

## BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

# THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL INTEGRITY, [2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15](#)

## Begging to Be a Blessing

### [2 Corinthians 8:1-5 \(NASB\)](#)

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

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

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

<sup>4</sup>begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,

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

### A. The Challenge to Give, [2 Corinthians 8:1-15](#)

[\(2 Corinthians 8:1-15\)](#) **Introduction:** the churches throughout Judea were suffering great poverty and needed help badly. This is what this passage is about: meeting the desperate need of fellow believers and human beings who were being threatened with starvation and death, many of whom were without Christ and doomed to an eternity apart from Christ.

The need of missions is an *unending call*, a *call that never ends*. The desperate needs of the world must always confront man. Why? Because the world is sinful and corruptible, full of greed and covetousness, banking and hoarding. People who *have* more than they need should be helping and giving, serving and ministering. Instead they are banking and hoarding. The result is a world reeling in desperate need. The challenge to the church is clear! **Give**—give all you are and have to reach and help the desperate of the world.

- [1. Know the spirit of the Macedonians: they gave because of the grace and favor of God \(v.1-5\).](#)
- [2. Excel in the same spirit of giving \(v.6-7\).](#)
- [3. Prove the sincerity of your love \(v.8\).](#)
- [4. Know the example of Christ—He gave \(v.9\).](#)
- [5. Remember your own past record \(v.10\).](#)
- [6. Give readily and willingly \(v.11-12\).](#)
- [7. Meet the needs of one another—equally \(v.13-15\).](#)

## 1. (2 Corinthians 8:1-5) Stewardship— Giving— Offerings: the first challenge is to know the spirit of the Macedonians.

### 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 (NASB)

<sup>1</sup>“Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia,  
<sup>2</sup> that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.  
<sup>3</sup> For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord,  
<sup>4</sup> begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,  
<sup>5</sup> and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

## THEY HAD BENEVOLENCE IN THEIR BARRENNESS—8:2B

### 2 Corinthians 8:2 (NASB)

<sup>2</sup>“That in a great ordeal of affliction their **abundance** of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.”

Notice also that the Macedonian church had almost nothing, yet, they had great joy. Paul said they had an abundance of joy. Once again, this word “**abundance**” is a strong word. It is from the word *perisseia* {*per-is-si'-ah*} which means not only an abundance, but “**superabundance.**” They had a superabundance of joy even though they were financially destitute. The Lord was looking after their lives and taking care of them.

He was giving them the absolute assurance of His care and provision day by day and of eternal life when they departed from this world. They rejoiced in all that God was doing for them and was going to do for them. The great joy they experienced over-flowed into their generosity and giving to others. This is how joy affects people. It shifts the focus off of you onto others. Joy is something you want to share.

The joy of the Lord caused them to give with liberality, sincerity, or simplicity. This liberality is the opposite of duplicity, or being double-minded. Double-minded people find their ability to give is restrained or crippled, because their concern for themselves and temporal matters conflicts with their concern for others and the kingdom of God. The believers of **Macedonia** were rich in single-mindedness, and gave with no thought of themselves or this world. Their selfless generosity was a practical application of Paul’s command in Philippians 2.

### Philippians 2:3-4 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup>“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

**<sup>4</sup> do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”**

These believers also rejoiced at laying up treasures in Heaven, knowing that the greater blessing is to the giver, not the receiver, and that God will give back in greater measure. If you have financial troubles, then give to the Lord.

**Luke 6:38 (NASB)**

**<sup>38</sup> “Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, *and* running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”**

It was the day after Christmas and the man parked his car to pick up the morning paper. He noticed a dirty, poorly dressed boy, looking at his car. Seeing the boy eyeing the car, he reminded himself to be quick or he might be missing a hubcap when he returned. He came out of the store with his paper under his arm and just as he opened the door to the car, the boy asked, “Mister, how much would a new car like this cost?” Mr. Greene responded, “I really don’t know. My brother gave me this car as a gift.” The ragged little boy looked unbelievably at the car and then, with a look of wonder in his eyes, said, “Boy, I wish I could be a brother like that.” How about you? Do you desire to be a blessing to someone else? You can be, by being benevolent in your barrenness, just like the believers in **Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea.**

## Giving Is Proportionate

**2 Corinthians 8:3 (NASB)**

**<sup>3</sup> “For “I testify” [*martureō*] that according to their “ability” [*Dunamis*], and beyond their ability *they gave* of their own accord.”**

Paul’s use of *martureō* (I testify) reveals his firsthand experience of the Macedonians’ generosity (cf. [Philippians 4:15-18](#)).

**Philippians 4:15-18 (NASB)**

**<sup>15</sup> “You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;**

**<sup>16</sup> for even in Thessalonica you sent *a gift* more than once for my needs.**

**<sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.**

**<sup>18</sup> But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.”**

They gave in proportion to what they had, **according to their ability.** *Dunamis* (**ability**) literally means “power,” or “strength,” and here refers to the Macedonians’ capacity or means (cf. its use in [Matthew 25:15](#)) to give.

**Matthew 25:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup>“To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own **“ability”** [*Dunamis*]; and he went on his journey.”

The Bible sets no fixed amount or percentage for giving (see the discussion of tithing below). Instead, giving is to be **“according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have”** ([2 Corinthians 8:12](#)), as **“[each person] may prosper”** ([1 Corinthians 16:2](#)).

**2 Corinthians 8:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup>“For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable **according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.**”

**1 Corinthians 16:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup>“On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, **as he may prosper**, so that no collections be made when I come.”

Any fixed amount or percentage would prove sacrificial for some but inconsequential for others. And, as the next aspect of the Macedonians’ giving reveals, **giving is to be sacrificial.**

## Giving Is Sacrificial

**2 Corinthians 8:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup>“For **“I testify”** [*martureō*] **that according to their “ability”** [*Dunamis*], and **beyond their ability** they gave of their own accord.”

The Macedonians gave according to what they had but in proportions that were sacrificial. Their giving was **beyond** what could reasonably be expected of such a poor congregation. Life was difficult for them; as noted in [verse 2](#), they faced extreme poverty and persecution.

**2 Corinthians 8:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup>“That in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and **their deep poverty** overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.”

Yet despite their desperate circumstances, **they joyfully gave with no regard for themselves, compelled by the needs of the poor saints in Jerusalem** (cf. [Hebrews 13:16](#)).

**Hebrews 13:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup>“And do not neglect doing good and sharing, **for with such sacrifices God is “pleased”** [*euaresteō* = gratify entirely].”

They believed God’s promise to supply all their needs ([Philippians 4:19](#)) and refused to worry about them ([Matthew 6:25-34](#)), gladly placing themselves in deeper dependence on Him.

**Philippians 4:19 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup> “And my God will supply all your needs according to His **riches** [*ploutos*] in glory in Christ Jesus.”

**Matthew 6:25-34 (NASB)**

<sup>25</sup> “For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

<sup>26</sup> “Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”

<sup>27</sup> “And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life?”

<sup>28</sup> “And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,

<sup>29</sup> yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.”

<sup>30</sup> “But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith!”

<sup>31</sup> “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’

<sup>32</sup> “For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”

<sup>33</sup> “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

<sup>34</sup> “So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Like David, who would not give the Lord something that cost him nothing ([1 Chronicles 21:24](#)), and the poor widow, who gave all she had ([Mark 12:42-44](#)), the Macedonians gave with selfless abandon.

**1 Chronicles 21:24 (NASB)**

<sup>24</sup> “But King David said to Ornan, “No, but I will surely buy *it* for the full price; for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, or offer a burnt offering which costs me nothing.”

**Mark 12:42-44 (NASB)**

<sup>42</sup> “A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.

<sup>43</sup> Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;

<sup>44</sup> for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.”