

2 Corinthians 8:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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—Paul introduces a third delegate: ton adelphon hēmōn (τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν, 'our brother') whom Paul has repeatedly tested (edokimasamen... pollakis, ἐδοκιμάσαμεν... πολλάκις, 'we tested... many times'). The perfect participle emphasizes completed testing with ongoing results: he's spoudaion onta (σπουδαῖον ὄντα, 'being diligent/earnest'). Now he's spoudaioteron (σπουδαιότερον, 'more diligent') due to pepoithēsei pollē (πεποιθήσει πολλῇ, 'great confidence') in the Corinthians.

This third brother (also unnamed) brings tested character and fresh enthusiasm. Paul's description—pollakis... en pollois ('often... in many things')—indicates extensive ministry experience. The confidence (pepoithēsis, πεποίθησις) in Corinth motivates increased diligence: he believes they'll respond well, energizing his service. This teaches important ministry dynamics: confidence begets diligence, expectation motivates effort. Paul publicly expresses confidence in Corinth (despite recent conflicts) to inspire them to meet those expectations. Three delegates—each tested, each motivated differently (Titus by personal concern, the second by church appointment, the third by confidence in Corinth)—ensured both competence and accountability.

Historical Context

The three-delegate system reflects both Jewish legal requirements (two or three witnesses, Deuteronomy 19:15) and Roman administrative practice (multiple officials preventing corruption). Paul adapted cultural wisdom for church governance: no single person controlled funds, decisions required consensus, and diverse motivations prevented collusion. This created a checks-and-balances system protecting both the collection and Paul's reputation.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does publicly expressed confidence motivate people to rise to expectations?
2. What role does proven character ('oftentimes proved diligent') play in ministry assignments?
3. Why did Paul use three delegates instead of one very trustworthy person?

Interlinear Text

συνεπέμψαμεν	δὲ	αὐτοῖς	τῇ	ἀδελφὸν	ἡμῶν	ὃν
we have sent	And	with them	which	brother	our	whom
G4842	G1161	G846	G3588	G80	G2257	G3739
ἐδοκιμάσαμεν	ἐν	πολλῇ	πολλάκις	σπουδαῖον	ὄντα	
proved	in	many things	oftentimes	diligent		G5607
G1381	G1722	G4183	G4178	G4705		
νυνὶ	δὲ	πολλῇ	σπουδαιότερον	πεποιθήσει	πολλῇ	
now	And	many things		confidence	many things	
G3570	G1161	G4183	G4706	G4006	G4183	
τῇ	εἰς	ὕμᾱς				
which	I have in	you				
G3588	G1519	G5209				

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