

# 2 Corinthians 12:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

## Analysis

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**But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.** Paul quotes his opponents' accusation: while he didn't take money directly (avoiding the "burden"), he allegedly used **guile** (dolos, δόλος, "deceit," "trickery") to extract funds indirectly—perhaps through the Jerusalem collection (chapters 8-9) or through Titus and other co-workers. The charge: Paul's financial independence was a deceptive front while he secretly manipulated Corinthians through subordinates.

The phrase **being crafty** (panougos, πανούργος) means "cunning," "unscrupulous"—the same word the serpent uses in Genesis 3:1 LXX. The accusation is serious: Paul is satanically deceptive, pretending selflessness while orchestrating financial exploitation through intermediaries. This shows how comprehensively his opponents attacked his character: if he takes money, he's greedy; if he refuses money, he's manipulative.

Paul's strategy is transparent quotation ("But be it so...") followed by refutation (vv. 17-18). By voicing the accusation directly, he demonstrates its absurdity and prepares to dismantle it with evidence of Titus and others' integrity.

## Historical Context

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The collection for Jerusalem saints (Romans 15:25-27, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8-9) was a significant financial undertaking. Paul's opponents

apparently suggested this was a scam—Paul would pocket the funds. This accusation was particularly vicious because it turned Paul's generous initiative (uniting Gentile and Jewish believers through shared resources) into evidence of greed.

## Related Passages

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**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How should ministers respond when both action and inaction are twisted into accusations—taking support proves greed; refusing support proves manipulation?
2. What does this false accusation teach about the impossibility of satisfying critics determined to find fault regardless of behavior?
3. How can contemporary church leaders maintain financial transparency to answer charges of "craftiness" in handling congregational funds?

## Interlinear Text

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ἔστω	δέ	ἐγὼ	οὐ	κατεβάρησα	ὑμᾶς	ἀλλ'	ὑπάρχων
<b>be it so</b>	<b>But</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>not</b>	<b>burden</b>	<b>you</b>	<b>nevertheless</b>	<b>being</b>
G2077	G1161	G1473	G3756	G2599	G5209	G235	G5225
πανουργος	δόλῳ	ὑμᾶς	ἔλαβον				
<b>crafty</b>	<b>with guile</b>	<b>you</b>	<b>I caught</b>				
G3835	G1388	G5209	G2983				

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