

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 \(v.13-15\).](#)

2. (2 Corinthians 8:6-7) Stewardship— Giving: the second challenge is to excel in the same spirit of giving as the Macedonians.

2 Corinthians 8:6-7 (NASB)

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.

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

Sometime earlier the Corinthian church had begun to take up an offering for the poor churches of Judea, but something had happened that caused the church to stop the project. Just what is not actually known, but it was probably all the trouble and problems covered in the letters of 1 and 2 Corinthians. Since the church had experienced revival, it was now time for the offering project to be completed.

Very simply, Paul says two things that apply to every church.

1. **The grace of giving is to be completed in you.** The Corinthians were to financially support the Lord’s work, the very ministry of God Himself. They were to support the ministry of meeting the needs of desperate people and of proclaiming the gospel to a lost and dying world. This glorious privilege is clearly seen when it is remembered that God has not given to angels the privilege of supporting His work; God has committed this grace, this privilege only to men.

2. **The other graces abound in you; therefore, the grace of giving is to abound in you.** The Corinthians had an abundance of spiritual resources, especially the gifts that involved...

- **faith:** the trust in God that enabled them to walk through life victoriously and to serve God faithfully.
- **utterance:** the ability to share the gospel and the doctrines of God’s Word.
- **knowledge:** the understanding of God’s Word.
- **diligence:** the energy and zeal to carry on the ministry of the Lord Jesus.
- **in the love:** the care for the minister of God who serves Christ so faithfully.

Because the church was so strong in these gifts, **they needed to abound in the gift of giving as well.** Did you hear that? Giving and helping others in their desperate need was as much a duty as any other responsibility.

Romans 12:13 (NASB)

¹³“Contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.”

Galatians 6:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

1 Timothy 6:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“*Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.*”

Hebrews 13:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“*And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*”

Giving Is in Submission to Pastors

I want to go back to 2 Corinthians 8:5-6:

2 Corinthians 8:5-6 (NASB)

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.*”

Having given themselves to the Lord, the Macedonians also gave themselves to Paul, Titus, and Timothy. In fact, it was their devotion to the Lord that led them to submit to the leadership of their pastors. It is the will of God that Christians obey those over them in the Lord. Hebrews 13:17 instructs believers, “**Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you,**” while Peter exhorted his readers to “**be subject to [their] elders**” (1 Peter 5:5; cf. 1 Thess. 5:12-13).

1 Peter 5:5 (NASB)

⁵“*You younger men, likewise, **be subject to your elders**; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.*”

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (NASB)

¹²“*But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,*

¹³“*and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.*”

2 Corinthians 8:6 (NASB)

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.***”

Confident that the Corinthians would follow the example of the Macedonians and submit to their pastors' direction, Paul urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in the Corinthians this gracious work of giving as well. As noted above, Titus had made a beginning of the work of collecting the Corinthians' offering about a year earlier (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.”

2 Corinthians 8:6 (NASB)

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.”

He had recently returned to Corinth bringing the severe letter, and Paul had **urged** him to help the Corinthians complete their giving. So, Paul through his letters (cf. [1 Corinthians 16:2](#)) and Titus through his visits had both informed the Corinthians about what they expected them to do.

1 Corinthians 16:2 (NASB)

²“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.”

Giving Is in Concert with Other Christian Virtues

2 Corinthians 8:7 (NASB)

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

Giving does not take place in a vacuum, isolated from other Christian virtues. It must not be done contrary to what is in the heart, for that would-be hypocrisy.

Paul’s affirmation to the Corinthians, **you abound in everything** (cf. [1 Corinthians 1:4-7](#)), was an encouraging compliment to those vacillating believers.

1 Corinthians 1:4-7 (NASB)

⁴“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus,

⁵ that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge,

⁶ even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you,

⁷ **so that you are not lacking in any gift**, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

They abounded in saving, securing, sanctifying **faith**, having a strong trust in and reliance on the Lord. *Logos* (**utterance**) refers here not to speech, but to doctrine, the “word [*logos*] of truth” ([2 Corinthians 6:7](#); cf. [Colossians 1:5](#); [2 Timothy 2:15](#); [James 1:18](#)).

2 Corinthians 6:7 (NASB)

⁷“In the “**word**” [*Logos*] of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left.”

Colossians 1:5 (NASB)

⁵“Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the “**word**” [*Logos*] of truth, the gospel.”

2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)

¹⁵“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the “**word**” [*Logos*] of truth.”

James 1:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the “**word**” [*Logos*] of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.”

2 Corinthians 8:7 (NASB)

⁷“But just as you abound in everything, in faith and “**utterance**” [*Logos*] and **knowledge** and in all “**earnestness**” [*spoudē*] and in the “**love**” [*agapē*] we **inspired** in you, *see that you abound in this gracious work also.*”

Knowledge is the ability to apply doctrine to the issues of life. **Earnestness** (*spoudē*) means “eagerness,” “energy,” or “spiritual passion” (cf. [2 Corinthians 7:11-12](#)).

2 Corinthians 7:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹“For behold what **earnestness** this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. ¹²So although I wrote to you, *it was* not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your “**earnestness**” [*spoudē*] on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God.”

2 Corinthians 8:7 (NASB)

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.***”

Love (*agapē*) is the “noble love of self-sacrifice” Paul had **inspired** in the Corinthians through his example, teaching, and preaching.

Because of the spiritual virtues, they possessed, Paul exhorted the Corinthians, **See that you abound in this gracious work also.** God’s grace had produced those virtues in them, and the apostle wanted it to flow out through their giving.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF TITUS—[2 Corinthians 8:6](#)

2 Corinthians 8:6 (NASB)

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.”

Paul has been sharing with the Corinthians the attitude of the Macedonian believers. He told the Corinthians of the generosity of the Macedonian churches, how they begged to be a blessing, and how they had given themselves to the Lord. Titus encouraged the Corinthian Christians to give to the Jerusalem believers. Paul urged Titus to return to the Corinthians to finish their ministry of grace giving and what they had previously planned to do in their area of sending a love offering to Jerusalem. He was to encourage them to finish what they started or planned.