

BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL

INTEGRITY, [2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15](#)

2 Corinthians 8:1-24 (NASB)

¹ Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia,

² that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

³ For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord,

⁴ begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,

⁵ and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

⁶ So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.

⁷ But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, *see* that you abound in this gracious work also.

⁸ I am not speaking *this* as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

¹⁰ I give *my* opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do *this*, but also to desire *to do it*.

¹¹ But now finish doing it also, so that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability.

¹² For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a person* has, not according to what he does not have.

¹³ For *this* is not for the ease of others *and* for your affliction, but by way of equality—

¹⁴ at this present time your abundance *being a supply* for their need, so that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your need, that there may be equality;

¹⁵ as it is written, "HE WHO *gathered* MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO *gathered* LITTLE HAD NO LACK."

¹⁶ But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

¹⁷ For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord.

¹⁸ We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in *the things of the gospel has spread* through all the churches;

¹⁹ and not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness,

²⁰ taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;

²¹ for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

²² We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of *his* great confidence in you.

²³ As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, *they are* messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.

²⁴ Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

Begging to Be a Blessing

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I HAVE SEVEN KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK OF US:

- 1) What do you want to do with your life?
- 2) How do you want to live?
- 3) What drives you?
- 4) What is the focus, the priority of your life?
- 5) Is the quest of each day to serve yourself, live for yourself, cater to your every whim and desire, or have you found a higher purpose for living?
- 6) Do you want to be a blessing to the Lord and to other people?
- 7) Is it your desire to touch the lives of people with your love, kindness, concern, and Christlikeness?

For the Christian, this is what true living is all about and really what matters. You can have an abundance of “things” and have nothing. You can accumulate great wealth, and

that's fine and OK, there is nothing wrong with that, but if accumulating things is what you believe life is all about, then my friend, you will find a life characterized by woe and worry. You are in essence **"flat busted broke."** That's what the Lord believes. Notice His comments to the church at Sardis that had an abundance, but was broke.

Revelation 3:15-17 (NASB)

¹⁵ "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

¹⁶ So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

¹⁷ Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."

On the other hand, you may not have much, but if your desire is to be a blessing to the Lord and to other people, and put that desire into action, then you my friend have treasures that cannot be calculated. You have something that cannot be taken away. You have found one of the vital reasons for living which is to be a channel of God's blessings.

We find in this eighth chapter some indispensable and powerful truths about being a channel of blessing to other people. We find that there were Christians in the Macedonian churches that had very little, yet, they were begging to be a blessing to other believers. It was an intense desire of their hearts, so much, that their attitudes have been recorded in the Scriptures to challenge us 2000 years later.

In this section, we will answer the question of how these folks were a blessing to other Christians and to the Lord. We will examine their circumstances and the attitudes of their hearts that led to their longing, their intense desire, their begging to be a blessing to other people they did not even know.

A Biblical Model for Giving

How people view money is an effective barometer of their spirituality. Money is neither good nor bad in itself; corrupt people can put it to evil uses, while good people can put it to righteous uses. Though it is morally neutral, what people do with their money reflects their internal morality. In the words of Jesus, **"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"** ([Luke 12:34 NASB](#)).

The Bible does not forbid the possession of money; in fact, it teaches that **"God [gives the] power to make wealth"** ([Deut. 8:18](#)) and **"richly supplies us with all things to enjoy"** ([1 Tim. 6:17](#)).

Because of His blessing, many godly men in Scripture, such as **Job** ([Job 1:3](#)), **Abraham** ([Gen. 13:2](#)), **Isaac** ([Gen. 26:12-13](#)), **Jacob** ([Gen. 30:43](#)), **Boaz** ([Ruth 2:1](#)), and **Solomon** ([1 Kings 10:23](#)), were extremely wealthy. God promised His people that

their obedience to Him would result in material as well as spiritual blessings ([Deuteronomy 15:4-6](#); [Deuteronomy 26:15](#); [Deuteronomy 28:11](#)).

Deuteronomy 15:4-6 (NASB)

⁴“However, there will be no poor among you, since the LORD will surely bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess,

⁵ if only you listen obediently to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today.

⁶ For the LORD your God will bless you as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.”

Deuteronomy 26:15 (NASB)

¹⁵“Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel, and the ground which You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You swore to our fathers.”

Deuteronomy 28:11 (NASB)

¹¹“The LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.”

But while the Bible does not forbid possessing money, it does forbid loving it, warning that “**the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs**” ([1 Timothy 6:10 NASB](#)).

Later in that chapter, Paul exhorted Timothy to “**instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy**” ([1 Timothy 6:17 NASB](#)).

To love money is to have an unhealthy affection for it and be driven to pursue it. Such a pursuit is the height of folly. “**Do not weary yourself to gain wealth,**” the book of Proverbs counsels. “**Cease from your consideration of it.** ⁵**When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings like an eagle that flies toward the heavens**” ([Proverbs 23:4-5 NASB](#)). Though he was one of the wealthiest men who ever lived, Solomon was wise enough to know that “**he who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity**” ([Ecclesiastes 5:10 NASB](#)).

Achan’s love of money brought disaster to himself, his family, and his nation ([Joshua 7:1-25](#)). Balaam’s love of money caused him to foolishly attempt to curse God’s chosen people ([Numbers 22-24](#)), which resulted in his death ([Numbers 31:8](#)).

Numbers 31:8 (NASB)

⁸“They killed the kings of Midian along with the *rest* of their slain:

Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian; they also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword.”

Delilah’s love of money led her to betray Samson ([Judges 16:4-6](#)), which ultimately led to the death of thousands ([Judges 16:27-30](#)).

Judges 16:4-6 (NASB)

⁴“After this it came about that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

⁵The lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Entice him, and see where his great strength *lies* and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him. Then we will each give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver.”

⁶So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you.”

Judges 16:27-30 (NASB)

²⁷“Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there. And about 3,000 men and women were on the roof looking on while Samson was amusing *them*.

²⁸Then Samson called to the LORD and said, “O Lord GOD, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.”

²⁹Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left.

³⁰And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life.”

Judas’s love of money caused him to betray the Lord Jesus Christ ([Matthew 26:14-16](#)) and damn himself to eternal torment in hell ([Matthew 26:24](#); [Acts 1:25](#)).

Matthew 26:14-16 (NASB)

¹⁴“Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests

¹⁵and said, “What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?” And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him.

¹⁶From then on he *began* looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus.”

Matthew 26:24 (NASB)

²⁴“The Son of Man *is to* go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”

Acts 1:25 (NASB)

²⁵“To occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”

Ananias's and Sapphira's love of money led them to hypocritically lie about their giving ([Acts 5:1-2](#)), resulting in God's execution of them ([Acts 5:5, 10](#)).

[Acts 5:1-2 \(NASB\)](#)

¹“But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,

²and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.”

[Acts 5:5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵“And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.”

[Acts 5:10 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁰“And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.”

Let us pray,

Father, again we're so blessed. You have already poured out such abundant blessing on us. We have so much and more. And, Lord, yet there is blessing we haven't received, riches we haven't experienced because we haven't given. We think of these poor Macedonians who had so little and gave the little they had, and thus were always replenished to give again and give again.

Father, we pray that You might teach us that if there was nothing else said we would give if we believed the promise, "Give and it shall be given to you." We would give if we obeyed the command, "Give." We would give if we believed that it was more blessed to do that because we crave so much to be blessed.

Father, You have shown us a path to blessing, a path to abundance, a path to obedience, and You ask us to trust You and obey You and walk it. May we do that. And teach us, continue to teach us that we might know the fullness of Your blessing and eternal glory for that treasure in heaven which can never be corrupted and never rusted and never stolen, but which we shall enjoy forever and ever in Your presence. Thank You, Lord, for Your Word to us. In Christ's name, amen.