance to Paul
  - » Instructions regarding this given to churches of Galatia, Macedonia & Achaia. Cf. Acts 18:23; 2Cor. 8:1ff.
  - » Spiritual importance: solidarity between Jew and Gentile? Romans 15:25-27; 2Cor 9:12-14.
3. Method (Vss. 2-4)
  - » “What is significant here is the very matter-of-fact way the issue is taken up. On a weekly basis they should set money aside, as the Lord has prospered them. No pressure, no gimmicks, no emotion. A need had to be met, and the Corinthians were capable of playing a role in it. In a day of highly visible campaigns for money on every side, there is something to be said for the more consistent, purposeful approach outlined here.” (Gordon Fee)
  - » “On the first day of every week” Note the frequent mentions of their assemblies in 5:4; 11:17,18,20; 14:26; etc. Taken with this verse it gives strong evidence that their assemblies took place on the first day of the week. See also Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10.
  - » “each one of you...” Answers the question of “who” was to do the giving. Both those with much and those with little have a responsibility to be charitable, Ephesians 4:28; 1Timothy 6:17-19.
  - » How much? “According to what he has prospered.” “The meaning is then that one’s giving should be in direct proportion to the way one prospers; it should be determined as a matter of principle, not something

done on impulse.” (Leon Morris)

- » “So that no collections made when I come.” Paul did not want to be cast in the position of strong-arming these disciples.
- » Others would go with Paul, he would not be handling the gift. Note Acts 20:4. The wisdom of this arrangement is apparent. It was the churches giving to the relief of the needy saints, not churches giving to Paul who would then give to the needy. While it was Paul that brought this need to their attention and instructed them on how to give, this was the work of each congregation.

### WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE MEAN FOR US TODAY?

1. Each first day of the week we take up a collection. Why is this?
2. It is not because Paul gave us a command to do so in 1Cor. 16.1-2. The context is clearly regarding a collection to address a specific need: the poor saints of Judea. (See Acts 24:17; Romans 15:25-27; 2Cor 8 - 9.)
3. We give because giving is a principle that goes all the way back to the beginning of the church, Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35.
4. The church has collective opportunities/responsibilities in evangelism and benevolence.
  - » Benevolence: Acts 4:34-35; 6:1; 11:27-30; 1Tim 5:9; etc.
  - » Preaching: 1Cor. 9:8-14; 2Cor 11:8; Phil. 1:5; 4:15-16.
5. Hence, there is a need for congregations to pool resources and funds, cf. Acts 4:34-35. How should this be done? This passage provides the pattern that we continue to follow.
6. So, in that sense the passage remains authoritative. Not because it’s a command to be followed for all time, rather this passage gives a pattern for how churches should continue to

pool their resources to meet the needs it has and to carry on its work. Something doesn't have to be a direct command to be followed, for the principle involved in this passage is one to be followed.