

BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

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

Begging to Be a Blessing

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

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

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

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

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

⁵and *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.

Giving Is Voluntary

2 Corinthians 8:3 (NASB)

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

The Macedonians’ giving was on their own initiative; it was self-motivated and spontaneous. *Authairetos* (of their own accord) refers to one who chooses his own course of action. In its only other New Testament appearance, Paul used it to speak of Titus’s choice to visit Corinth (2 Corinthians 8:17). The Macedonians were not coerced, manipulated, or intimidated, but gave freely.

2 Corinthians 8:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you “of his own accord” [*Authairetos*].”

It is possible that Paul, aware of their deep poverty, had not even asked them to contribute to the poor saints in Jerusalem. It is evident from 2 Corinthians 8:10 and 2 Corinthians 9:2 that about a year had passed since he first told the Corinthians about that collection.

2 Corinthians 8:10 (NASB)

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.”

2 Corinthians 9:2 (NASB)

²“For I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, *namely*, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them.”

When Paul told the Macedonians about the zeal of the believers in Achaia (where Corinth was located) to contribute, the Macedonians were moved to give (2 Corinthians 9:2).

2 Corinthians 9:2 (NASB)

²“For I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, namely, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them.”

Events had now come full circle. The Corinthians’ zeal had initially prompted the Macedonians to give, and now Paul held them up as an example of sacrificial giving for the lagging Corinthians to imitate.

Despite the claims of those who advocate mandatory tithing, Christian giving is entirely voluntary. Paul did not require a fixed amount or percentage from either the Macedonians or the Corinthians, nor does any other New Testament writer. The argument for tithing is based on a misunderstanding of the Old Testament. Its proponents argue that tithing not only was commanded in the Mosaic Law but also existed before it. Therefore, they maintain, tithing transcends the Law and is a universal divine standard for giving.

But that seemingly convincing argument is seriously flawed. **First**, it is faulty reasoning to assume that an ordinance is permanent merely because it existed before the Law was given. The Sabbath predates the Law ([Exodus 16:23-29](#)), yet the New Testament abrogates its mandatory observance ([Romans 14:5-6](#); [Galatians 4:10-11](#); [Colossians 2:16](#)).

Exodus 16:23-29 (NASB)

²³ “Then he said to them, “This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning.”

²⁴ So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it did not become foul nor was there any worm in it.

²⁵ Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field.”

²⁶ “Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, *the sabbath*, there will be none.”

²⁷ It came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather, but they found none.

²⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses, “How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions?”

²⁹ “See, the LORD has given you the sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.”

Romans 14:5-6 (NASB)

⁵ “One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

⁶ He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.”

Galatians 4:10-11 (NASB)

¹⁰ “You observe days and months and seasons and years.

¹¹ I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.”

Colossians 2:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ “Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day.”

Animal sacrifices also existed before the Law ([Genesis 4:2-4](#); [Genesis 8:20](#); [Genesis 22:13](#); [Exodus 10:25](#)), yet were done away with by the final sacrifice of Jesus Christ ([Hebrews 10:1-18](#)).

Genesis 4:2-4 (NASB)

²“Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

³So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground.

⁴Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering.”

Genesis 8:20 (NASB)

²⁰“Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.”

Genesis 22:13 (NASB)

¹³“Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.”

Exodus 10:25 (NASB)

²⁵“But Moses said, “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice *them* to the LORD our God.”

Hebrews 10:1-18 (NASB)

¹“For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.

²Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

³But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins year by year.

⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;

⁶ IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE.”

⁷“THEN I SAID, ‘BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.’”

⁸ After saying above, “SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*” (which are offered according to the Law),

⁹ then He said, “BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

¹⁰ By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,

¹³ waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.

¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

¹⁶ “THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,” *He then says,*

¹⁷ “AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.”

¹⁸ Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin.”