

## Lesson 15: 2 Corinthians 8:10-24

- 1) **Verse 10: And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.**
  - a) 8:10 Paul does not command them on this matter but does give them his authoritative counsel.
    - i) Paul wants to motivate them through reasoning since genuine benevolence for others is not something that can be commanded.
    - ii) He also does not want to seem to criticize them, but he does want to tell him what he thinks is best. Their original intention was good, but if they do not carry it out, it would make them look bad.
  - b) The phrase translated "a year ago" does not necessarily mean a year ago as it tends to do in English idiom but refers instead to the previous calendar year, which could be as recent as a month ago; no definite span of time is indicated.
    - i) There was no universally accepted calendar. The Jewish new year began in autumn, the Roman in January, and the Athenian in midsummer. The only thing we can be sure of is that the Corinthians had started on the collection before the Macedonians and that some time has passed.
    - ii) When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, the collection had already been launched (1 Cor 16:1-4). In the meantime there had been the intervening painful visit, the severe letter, and Titus's visit and return to Paul. Paul had since moved from Ephesus to Troas to Macedonia. Certainly many months have passed.
  - c) Paul shows his leadership style by praising what can be praised, namely, their willingness to commit to the ministry in the first place.
    - i) But he clearly, if subtly, communicates that talk is cheap; now is the time to produce. Boswell's old adage that the road to hell is paved with good intentions applies.
    - ii) Paul thinks it is in their best interest to complete what they were so willing to start because: (1) they have already begun and they should not leave something undone (8:11); (2) nothing is accomplished if what is started is not finished; (3) they get no credit for initial enthusiasm that disintegrates before the task is finished.
    - iii) There is a lesson in there for us. We need to finish what we begin. One small task, if completed, may be worth more than a hundred grand plans that

were never finished or worse never even begun.

(1) Luke 14:28-30 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

**2) Verses 11-12: Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. 12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.**

- a) The only imperative in the chapter appears in 8:11 and strikes at the heart of Paul's concern that they finish what they started.
  - i) Paul is not trying to recruit them at the last minute; they were the first to get involved.
  - ii) He is trying to get them to reverse their last minute foot dragging. Putting off something not only results in dwindling motivation to complete the task, their delay calls into question their initial willingness.
- b) The phrase translated "according to your means" (lit., "out of what you have") parallels the phrase in 8:3, "according to their ability."
  - i) Paul does not ask them to do as the Macedonians did and go beyond their means but only to give according to their means. They are not to go into debt, to become disadvantaged or overburdened.
  - ii) Paul's goal is not unreasonable; he is not trying to raise record amounts. His instructions in 1 Cor 16:2 to set aside a sum of money each week reveals that he knows he is dealing with many who have limited resources, and a significant amount will only be accumulated over time.
  - iii) Whatever they give generously, he assures them, is acceptable to God. God does not expect the widow's mites, "all that she had to live on" (Mark 12:44), but God does expect generosity and giving gifts without a begrudging spirit. What matters to God is only what is in the giver's heart.
  - iv) In the Corinthians' case the smallest gift is greater than the grandest intention that goes unfulfilled.
- c) As the thriving capital of Achaia, Corinth was far more wealthy than the Macedonian cities, and the congregation had some members who were relatively

well off.

- i) Paul does not mention anything about their poverty, so we can assume that they were not in the same financial straits as the Macedonians.
- ii) One wonders, then, if Paul does not share this piece of wisdom about giving according to your means for the poor in the congregation who were so easily slighted and humiliated by the others.
- iii) If the slaves in the Corinthian church were also contributing to the fund, it could only be a token amount, if anything.
- iv) Barclay notes that the only money they could donate "would be taken from their savings with which they might hope one day to purchase their freedom!" The greater their generosity, the less their chance of ever gaining their freedom!
- v) Paul is not asking for such bold sacrifices, but he is asking for proportionate giving.

**3) Verses 13-15: For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: 14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: 15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.**

- a) Stinginess has a way of expressing itself through suspicion of others and rationalizing its tightfisted ways.
  - i) Paul is aware that some miserly members of the congregation might gripe, "Others will be profiting from our hard earned money." "We have to bear the brunt of the burden while the poor get rich off us." "We have enough financial troubles of our own, why should we have to help others we do not even know?"
  - ii) Paul is realistic; unless one has the spirit of Christ, one does not want to bear a greater burden so that others might be relieved. He therefore tries to deflect any possible complaint by assuring them that the Jerusalem church is not going to live the high life from these gifts.
- b) Paul does not ask the Corinthians to give more than others because they are better off. He asks them only to give what they can.
  - i) The example of the Macedonians shows that Paul is not placing an unequal burden upon them. He does not want them to become hard pressed in

offering relief to others.

- ii) The word translated "hard pressed" is the same word in 8:2 that refers to the Macedonian's "test of affliction." The Corinthians' giving to this fund, even sacrificially, will hardly compare with the severe affliction that the Macedonians endured.
- c) The principle undergirding the whole project is one of equity or equality.
- i) The word used in verse 14 relates to "justice" and "fairness."
  - ii) Paul does not write "so that there might be equity," as the NIV renders it, but instead he writes "out of equity." Paul is not talking about the purpose for their giving -- to create equality -- but the ground of their giving -- from equality.
- d) In Rom 15:25-31 Paul makes it clear that the gospel is a gift that creates an obligation of gratitude that should be shown by the return of material gifts.
- i) Paul specifically refers to the Macedonians and Achaians as spiritual debtors to those in Jerusalem. He explains, "For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings." The collection becomes a way of paying off a spiritual debt to those in Jerusalem.
- e) Given the Corinthians' sensitivities to the intricacies of such social relations, however, Paul does not come right out and say in so many words that they are debtors to the church in Jerusalem.
- i) He shows sensitivity to the social rules of the time by emphasizing future reciprocity.
  - ii) The protocol of gift giving in this culture took for granted that whenever there was disparity in the exchange of gifts, the one who outgave the other gained status as the superior while the other moved down a rung in the status ladder.
  - iii) That explains why Paul stresses that the Corinthians' plenty now will supply the needs of the saints "so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need." No one will outgive the other and attain a higher status over the other.
  - iv) Hanson expresses it this way: "The Corinthians give now, not as the richer members condescending to give to their poorer brethren, but as brothers who know that, in Christ, their present supplying of the needs of the Christians in Jerusalem will be answered by the people of Jerusalem in some way and at some time supplying their need."
- f) Paul's statement leaves open the possibility that they will repay in kind with

material gifts if the Corinthians ever have need.

- i) But in Chapter 9 Paul will give a Christian twist to the convention of gift giving. He stresses that God rewards those who are generous with the poor.
  - ii) This theological affirmation changes entirely the dynamics behind gift exchange with its expectation of reciprocity and brings it more in line with the gospel.
  - iii) The implication is that the bond between them is triangular because God repays those who are generous to the poor.
- g)** Paul steers carefully through the intricate maze of cultural expectations regarding gift exchange and social reciprocity yet clearly implies that Christians cannot sit idly by and let the Christians starve who sent the gospel their way.
- i) God intends that there be fairness in the distribution of what people need to live. They will lose nothing in sharing with their needy brothers and sisters in Christ. But they will face God's judgment if they keep for themselves a surplus that could have been used to help others on the edge of survival.
- h)** The quotation from Exodus 16:18 from the miracle of the manna caps this stage of Paul's argument:
- i) Exodus 16:18-20 And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. 19 And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. 20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them.
  - ii) The manna was distributed "each according to his need," and Paul takes this as a divine pattern for the distribution of material possessions.
  - iii) Some fail to see how the quotation is relevant since, they claim, it does not illustrate the principle of give and take, except that in God's scheme of things it does not pay to be selfish.
  - iv) But the principle of give and take is not the point. God's justice demands equality, and Paul interprets this to apply to the equality of sharing. Trying to amass more than one's fair share, hoarding it, or clutching it desperately is a futile waste of energy. One ends up with a pile of rot. Paul interprets the account from Exodus as teaching that one can share with others and still have enough.
  - v) The "enough" has to do with what is necessary. Unfortunately, the continuation of the story of the manna in the wilderness illustrates how

humans never seem to feel that enough is enough.

- vi) Sinful humans are not satisfied with their omer apiece and invariably want to squirrel away more for themselves. They also grow dissatisfied with plain old manna from heaven and crave luxuries (see Num 11:5-6).
- vii) Anxiety over possessing and keeping such things throttles any generosity as we worry that we may not have enough for ourselves. But our selfishness and covetousness is in turn stifled by the divine principle of equality that turns our excess spoils into spoilage reeking to heaven.
- viii) 1 Timothy 6:6-8 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

- i) This divine principle -- no one has a surplus; no one has a shortage -- was enforced by God in the time of the wilderness. Now it is voluntary, dependent on the working of God's grace in the hearts of Christians. The principle governs Paul's advice on handling money.
  - i) He told the Corinthians earlier that they should not depend on their money but live independently of it (1 Cor 7:29-31).
  - ii) He warns others to beware of greed (Rom 1:29; 1 Cor 6:10; 2 Cor 3:5; Eph 4:19; 5:3,5; and 1 Tim 6:10) and to provide for those in need (Rom 12:13; 2 Cor 9:8; Gal 6:6-10; Eph 4:28; and 2 Thess 3:13).
  - iii) In Eph 4:28 Paul says that one should work so that one may "have something to share with those in need" (cp. 1 Thess 4:12).
  - iv) On the other side, he warns others from trying to take advantage of others' generosity (see 2 Thess 3:8-12).
- j) Paul sees this project as the outworking of an even greater divine principle that is creating a worldwide fellowship of people in Christ.
  - i) They are interconnected to one another through Christ and have equal access to God's grace.
  - ii) They trust in God's daily provision, and no one needs to hoard their material blessings since God provides abundantly. If they lack anything, they need not fret. God has provided other Christians an abundance so they can help.
  - iii) God has also poured out grace to make Christians generous.

**4) Verses 16-17: But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. 17 For indeed he accepted the**

**exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.**

- a) Paul now informs the Corinthians about the envoys he has sent to them to help with the final arrangements: Titus, whom they know, the brother famous among the churches for his ministry in the gospel, and another whom he has found earnest.
    - i) Titus is mentioned in verses 16-17; the brother famous among the churches is mentioned in verse 18; and, the third person (the brother found earnest) is mentioned in verse 22. Only Titus is named.
    - ii) These three will also reinforce his exhortations on the collection, but Paul delicately tiptoes around the issue so that the Corinthians might not perceive their coming as putting undue pressure on them.
  - b) The Corinthians might be surprised to see Titus again so soon, so Paul writes a commendatory explanation.
    - i) His main intention is to dispel any hint of coercion on his part. The expression "of his own accord" in verse 17 speaks volumes.
    - ii) Paul is not coercing an underling to return to the Corinthians. He sends his partner, Titus, who wanted to return to them of his own accord.
  - c) Titus loves the Corinthians as Paul loves them. His zeal for the project is the same as Paul's.
    - i) Note that the "zeal" he feels for them has been given to him by God. Paul always recognizes God's hand in the lives of people. It is not just Titus' zeal, but zeal that was given him by God.
    - ii) Paul has mentioned the earnestness of the Corinthians (8:7; 7:11,12) and the Macedonians (8:8). He now mentions Titus's zeal, which becomes an example for them.
    - iii) Titus on his own initiative accepted Paul's appeal to return; they should, on their own initiative, accept Paul's appeal to give. Titus is more than eager; they should be more than eager.
- 5) Verse 18: And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;**
- a) The renowned brother who is being sent with Titus is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel.

- i) Paul does not identify who these churches might be. Conceivably, he is known everywhere in Paul's mission field and beyond, but it is more likely that Paul means all the churches in Macedonia and Achaia.
  - ii) The churches sing his praises for what he does for the gospel (lit., "in the gospel").
  - iii) One of the most important tasks "in the gospel" is proclaiming it. The phrase clearly is associated with preaching in Rom 1:9; 1 Cor 9:18; 2 Cor 10:14; and 1 Thess 3:2, where Timothy is identified as "God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ." Paul's usage of this term indicates that this brother is celebrated for his preaching.
- b) Since the days of the early church, the intriguing questions has been: "Who is this brother?"
- i) It is odd to recommend persons without giving their names, and this omission has raised speculation about why Paul does not name the brothers accompanying Titus. Paul generally omits the names of his adversaries ("the offender"), not his supporters. Several explanations have been proposed.
  - ii) The simplest reason for the omission is likely the best: perhaps the emissary is someone already known to the Corinthians; and since he arrived with the letter, it would have been unnecessary to name him.
  - iii) But who is he?
    - (1) Numerous candidates have been mentioned: Luke, Barnabas, Timothy, Silas, Mark, Aristarchus, and Apollos.
    - (2) **Luke:** Throughout Acts, Luke never mentions Titus, and in this epistle Paul refers to Titus but never to Luke. One commentator argues that in the first century writers would refrain from identifying close relatives, and he then surmises that Luke and Titus were close relatives, possibly brothers.
      - (a) Further, in the list of travelers safeguarding the collection on its way to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4), no one is listed as representing the church in Corinth. Yet, Luke accompanied Paul from Philippi to Jerusalem. Was Luke the brother who carried the Corinthian gift? Was Luke present with Paul at the writing of 2 Corinthians in Macedonia?
      - (b) Many Byzantine manuscripts include an explanatory note at the end of this epistle that reads: "The second epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi through Titus and Luke." (See the handout.)
    - (3) **Barnabas:** The relation between Paul and Barnabas was close, but after their first missionary journey, they had a sharp disagreement and went



their separate ways. Yet 1 Corinthians 9:6 suggests that at some point their previous cordial relationship was restored. But there is no evidence that Barnabas was with Paul in Macedonia and was sent to Corinth.

**(4) Timothy:** Paul writes the name of Timothy in the beginning of this epistle and identifies him as "our brother," which is literally "the brother." He had earlier sent Timothy to Corinth and counseled the Corinthians to receive him graciously. Is "the brother" in verse 18 simply a reference back to "the brother" in the first verse of this epistle?

**(5) Silas:** The name of Silas and Timothy occur in the context of preaching the gospel in Corinth in 1:19. Acts 18:5 tells us that Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia to help Paul preach the gospel in Corinth.

**(6) Mark:** The altercation between Paul and Barnabas resulted from Mark's departure for Jerusalem. His name does not appear in the Corinthian letters, but Paul again notes his name in other contexts. There is no evidence that Mark was known in Corinth.

**(7) Aristarchus:** We know that Aristarchus accompanied Paul to Jerusalem and to Rome. Paul called him his fellow prisoner and his fellow worker. Aristarchus represented the church in Thessalonica (Acts 20:4).

**(a)** As we will see in a moment, some argue that this group included Macedonians and some argue it did not. If it did, then Aristarchus is a likely candidate.

**(8) Apollos:** Paul refers to Apollos as "our brother" or "the brother" in 1 Corinthians 16:12, where said he had tried to convince Apollos to go to Corinth but that he was unwilling. But, Paul said, Apollos would go when had the opportunity. Perhaps this is that opportunity. He is otherwise not mentioned in this letter, even though he is mentioned frequently in the first letter.

**6) Verses 19-20: And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: 20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:**

**a)** Some commentators argue that this group included representatives from Macedonia and others argue it did not.

**i)** Those who argue it did point to verse 19 and say that "churches" must include the Macedonian congregations about which Paul has been writing and to which he explicitly referred in 8:1.

- ii) Those who argue it did not point to 9:4, where Paul appears to treat the arrival of Macedonian representatives as a hypothetical. (But the Macedonians in 9:4 may have been other Macedonians who were possibly coming later with Paul.)
- iii) There was some tension among the Corinthians about the Macedonians. Paul had declined to accept patronage from the Corinthians, but (as we will see in Chapter 11) he did accept money from the Macedonians to support his ministry in Corinth. The rich Corinthians most likely did not like the appearance of their receiving aid from the poor Macedonians. Paul may have been trying to settle these issues by sending Macedonian representatives to Corinth -- or perhaps avoid these issues by *not* sending such representatives.

**b) Why does Paul say this unnamed brother was "chosen of the churches?"**

- i) He was not chosen to go to Corinth to help them complete their donations but to represent these churches.
- ii) He accompanied Titus now to assure anyone who might question the integrity of the project that it is being carried out in a virtuous and unimpeachable way. If someone suspects foul play or that a conspiracy is afoot, they will have to implicate these other churches as well.

**c) Money is a sensitive issue and frequently sparks controversy, and Paul reminds them that this fund is a "grace" that is "being ministered" by us for the purpose of bringing glory to the Lord and to show our good will (8:19).**

- i) Paul then explains that he is taking every precaution to be above reproach. By having these well-known representatives from the churches accompany Titus, Paul makes it clear that he does not intend for this project to line his own pockets.
- ii) With someone appointed by other churches and not by Paul, there can be no doubts about his own honesty regarding what will happen to the funds.
- iii) Paul recognizes that the power of one's witness corresponds directly to one's reputation for integrity. He cannot allow the project to become shrouded in malicious rumors that all is not above board. He therefore takes steps to ensure that there be not the slightest hint of any impropriety.
- iv) When people are looking for any excuse not to give, it is best not to give them one.

**7) Verse 21: Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.**

- a) Paul cites Proverbs 3:4 (which is also cited in Rom 12:17) to underscore his

honorable intentions.

- i) His motives and actions are an open book to God, who scrutinizes him.
- ii) Still, he also wants to be completely open to people. This recalls his statement in 4:2 that he commends himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
- iii) Though he can accept being held in ill-repute (6:8; 1 Cor 4:10), he does not welcome dishonor and will do nothing to warrant it.
- iv) The gospel may be scandalous, but his behavior and sincerity must be exemplary to both believers and unbelievers.
- v) Too often those who call themselves Christians have brought discredit to themselves and to the Christian faith in the eyes of the world by mishandling donations through fraud or by receiving disproportionately high salaries for their "service" in the gospel.
- vi) Paul is sensitive to any charges that he might be guilty of corruption. He therefore bends over backwards to keep everything open and public and to avoid the slightest impression of any self-seeking in all of his ministry (6:3), especially with regard to a collection of a substantial sum of money.

**8) Verse 22: And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you.**

- a) This concern for propriety leads to the mention of another person who will accompany Titus.
  - i) He is identified as "our brother," which distinguishes him from the first one mentioned who is identified as "the brother."
  - ii) His position in the list and his being "sent" suggests his lesser seniority. Further, he is not described as being "chosen of the churches," but instead appears to have been chosen by Paul.
  - iii) This may mean that he is a well-known and longtime companion of Paul.
  - iv) "If we were able to guess at the identity of the brother in verse 18, we admit we have no idea who this brother may have been."
- b) His key qualification was that he was zealous or eager to help.
  - i) The word translated "diligent" in the KJV can mean active, zealous, or

earnest.

- ii) The confidence in verse 22 could be Paul's confidence (KJV) or this third brother's confidence (ASV), which presumably would have been based on Paul's own confidence.
- iii) Whoever this third brother was, he was an optimist and he was eager to get to work -- what better qualifications could there be for a worker in any field of endeavor?
- iv) He did not start off on his mission by complaining that the Corinthians probably wouldn't give very much anyway, so why bother? It's never going to work. How will they ever get all the way to Jerusalem with the money? And everyone is going to say they stole it anyway, so what does it matter? And the Macedonians gave so little, how will that small amount help anyone in Jerusalem? And do I really have to go? I'm kind of busy, you know. Etc. Etc. Etc.! (Any of that sound familiar?)

**9) Verse 23: Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.**

- a) Paul rounds out this paragraph on the administration of the program with a final reference to Titus and the brothers and their qualifications.
  - i) Titus is Paul's partner because he works with him for the Corinthians. In the Pauline letters, no other person receives the honor of being called "my partner" in the singular as Titus is called here.
  - ii) The brothers are "apostles" (sent ones) of the churches, which means that they are their messengers, agents, or representatives.
    - (1) Philippians 2:25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.
  - iii) They are not Paul's coworkers in Corinth but mostly bystanders to endorse that everything that Paul and his emissary undertakes is honorable.
- b) More important, these brothers are identified as the glory of Christ.
  - i) They bring glory to Christ by the quality of their lives. They are dedicated to the gospel of the glory of Christ (4:4).
  - ii) This phrase could also mean that they reflect the glory of Christ as Paul is "the aroma of Christ" (2:15) or the Corinthians are "a letter of Christ" (3:3).

- iii) Paul probably has more in mind than the prosaic idea that they are a credit to Christ. "Glory" is connected to revelation. Watson comments, "The glory of God is that which makes the invisible God visible, that which makes God known."
  - iv) Distinguishing them as "the glory of Christ" implies that Christ is made known through these delegates. Rather than blinding others to the glory of Christ as the god of this age does (4:4), they proclaim the gospel.
  - c) The three who come to Corinth are more than envoys. They become a standard of Christian living which the Corinthians would do well to emulate. In 8:24 Paul entreats the Corinthians to live up to his boasts about them.
- 10) Verse 24: Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.**
- a) Paul reemphasizes the appeal in 8:7-15 to fulfill their commitment.
  - b) They are to show the proof of their love to these men and to the churches. This exhortation intimates that the proof of their love is not shown by simply receiving these emissaries with open arms but by contributing liberally to help the saints.
  - c) One of the songs in our song book contains the memorable line, "Father, show me now that you love me."
    - i) Show me now that you love me? Yes, Father, I know that you sent your only begotten son to die on the cross for my sins --- but what have you done for me lately?
    - ii) We should sing and pray instead that we will show God that we love Him. And how do we do that? By our obedience to his word. See John 14:15 ("If ye love me, keep my commandments.")
- (1)** 1 John 4:7-12 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 **In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.** 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.
- (2)** 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

- d) The Corinthians' generosity is proof that God's grace is at work in them.
- e) Finally, Paul appeals to their pride to show others their generosity. Every eye, so to speak, is fixed on Corinth!
  - i) Christians and churches do not always make the right ethical decisions when left to themselves. Accountability to others keeps us from always doing what we want and serving our own selfish desires.
  - ii) Paul assumes that Christians live and act out of a communal context and that they are answerable to each other.
  - iii) The decisions made by the Corinthians regarding this matter will have immediate repercussions for the whole church. Knowing that our fellow Christians are watching what we do may help us to be more responsible in allowing God's grace to work in our lives.