

WHY YOUR REPUTATION MATTERS

2 Corinthians 8:16-24

GOD GIVES US THE DESIRE TO SERVE HIM BUT WE MUST CHOOSE TO BE OBEDIENT

- “Thanks be to God, who put the same concern for you into the heart of Titus. ¹⁷ For he welcomed our appeal and, being very diligent, went out to you by his own choice.” (2 Cor. 8:16-17)
- “For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose.” (Phil. 2:13)
- **The Holy Spirit does not lead us away from the truth He has inspired.**
- “Faith that produces no corresponding action is dead.” (James 2:17 paraphrase)

THE ENTIRETY OF OUR LIVES SHOULD BE MARKED WITH INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- “We have sent with him the brother who is praised among all the churches for his gospel ministry. ¹⁹ And not only that, but he was also appointed by the churches to accompany us with this gracious gift that we are administering for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. ²⁰ We are taking this precaution so that no one will criticize us about this large sum that we are administering. ²¹ Indeed, we are giving careful thought to do what is right, not only before the Lord but also before people. ²² We have also sent with them our brother. We have often tested him in many circumstances and found him to be diligent—and now even more diligent because of his great confidence in you. ²³ As for Titus, he is my partner and coworker for you; as for our brothers, they are the messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 8:18-23)
- “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way.” (Psalm 139:23-24)
- **Integrity is essential, but accountability helps protect integrity from being compromised.**
- “Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits.” (1 Peter 2:12)

OUR LOVE FOR GOD AND OTHERS SHOULD BE PROVEN, NOT JUST SPOKEN

- “Therefore, show them proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you.” (2 Corinthians 8:24)

- **Biblical love expresses itself through a commitment to seek another person’s good in a manner consistent with God’s truth.**
- “Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth.” (1 John 3:18)
- **Our love for God for God is demonstrated through obedience.**
- “The one who has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me.” (John 14:21)
- **Our love for others should be demonstrated through practical service.**
- “For you were called to be free, brothers and sisters; only don’t use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.” (Galatians 5:13)

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION

Observation:

- Who placed a concern for the Corinthians in Titus's heart, and how did Titus respond to that concern? (vss. 16-17)
- How does Paul describe the men accompanying Titus, and what qualifications made them trustworthy representatives of the churches? (vss. 18-19 & 22-23)
- Why did Paul take special precautions in administering the financial gift? (vss. 20-21)
- What does Paul ask the Corinthians to demonstrate before the churches? (vs. 24)

Understanding

- Why is it possible to genuinely desire to serve God but never actually follow through?
- How can we distinguish between a desire that is genuinely being shaped by the Holy Spirit and one that is primarily driven by personal ambition, emotions, cultural influence, or selfish motives?
- Why is it dangerous to assume that simply because we strongly desire something, God must be leading us toward it?
- What qualities should we look for when entrusting someone with responsibility, influence, leadership, or resources in the church?
- In what areas of life are you most accountable to others, and where might additional accountability help protect your integrity?
- What are some practical ways we can demonstrate love within our church family beyond simply being friendly, attending services, or telling people we care about them?

Loving Outward:

- Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
- Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
- Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?