

# 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.**

### **THE SENTIMENT OF SACRIFICE AND SELFLESSNESS— 2 Corinthians 8:3**

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

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

The Macedonians were begging to be a blessing. They demonstrated this attitude by their abundant joy in their affliction, by their benevolence in their barrenness, and by their sentiment of sacrifice and selflessness. They not only gave what they could afford, but they willingly, and sacrificially gave beyond what they could really afford. Their giving was beyond what could reasonably be expected of such a poor congregation. Life was very difficult for these folks. They faced extreme poverty and persecution. Yet, despite their desperate circumstances, they joyfully gave with no regard for themselves, compelled by the needs of the poor saints in Jerusalem.

The sacrifice they made was not coerced. It was strictly voluntary. They were selfless and sacrificial. Their giving was not measured inversely according to their own needs, but proportionately to the need of others. These folks found satisfaction by giving to others, whereas, other people find their satisfaction in accumulating things. When we look at the Bible, we find that God encourages selflessness and sacrifice in giving to Him or to others in need.

#### **Romans 15:1 (NASB)**

**<sup>1</sup>“Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves.”**

#### **Galatians 6:2 (NASB)**

**<sup>2</sup>“Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”**

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:14 (NASB)**

**<sup>14</sup>“We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”**

#### **James 1:27 (NASB)**

**<sup>27</sup>“Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.”**

The story is told of a Scottish church that was attempting to raise money for a new building. One member of the church was a rich Scot who was known to be worth fifty thousand pounds. He was pretty stingy. A deacon came to see him and asked, “Brother, how much are you going to give for the new church?” The Scot replied, “Oh, I guess I’ll be able to put in the widow’s mite.” The deacon called out in the next meeting, “Brethren, we have all the money we need. This brother is going to give fifty thousand pounds.” The man was amazed. “I didn’t say I would give fifty thousand pounds. I said I

would give the widow's mite." The deacon replied, "Well, she gave her all, and I thought that is what you meant to give!"

It is interesting that God notes what you give but also what you keep for yourself. He did this with the widow that gave the mite and the Macedonian believers that gave beyond what could ever be expected of them.

## Giving Is a Privilege, Not an Obligation

### **2 Corinthians 8:4 (NASB)**

**<sup>4</sup>"Begging" [Deomai] us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints."**

Paul once again stressed that he in no way pressured the Macedonians to give. Instead they asked, even begged, to participate. *Deomai* (begging) is a strong word, meaning "to implore," or "to plead."

It is used in [Luke 5:12](#) of a leper who implored Jesus to heal him,

### **Luke 5:12 (NASB)**

**<sup>12</sup>"While He was in one of the cities, behold, *there was* a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and "implored" [Deomai] Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."**

It is used in [Luke 9:38](#) of a father's desperate plea for Jesus to cast a demon out of his son, and

### **Luke 9:38 (NASB)**

**<sup>38</sup>"And a man from the crowd shouted, saying, "Teacher, I "beg" [Deomai] You to look at my son, for he is my only boy."**

It is used in [2 Corinthians 5:20](#) begging sinners to be reconciled to God.

### **2 Corinthians 5:20 (NASB)**

**<sup>20</sup>"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we "beg" [Deomai] you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."**

### **2 Corinthians 8:4 (NASB)**

**<sup>4</sup>"Begging" [Deomai] us with much urging for the "favor" [*charis*] of participation in the support of the saints."**

The phrase with much urging could be translated "most insistently" and further testifies to the intensity of the Macedonians' desire to contribute.

The privilege the Macedonians sought so eagerly was the favor of participation in the support of the saints. Favor translates *charis*, which is commonly translated "grace."

**They literally begged for the blessing of helping to meet the needs of believers they had never met.**

**They did so not out of a sense of obligation but out of the generosity of their transformed hearts.**

## **THEIR INTENSITY TO INVEST IN OTHERS—[2 Corinthians 8:4](#)**

### **2 Corinthians 8:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup>“**Begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints.**”

### **2 Corinthians 8:4 (KJV)**

<sup>4</sup>“**Praying us with much intreaty** that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.”

The Macedonian churches were begging to be a blessing. This is the idea of the phrase “**praying us with much intreaty.**” The word “*praying*” is from the word *deomai* {*deh'-om-ah-ee*}. It means “**to beg, to plead or implore, to long for or desire.**” They begged with much “**intreaty.**” The word “*intreaty*” is from the Greek word *paraklesis* {*par-ak'-lay-sis*} which means “**powerful, persuasive discourse, a stirring address, an admonition.**”

These Christians were pretty insistent about giving to the Jerusalem Christians. They were begging to be a blessing and to have the honor of giving their gift to Paul. Paul was not doing the begging here. The people that were making the sacrifice and investment were doing the begging. They were a blessing to Paul and others because they had an intense desire to invest in the lives of others. Such is the grace of giving. It is not dictated by ability. It has nothing to do with being well-off. It is willing and views giving as a privilege. It is joyously enthusiastic.

The Macedonian Christians were giving so much that Paul felt it was just beyond their means. However, they insisted, and took note the reason why they wanted to do this. They wanted to share in the fellowship of ministering to the saints. Some fellow believers were in need, and they wanted the privilege of having fellowship with them by giving to them. Please note how giving is said to be a way of fellowship with others.

### **2 Corinthians 8:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup>“**Begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints.**”

These Christians had the proper concept of what “**participation**” or “**fellowship**” is all about. Fellowship is much more than talking and having fun at an activity or at church. It is more than having lunch after church on Sunday. The word is derived from the Greek word *koinonia* {*koy-nohn-ee'-ah*} which not only means “**fellowship**” but also “**partnership and participation.**” These Christians were partners with the Christians in Jerusalem and wanted to participate in their lives by investing in them with their sacrificial gifts.

Beloved, when we give to our church, to other Christians in need, or when we support our missionaries, we are having fellowship with them. We demonstrate that we are partners with our missionaries by participating in their lives with our prayers, and financial support. We give evidence that we want to be a blessing by investing in their families and ministries.

It is related of **General Gordon**, affectionately known as “**Chinese Gordon**,” that when the English government sought to reward him for his magnificent service in China, he declined all money and titles, but accepted a gold medal on which his name and a record of his thirty-three engagements were inscribed. After his death, the medal could not be found. Finally it was learned that he had sent it to Manchester during a famine, with a request that it be melted and used to buy bread for the famished poor. In his diary that day he had written these words: “The last and only thing that I had in this world that I valued, I have given over to the Lord Jesus Christ.” It was his desire to be a blessing.

**Are you begging to be a blessing? Do you have an intense desire to invest in the lives of others?** This is a great way to be an encouragement to people, whether it is a struggling widow, an injured or sick father trying to care for his family, a missionary, or a student in Bible College that is preparing for the ministry. A great way to be a blessing is to invest into the lives of others with your time, attention, or financial support. **How can you do this? How do you develop a “Begging to be a Blessing” attitude?** When it comes to giving or investing in other people’s lives, it is vital that you have a proper, biblical perspective of what money is and is not.

**How people view money is an effective barometer of their spirituality.** Money is neither good nor bad in itself. People who are corrupt 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 and what is the focus and priority of their life. Jesus put it this way, “**Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**” ([Luke 12:34](#)).

The Bible does not forbid the possession of money. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Boaz, and Solomon were all wealthy men. As a matter of fact, it teaches that the Lord gives us the power and ability to make wealth.

**Deuteronomy 8:18 (NASB)**

**18 “But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”**

While the Bible does not forbid possessing money, it does forbid loving it.

**1 Timothy 6:10 (NASB)**

**10 “For 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.”**

To love money is to have an unhealthy affection for it and be driven to pursue it at any cost. Such a pursuit is the height of folly. Some folks destroy their health and families in their pursuit of money. When they set their eyes upon it, it's gone.

**Proverbs 15:27 (NASB)**

**<sup>27</sup>“He who profits illicitly troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live.”**

**Proverbs 23:4-5 (NASB)**

**<sup>4</sup>“Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration of it.**

**<sup>5</sup>When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For *wealth* certainly makes itself wings Like an eagle that flies *toward* the heavens.”**

Solomon was one of the wealthiest men that ever lived, yet, he was wise enough to know that money cannot buy happiness or satisfy your heart.

**Ecclesiastes 5:10 (NASB)**

**<sup>10</sup>“He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance *with its* income. This too is vanity.”**

The list of Bible characters who destroyed their lives in pursuit of money is very familiar.

- 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](#)).
- Delilah's love of money led her to betray Samson ([Judges 16:4-6](#)), which ultimately led to the death of thousands of people ([Judges 16:27-30](#)).
- Judas' love of money caused him to betray the Lord Jesus Christ ([Matthew 26:14-16](#)).
- Ananias 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](#)).

When people realize that money is a tool for blessing, then God can entrust them with greater funds as they use their possessions to assist others and further the cause of Jesus Christ. They actually become “**channels of blessing.**” God used the Colgate family to further the cause of Christ by their investment in the lives of others and the Lord's work.

**Samuel Colgate (1822-1897)**, was an American soap manufacturer and philanthropist. He expanded the business of his father, **William Colgate**, into one of the largest establishments of its kind in the world. His father was also noted for giving at least a tenth of his net yearly earnings to charities, and organizing both the **American Bible Society** and the **American and Foreign Bible Society**. **Samuel Colgate** was a benefactor and trustee of **Madison University** in Hamilton, N.Y., which was renamed in **1890** to **Colgate University**.

Being an influential, American manufacturer and philanthropist, **Samuel Colgate** said: “The only spiritual light in the world comes through Jesus Christ and the inspired Book. Redemption and forgiveness of sin alone are through Christ. Without His presence and the teachings of the Bible we would be enshrouded in moral darkness and despair. The condition of those nations without Christ, contrasted with those nations where Christ is accepted, revealed so marked a difference that no arguments are needed. It is an object-lesson so plain that it can be seen and understood by all. May “the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”