

## Financially, We Aim at What Is Honourable in God's Sight and in Man's

### Small Group Follow-up Study for 2 Corinthians 8:16-24

#### **RE-READ**

[16] But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you. [17] For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord. [18] With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel. [19] And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will. [20] We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, [21] for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man. [22] And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you. [23] As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. [24] So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.

#### **RECAP**

According to *Christianity Today's* exposé, "Why Gospel for Asia Got Kicked Out of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability," the "ECFA found that GFA violated five of the accountability group's seven core standards." That's disconcerting, especially since the basis for establishing the ECFA and developing her *Seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship* is stated clearly by the Apostle Paul in verses 20 and 21 of our text: "We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, for we aim at what is honourable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man." What course is it that Paul refers to here? It's the course of having multiple godly people appointed by the church to handle church finances.

Multiple → Think Titus (v. 16), the famous brother (v. 18), and the earnest brother (v. 22).

Godly → According to verse 23 these brothers are "the glory of Christ." They have a God-given desire to serve (vv. 16-17), a burden for lost souls (v. 18), a desire to honour God (v. 19), a reputation for honesty (vv. 20-22), and a cooperative spirit (vv. 23-24).

Appointed → The famous brother and the earnest brother are both "messengers of the churches" (v. 23), having been appointed or elected by them to travel with Paul (v. 19).

#### **RESPOND**

1. What caught your attention from Sunday's sermon? What are you still thinking about/mulling over? What questions did Sunday's sermon raise that remain unanswered in your mind?
2. Why would Paul launch into a description of the accountability standards he had in place for the Corinthians' gift in the middle of a renewed call for them to give?
3. Can you honestly say you're convinced of the integrity of the ministries you support? What do you consider to be the benchmarks of a ministry's integrity? Do the ministries you support fit these criteria?
4. The churches chose Titus' two companions to be their representatives (vv. 18-19, 23). What does that tell us about the corporate life of the early churches and their relationships with one another?
5. In choosing people to administer the finances of the church, for what qualities should we look?
6. Given our discussion tonight, what sort of things should we be praying for our church?