CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

1 Corinthians Chapter 16 — Final Instructions and Closing Greetings

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

1 Corinthians Chapter 16 brings Paul's letter to a close.

After fifteen chapters of teaching, correction, and encouragement, Paul turns to practical matters.

Money.

Travel plans.

Coworkers.

Greetings.

At first, this chapter may seem less important than the great chapters on love and the resurrection.

But it is full of wisdom.

Right after the soaring truth of Chapter 15, Paul talks about a collection for the poor.

The resurrection hope does not lift believers away from real life.

It sends them into it.

Because our labor in the Lord is not in vain, we give, we plan, we serve, and we love.

Paul tells the Corinthians how to prepare an offering for the poor believers in Jerusalem.

He shares his travel plans, always open to the Lord's will.

He asks them to welcome Timothy and to respect faithful servants like Stephanas.

He gives five short commands that sum up the Christian life.

And he closes with greetings, a warning, a prayer, and a cry:

“Maranatha!”

“Our Lord, come!”

Notice how Paul ends a letter full of correction.

Not with anger.

With love.

“My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.”

The chapter moves through six movements:

- The Collection for the Saints (verses 1–4).

- Paul's Travel Plans (verses 5–9).
- Instructions Regarding Fellow Workers (verses 10–12).
- Exhortation to Stand Firm (verses 13–14).
- Commendation of Faithful Servants (verses 15–18).
- Final Greetings (verses 19–24).

The central truth of 1 Corinthians 16 is:

The hope of the resurrection leads believers to give generously, serve faithfully, stand firm, and do everything in love as they wait for the Lord to come.

I. THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS

1 Corinthians 16:1 — As in Galatia

“Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so also you must do.”

Paul answers another question from the Corinthians' letter.

“Now concerning the collection for the saints.”

The **saints** here are the poor believers in Jerusalem.

The church in Jerusalem had faced famine, persecution, and poverty.

Paul was gathering an offering from the Gentile churches to help them.

This collection mattered to Paul for more than one reason.

It met real needs.

It showed love in action.

And it showed that Jewish and Gentile believers were one family in Christ.

“As I directed the churches of Galatia, so also you must do.”

The Corinthians were not being asked to do something unusual.

Other churches were giving too.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 8:1

> Now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace God has given to the churches in Macedonia.

2 Corinthians 9:1

> There is really no need for me to write to you about this service to God's people.

Romans 15:26

> For the believers in Macedonia and Achaia were glad to give an offering for the poor among God's people in Jerusalem.

Spiritual Principle

Believers are called to care for the needs of other believers, even far away.

Key Truth

The church is one family across every nation.

II. ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

1 Corinthians 16:2 — Set Aside as He May Prosper

“On the first day of the week, let each of you set aside something, saving it up as he may prosper, so that there will be no need for collections when I come.”

Paul gives practical guidance for giving.

When?

“On the first day of the week.”

Sunday, the day of Christ's resurrection.

The day the early church gathered for worship.

Who?

“Let each of you.”

Everyone, not just the wealthy.

How?

“Set aside something, saving it up.”

Regularly and with a plan.

How much?

“As he may prosper.”

In proportion to what God has given.

Why?

“So that there will be no need for collections when I come.”

Paul did not want a last-minute rush or pressure.

He wanted thoughtful, faithful giving.

Cross References

Acts 20:7

> On the first day of the week, we gathered to break bread. Paul spoke to the people, and since he planned to leave the next day, he kept talking until midnight.

2 Corinthians 9:7

> Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give. Do not give reluctantly or because you feel forced, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Malachi 3:10

> “Bring the whole tenth into the storehouse, so that there will be food in My house. Test Me in this,” says the LORD of Armies, “and see if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”

Spiritual Principle

Christian giving should be regular, personal, planned, and proportional.

Application

Do you have a plan for giving?

Does your giving reflect how God has blessed you?

III. YOUR GIFT TO JERUSALEM

1 Corinthians 16:3 — Approved Messengers

“When I arrive, those you approve by letters I will send with your gift to Jerusalem.”

Paul shows great care in handling money.

“Those you approve.”

The church itself would choose trustworthy people to carry the gift.

“By letters.”

Paul would send letters of introduction with them.

“With your gift to Jerusalem.”

Notice that Paul calls it **“your gift.”**

It was the Corinthians' gift, not Paul's.

Paul made sure that everything was open and honest.

No one could accuse him of using the money for himself.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 8:19

> Not only that, but the churches chose him to travel with us as we carry this offering, which we are handling to honor the Lord Himself and to show our eagerness to help.

Acts 11:29

> The disciples decided that each of them, according to his ability, would send help to the believers living in Judea.

Romans 15:25

> But now I am on my way to Jerusalem to serve God's people there.

Spiritual Principle

Money given to God's work must be handled with honesty and accountability.

Key Truth

Integrity in handling money protects the church's witness.

IV. IF IT IS APPROPRIATE

1 Corinthians 16:4 — They Will Accompany Me

“If it is appropriate for me to go also, they will accompany me.”

Paul was not sure yet whether he would go to Jerusalem himself.

If he did, the church's messengers would travel with him.

Either way, the gift would be carried by people the church trusted.

In the end, Paul did go to Jerusalem with the offering, along with representatives from many churches.

Cross References

Acts 20:4

> He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.

2 Corinthians 8:19

> Not only that, but the churches chose him to travel with us as we carry this offering, which we are handling to honor the Lord Himself and to show our eagerness to help.

Acts 24:17

> After several years away, I came to Jerusalem to bring gifts for the poor of my nation and to present offerings.

Spiritual Principle

Wise leaders make plans while staying open to God's direction.

V. THROUGH MACEDONIA

1 Corinthians 16:5 — Paul's Route

“I will come to you after I pass through Macedonia—for I am passing through Macedonia—”

Paul shares his travel plans.

He was in Ephesus.

He planned to travel north through Macedonia, visiting the churches there.

Then he would come south to Corinth.

Paul cared about all the churches.

He wanted to strengthen each one.

Cross References

Acts 19:21

> After all this happened, Paul decided, led by the Spirit, to travel through Macedonia and Achaia and then go to Jerusalem. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must also visit Rome.”

2 Corinthians 1:16

> I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and again on my way back, and then have you send me on to Judea.

Acts 20:1

> When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and encouraged them. Then he said goodbye and set out for Macedonia.

Spiritual Principle

Gospel work involves careful planning.

VI. PERHAPS I WILL STAY

1 Corinthians 16:6 — Spending the Winter

“and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey wherever I go.”

Paul hoped to stay longer in Corinth.

“Perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter.”

In the ancient world, sea travel stopped during winter because storms made it dangerous.

Paul might stay in Corinth until spring.

“So that you may help me on my journey wherever I go.”

Paul hoped the Corinthians would support his next missionary journey.

Notice the word **“perhaps.”**

Paul held his plans loosely.

Cross References

Titus 3:12

> When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to spend the winter there.

Romans 15:24

> I plan to visit you when I go to Spain. I hope to see you as I pass through, and to have you help me on my journey there after I have enjoyed your company for a while.

Acts 15:3

> The church sent them on their way. As they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had turned to God. This news brought great joy to all the believers.

Spiritual Principle

Churches share in the mission when they help send God's servants on their way.

VII. IF THE LORD PERMITS

1 Corinthians 16:7 — Not Just in Passing

“For I do not wish to see you now only in passing, but I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.”

Paul wanted more than a quick visit.

“I do not wish to see you now only in passing.”

The Corinthians had many problems.

Paul wanted to spend real time with them.

“I hope to remain with you for some time.”

Then he adds an important phrase:

“If the Lord permits.”

Paul made plans.

But he submitted every plan to God.

Cross References

Acts 18:21

> But as he left, he promised, “I will come back to you if God wants me to.” Then he sailed from Ephesus.

James 4:15

> Instead, you should say, “If the Lord wants, we will live and do this or that.”

Romans 1:10

> In my prayers I always ask that now at last, by God's will, the way may be opened for me to come to you.

Spiritual Principle

Make your plans, but always add, “If the Lord permits.”

Application

Are you holding your plans in submission to God's will?

VIII. IN EPHESUS UNTIL PENTECOST

1 Corinthians 16:8 — Where Paul Was Writing

“But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost,”

This verse tells us where Paul wrote this letter.

He was in **Ephesus**, a great city across the sea from Corinth.

He planned to stay there **until Pentecost.**

Pentecost was a Jewish feast that came fifty days after Passover.

This suggests Paul was writing in the spring.

It may also explain why he spoke of Christ as our Passover Lamb in Chapter 5.

Cross References

Acts 19:1

> While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the inland regions and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples.

Acts 2:1

> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Acts 20:16

> Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not spend time in the province of Asia. He was hurrying to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

Spiritual Principle

God works through real people in real places at real times.

IX. A GREAT AND EFFECTIVE DOOR

1 Corinthians 16:9 — And Many Adversaries

“because a great and effective door has opened for me, and there are many adversaries.”

Paul explains why he was staying in Ephesus.

“A great and effective door has opened for me.”

God had given Paul a wonderful opportunity.

In Ephesus, Paul taught daily for two years.

The gospel spread throughout the region.

“And there are many adversaries.”

Notice the word **“and.”**

Not **“but.”**

Opportunity and opposition came together.

In fact, the opposition was a sign that God was at work.

Paul did not see opposition as a reason to leave.

He saw it as a reason to stay.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 2:12

> When I came to Troas to preach the good news of Christ, I found that the Lord had opened a door for me.

Acts 19:9

> But some of them became stubborn and refused to believe, and they spoke evil of the Way in front of the crowd. So Paul left them, took the disciples with him, and taught every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

Colossians 4:3

> At the same time, pray for us too, that God will open a door for our message, so that we can tell the secret truth about Christ, for which I am in chains.

Spiritual Principle

Open doors and opposition often come together.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Opposition does not mean the door is closed; it often means the door is open.

X. IF TIMOTHY COMES

1 Corinthians 16:10 — Without Fear

“If Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear, for he is doing the Lord's work as I also do.”

Paul had sent Timothy ahead.

“See that he may be with you without fear.”

Timothy was young.

He may have been timid.

And the Corinthian church could be difficult.

Paul asks them to welcome him and make him feel safe.

“For he is doing the Lord's work as I also do.”

Timothy's authority came from the work he was doing.

He was serving the Lord just as Paul was.

Cross References

1 Timothy 4:12

> Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young. Instead, set an example for the believers in your speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.

1 Corinthians 4:17

> That is why I have sent Timothy to you. He is my dear and faithful son in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Philippians 2:19

> I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may also be encouraged when I hear news about you.

Spiritual Principle

Churches should welcome and encourage those who serve them.

Application

Is there a young or new servant in your church who needs your encouragement?

XI. LET NO ONE DESPISE HIM

1 Corinthians 16:11 — Send Him in Peace

“Therefore let no one despise him, but send him on his way in peace, that he may come to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers.”

Paul continues.

“Let no one despise him.”

The proud Corinthians might look down on a young man like Timothy.

Paul says, **“Don't.”**

“But send him on his way in peace.”

Treat him well and help him on his journey.

“For I am expecting him with the brothers.”

Paul was waiting to hear Timothy's report.

Cross References

Titus 2:15

> Teach these things. Encourage and correct with full authority. Do not let anyone look down on you.

3 John 1:6

> They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their journey in a way that honors God.

Acts 15:33

> After spending some time there, they were sent off in peace by the believers to return to those who had sent them.

Spiritual Principle

God's servants should be honored for their work, not judged by their age or appearance.

XII. OUR BROTHER APOLLOS

1 Corinthians 16:12 — Not His Will to Come Now

“As for our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brothers, but it was not his will to come now; he will come when he has opportunity.”

This verse is beautiful.

Remember the divisions in Chapter 1.

“I follow Paul.”

“I follow Apollos.”

Some thought Paul and Apollos were rivals.

But Paul calls him **“our brother Apollos.”**

And Paul **“strongly urged”** him to visit Corinth.

There was no jealousy between them.

“But it was not his will to come now.”

Apollos decided not to go yet.

Perhaps he did not want to make the divisions worse by showing up.

“He will come when he has opportunity.”

Paul respected Apollos' decision.

Cross References

Acts 18:24

> Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, who was born in Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a gifted speaker and knew the Scriptures very well.

1 Corinthians 3:6

> I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.

Titus 3:13

> Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, and see that they have everything they need.

Spiritual Principle

True servants of God are partners, not rivals.

Key Truth

The Corinthians tried to set Paul and Apollos against each other.

Paul and Apollos never played that game.

XIII. BE WATCHFUL, STAND FIRM

1 Corinthians 16:13 — Courage and Strength

“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act with courage, be strong.”

Paul gives four short commands, like a commander calling to his soldiers.

Be watchful.

Stay alert.

Watch for danger, false teaching, and temptation.

Watch for the Lord's return.

Stand firm in the faith.

Do not be moved by every new idea.

Hold on to the truth of the gospel.

Act with courage.

The phrase literally means **“act like men”**—be brave and mature.

Do not be childish or fearful.

Be strong.

Not in your own strength, but in the Lord's.

These commands sum up much of what Paul has taught in the letter.

Cross References

Ephesians 6:10

> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.

1 Peter 5:8

> Be alert and clear-minded. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

Joshua 1:9

> Haven't I commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged, because the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

Spiritual Principle

The Christian life calls for watchfulness, firmness, courage, and strength.

Application

Which of these four commands do you most need to obey today?

XIV. LET ALL BE DONE IN LOVE

1 Corinthians 16:14 — The Final Command

“Let all that you do be done in love.”

After four commands that sound like a soldier's orders, Paul adds a fifth.

“Let all that you do be done in love.”

This balances everything.

Being watchful without love becomes suspicious.

Standing firm without love becomes stubborn.

Courage without love becomes harsh.

Strength without love becomes proud.

Love must guide it all.

This one verse sums up the whole letter.

Divisions, lawsuits, food, worship, gifts—every problem in Corinth would have been solved by love.

Cross References

Colossians 3:14

> And over all these, put on love, which ties everything together in perfect unity.

1 Peter 4:8

> Above all, keep loving one another deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Romans 14:15

> If your brother or sister is hurt by what you eat, you are no longer living in love. Do not let what you eat destroy someone for whom Christ died.

Spiritual Principle

Love must guide everything we do.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Strength without love becomes harshness; love without strength becomes weakness; Christ calls us to both.

XV. THE HOUSEHOLD OF STEPHANAS

1 Corinthians 16:15 — Devoted to Service

“You know the household of Stephanas—that they were the first converts in Achaia, and that they devoted themselves to the service of the saints—”

Paul points to a faithful family.

“The household of Stephanas.”

Paul had baptized this family himself.

“They were the first converts in Achaia.”

They were the firstfruits of the gospel in that region.

“And they devoted themselves to the service of the saints.”

The word means they **appointed themselves.**

No one assigned them.

They saw the needs and gave themselves to meet them.

This is the heart of a servant.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 1:16

> I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.

Romans 16:5

> Also greet the church that meets in their home. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first person in the province of Asia to believe in Christ.

Hebrews 6:10

> God is not unfair. He will not forget your work and the love you have shown for His name as you have helped His people and continue to help them.

Spiritual Principle

True servants see needs and give themselves to meet them.

Key Truth

God notices those who devote themselves to serving His people.

XVI. SUBMIT TO SUCH AS THESE

1 Corinthians 16:16 — Every Fellow Worker

“be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer.”

Paul tells the church how to respond to faithful servants.

“Be subject to such as these.”

Follow their lead.

Respect their guidance.

“And to every fellow worker and laborer.”

Not just Stephanas, but everyone who works hard in the Lord's service.

Notice what earns this respect.

Not wealth.

Not eloquence.

Not impressive gifts.

Faithful service.

Cross References

Hebrews 13:17

> Obey your leaders and follow their direction. They watch over your souls as people who must give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with sorrow, since that would not help you.

1 Thessalonians 5:12

> Brothers and sisters, we ask you to respect those who work hard among you, who lead you in the Lord and give you guidance.

1 Peter 5:5

> In the same way, you who are younger, submit to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Spiritual Principle

Faithful service, not status, earns respect in the church.

XVII. STEPHANAS, FORTUNATUS, AND ACHAICUS

1 Corinthians 16:17 — Supplying What Was Lacking

“I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, for they supplied what was lacking on your part.”

Three men from Corinth had come to visit Paul in Ephesus.

They may have brought the Corinthians' letter with them.

“I rejoice at their coming.”

Their visit brought Paul joy.

“For they supplied what was lacking on your part.”

Paul could not be with the whole church.

But these three men brought the church's love and fellowship to him.

They filled the gap.

Cross References

Philippians 2:30

> because he nearly died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to give me the help that you could not give.

2 Corinthians 11:9

> When I was with you and needed something, I did not burden anyone. The believers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and I will continue to do so.

Philippians 4:10

> I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have shown your concern for me again. You were concerned before, but you had no chance to show it.

Spiritual Principle

A few faithful people can bring great encouragement to God's servants.

XVIII. THEY REFRESHED MY SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 16:18 — Acknowledge Such People

“They have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such people.”

Paul describes the effect of their visit.

“They have refreshed my spirit and yours.”

They encouraged Paul.

And they encouraged the church back home.

Some people drain others.

Some people refresh others.

“Therefore acknowledge such people.”

Recognize them.

Thank them.

Honor them.

Cross References

Philemon 1:7

> Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of God's people.

1 Thessalonians 5:12

> Brothers and sisters, we ask you to respect those who work hard among you, who lead you in the Lord and give you guidance.

1 Timothy 5:17

> Elders who lead well should be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

Spiritual Principle

God's people should recognize and honor those who refresh others.

Application

Who has refreshed your spirit?

Thank them this week.

XIX. AQUILA AND PRISCILLA

1 Corinthians 16:19 — The Church in Their House

“The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, with the church that meets in their house.”

Paul begins his final greetings.

“The churches of Asia greet you.”

Believers in other places sent their love.

“Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord.”

This couple had been with Paul in Corinth.

They were tentmakers like Paul.

They had worked side by side with him and later moved to Ephesus.

The Corinthians knew them well.

“With the church that meets in their house.”

The early church met in homes.

Aquila and Priscilla opened their home for worship.

They were a couple who used everything they had for the Lord.

Cross References

Acts 18:2

> There he met a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,

Romans 16:3

> Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus.

Romans 16:5

> Also greet the church that meets in their home. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first person in the province of Asia to believe in Christ.

Spiritual Principle

God uses ordinary homes and faithful couples to build His church.

Key Truth

Your home can be a place of ministry.

XX. A HOLY KISS

1 Corinthians 16:20 — Greet One Another

“All the brothers greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

More greetings.

“All the brothers greet you.”

The whole church in Ephesus sent its love.

“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

In that culture, a kiss on the cheek was a common greeting among family and friends.

Paul calls it a **holy** kiss.

It was a sign of love, peace, and family belonging in Christ.

In a church torn by divisions, this greeting would show that they were truly one family.

Today, believers in many cultures express the same love with a handshake, an embrace, or a warm greeting.

Cross References

Romans 16:16

> Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings.

2 Corinthians 13:12

> Greet one another with a holy kiss.

1 Peter 5:14

> Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Spiritual Principle

Believers should greet one another with genuine love as members of one family.

XXI. WITH MY OWN HAND

1 Corinthians 16:21 — Paul's Signature

“This greeting is with my own hand—Paul.”

Paul usually dictated his letters to a helper who wrote them down.

But at the end, he took the pen himself.

“This greeting is with my own hand.”

This was his personal signature.

It proved the letter was truly from him.

And it was a personal touch.

After all the correction, Paul wanted them to know that he cared for them personally.

Cross References

Galatians 6:11

> See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

Colossians 4:18

> I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

2 Thessalonians 3:17

> I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the mark in every letter I write. This is how I write.

Spiritual Principle

Personal care matters in ministry.

XXII. MARANATHA

1 Corinthians 16:22 — Our Lord, Come!

“If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. Maranatha!”

Paul writes two strong statements.

“If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.”

This is a solemn warning.

The whole letter has been about love.

Love for one another.

Love that builds up.

But the deepest love is love for the Lord Jesus.

Anyone who claims to be a Christian but does not love Jesus is in grave danger.

To reject the love of Christ is to stand under God's judgment.

“Maranatha!”

This is an Aramaic word, the language Jesus spoke.

It means **“Our Lord, come!”**

It was a prayer of the earliest believers.

They longed for Jesus to return.

Paul ends his letter with this cry of hope.

Cross References

Galatians 1:8

> But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a good news different from the one we preached to you, let that person be under God's curse!

Revelation 22:20

> He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Ephesians 6:24

> Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love that never fades.

Spiritual Principle

Love for the Lord Jesus is the mark of a true believer.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Those who love Jesus long for Him to come.

XXIII. THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS

1 Corinthians 16:23 — Be with You

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

Paul's letter began with grace.

“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Now it ends with grace.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

Everything the Corinthians needed was found in the grace of Christ.

Grace to forgive their sins.

Grace to heal their divisions.

Grace to change their hearts.

Grace to stand firm until He comes.

Cross References

Romans 16:20

> The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

2 Corinthians 13:14

> May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Revelation 22:21

> The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all of God's people. Amen.

Spiritual Principle

The Christian life begins in grace, continues in grace, and ends in grace.

XXIV. MY LOVE BE WITH YOU ALL

1 Corinthians 16:24 — In Christ Jesus. Amen.

“My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.”

Paul's final words are remarkable.

This church had criticized him.

Some had rejected his authority.

They had divisions, sin, pride, and confusion.

Paul had to rebuke them many times.

Yet his final words are:

“My love be with you all.”

Not some of them.

All of them.

Even those who opposed him.

“In Christ Jesus.”

Paul's love flowed from Christ's love.

He had written a whole chapter about love.

And he ends by showing it.

“Amen.”

So be it.

Cross References

Philippians 4:23

> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

2 Timothy 4:22

> The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Romans 16:24

> May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.

Spiritual Principle

True love continues even toward those who have been difficult.

Key Truth

A letter full of correction ends with love.

That is the mark of a true shepherd.

XXV. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 16

1. Generosity Strengthens the Church

“On the first day of the week, let each of you set aside something.”

Principle:

Giving regularly and willingly provides for the needs of fellow believers and displays love in action.

2. Gospel Work Requires Planning and Endurance

“I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.”

Principle:

Paul's travel plans show both human responsibility and dependence on God's will.

3. Honor Faithful Servants

“Acknowledge such people.”

Principle:

Believers like Timothy, Stephanas, and others are examples of humble and dedicated ministry.

4. Love Is the Foundation

“Let all that you do be done in love.”

Principle:

Every command—whether to stand firm, be courageous, or serve others—must be rooted in love.

5. Christ's Return Is Near

“Maranatha!”

Principle:

“Our Lord, come!” reminds us to live in expectation of Jesus' appearing.

XXVI. PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN GIVING

Verses 1–4 give clear guidance for giving.

Giving Is for a Purpose

The collection helped poor believers in Jerusalem.

Giving Is Regular

“On the first day of the week.”

Giving Is for Everyone

“Let each of you.”

Giving Is Planned

“Set aside something, saving it up.”

Giving Is Proportional

“As he may prosper.”

Giving Is Handled with Integrity

Trusted people chosen by the church carried the gift.

Giving Is Shared

Many churches gave together.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Generous giving is the resurrection hope put into practice.

XXVII. PAUL'S FELLOW WORKERS

Chapter 16 introduces us to people who served alongside Paul.

Timothy

Young and perhaps timid, but doing the Lord's work.

Apollos

A gifted teacher and Paul's brother, not his rival.

Stephanas and His Household

The first converts in Achaia, devoted to serving the saints.

Fortunatus and Achaicus

Men who traveled to encourage Paul and refreshed his spirit.

Aquila and Priscilla

A faithful couple who opened their home for the church.

Key Truth

God's work is never done by one person; it is done by a team of faithful servants.

XXVIII. FIVE COMMANDS FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Verses 13–14 give five short commands.

- **Be watchful.** Stay spiritually alert.
- **Stand firm in the faith.** Hold on to the truth.
- **Act with courage.** Be brave and mature.
- **Be strong.** Rely on the Lord's strength.
- **Let all that you do be done in love.** Let love guide everything.

Key Truth

The first four commands make us strong; the fifth keeps our strength loving.

XXIX. LOOKING BACK OVER 1 CORINTHIANS

Chapter 16 completes Paul's letter.

Here is a summary of the whole book.

Chapter 1 — Christ the Power and Wisdom of God

The church is united around Christ crucified, not human leaders.

Chapter 2 — The Spirit Reveals the Wisdom of God

God's wisdom is known only through His Spirit.

Chapter 3 — Christ the Only Foundation

God gives the growth, and Christ is the only foundation.

Chapter 4 — Faithfulness in God's Household

God's servants are stewards who must prove faithful.

Chapter 5 — Discipline in the Church

Christ our Passover calls His church to holiness.

Chapter 6 — Glorify God in Your Body

We were bought with a price, so we belong to God.

Chapter 7 — Marriage, Singleness, and Devotion

Both marriage and singleness are gifts for serving the Lord.

Chapter 8 — Knowledge, Love, and Liberty

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

Chapter 9 — Paul's Rights and Sacrifice

Paul gave up his rights for the sake of the gospel.

Chapter 10 — Examples, Warnings, and God's Glory

Do everything to the glory of God.

Chapter 11 — Headship, Worship, and the Lord's Supper

Come to the Lord's Table with reverence and love.

Chapter 12 — The Gifts and the Body

Many members, one body in Christ.

Chapter 13 — The Greatest Gift: Love

The greatest of these is love.

Chapter 14 — Order in the Gifts

God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

Chapter 15 — The Resurrection

Christ is risen, and death is defeated.

Chapter 16 — Final Instructions

Let all that you do be done in love.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

From beginning to end, 1 Corinthians calls a divided church back to Christ crucified, Christ risen, and the love that makes His people one.

XXX. WHAT 1 CORINTHIANS 16 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Is the Lord of Our Plans

“If the Lord permits.”

He Is the Lord Whose Work We Do

“He is doing the Lord's work.”

He Is the Lord We Love

“If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ...”

He Is the Lord Who Is Coming

“Maranatha!”

He Is the Source of All Grace

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The letter that began with the grace of Jesus ends with the grace of Jesus—and with a longing for Him to come.

XXXI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What was the collection for the saints?

An offering from the Gentile churches for poor believers in Jerusalem.

Question 2

What principles of giving does Paul teach in verse 2?

Giving should be regular, on the first day of the week.

Everyone should take part.

It should be planned and set aside.

It should be in proportion to how God has blessed.

Question 3

Why did Paul arrange for others to carry the money?

To make sure the gift was handled with honesty and accountability.

No one could accuse Paul of misusing it.

Question 4

What does “if the Lord permits” teach us?

We should make plans, but always submit them to God's will.

Question 5

Why did Paul stay in Ephesus despite many adversaries?

God had opened a great door for the gospel.

Opposition did not mean the door was closed.

Question 6

Why did Paul ask the Corinthians to welcome Timothy?

Timothy was young and may have been timid.

He was doing the Lord's work and deserved respect.

Question 7

What does verse 12 show about Paul and Apollos?

They were brothers and partners, not rivals.

Paul urged Apollos to visit and respected his decision.

Question 8

What are the five commands in verses 13–14?

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act with courage, be strong, and let all that you do be done in love.

Question 9

Why did Paul commend the household of Stephanas?

They were the first converts in Achaia.

They devoted themselves to serving the saints.

Question 10

What was the “holy kiss”?

A common greeting of love and family belonging in that culture.

Today believers express the same love in ways that fit their culture.

Question 11

What does “Maranatha” mean?

It is an Aramaic word meaning “Our Lord, come!”

It expresses the early church's longing for Christ's return.

Question 12

What should 1 Corinthians 16 change about the way Christians live today?

1 Corinthians 16 should cause believers to live:

- Giving regularly and generously.
- Handling money with integrity.
- Making plans under God's will.
- Walking through open doors despite opposition.
- Encouraging and honoring faithful servants.
- Standing firm with courage and strength.
- Doing everything in love.
- Longing for the Lord's return.

XXXII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

1 Corinthians 16 asks several important questions.

Am I a Generous Giver?

Do I give regularly and in proportion to how God has blessed me?

Do I Hold My Plans Loosely?

Do I say, “If the Lord permits”?

What Open Door Has God Given Me?

Am I walking through it, even if there is opposition?

Do I Encourage Those Who Serve?

Who needs my welcome and support?

Am I Watchful and Firm?

Am I alert to danger and standing firm in the faith?

Is Love Guiding Everything I Do?

Or is my strength becoming harsh?

Do I Refresh Others?

Do people leave my presence encouraged?

Do I Love the Lord Jesus?

Do I long for Him to come?

XXXIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Resurrection Hope in Everyday Life”

Chapter 15 lifts our eyes to eternity.

Death defeated.

Bodies raised.

Victory in Christ.

Then Chapter 16 brings us right back to earth.

Money for the poor.

Travel plans.

Coworkers.

Greetings.

This is no accident.

The resurrection is not an escape from everyday life.

It is what gives everyday life meaning.

Because Christ is risen, our giving matters.

Our planning matters.

Our serving matters.

Our love matters.

Our labor in the Lord is not in vain.

This creates a powerful principle.

Heavenly hope is lived out in ordinary faithfulness.

Principle:

The hope of the resurrection is shown in the way we give, serve, and love today.

XXXIV. FINAL APPLICATION

1 Corinthians Chapter 16 closes a letter written to a troubled church.

The Corinthians had divisions.

They had pride.

They had sin.

They had confusion.

Paul had to correct them again and again.

But he never gave up on them.

He planned to visit.

He sent Timothy.

He urged them to give.

He honored their faithful members.

And he ended with love.

1 Corinthians 16 therefore reminds us:

Never stop giving.

Never stop serving.

Never stop standing firm.

Never stop loving.

Never stop longing for Jesus to come.

The church does not need perfect people.

It needs:

Generous givers.

Faithful servants.

Courageous believers.

And hearts full of love for the Lord Jesus.

The same grace still calls us:

Tell people that Jesus is coming.

Tell people that His grace is enough.

Tell people that love is the greatest gift.

Tell people that their labor in the Lord is not in vain.

And until He comes:

Be watchful.

Stand firm.

Be strong.

Do everything in love.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the letter of 1 Corinthians and for every truth You have taught us through it.

Thank You for the gospel of Christ crucified and risen.

Thank You for the opportunity to give to the needs of Your people.

Thank You for faithful servants like Timothy, Apollos, Stephanas, Aquila, and Priscilla.

Thank You for the people who have refreshed our spirits.

Thank You for open doors to share the gospel, even when there are many adversaries.

Forgive us when we have held tightly to what You have given us.

Forgive us when we have made our plans without You.

Forgive us when we have failed to encourage those who serve.

Forgive us when our strength has been without love.

Make us generous givers.

Help us plan wisely and say, “If the Lord permits.”

Give us courage to walk through the doors You open.

Help us welcome, honor, and refresh those who serve.

Make us watchful, firm, courageous, and strong.

And let everything we do be done in love.

Fill our hearts with love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And until the day He returns, may we live with this prayer on our lips:

“Maranatha! Our Lord, come!”

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act with courage, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.” — 1 Corinthians 16:13–14

Central Truth

The hope of the resurrection leads believers to give generously, serve faithfully, stand firm, and do everything in love as they wait for the Lord to come.

1 Corinthians 16 in One Sentence

Paul closes his letter by teaching regular, generous giving, sharing his plans under the Lord's will, honoring faithful servants, calling believers to be watchful, firm, courageous, strong, and loving, and ending with a cry for the Lord's return and a word of grace and love to all.