

BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

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

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.”

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.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE CORINTHIAN'S GROWTH—

2 Corinthians 8:7

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.”

The **Corinthian believers** had great strengths, too, just like the **Macedonian believers**. Paul proceeds to list their areas of maturity and excellence, and then he challenges them to a higher level of growth in the area of giving by using the testimony of the churches in Macedonia. This is the job of any preacher, to challenge Christians to a higher level of spiritual growth.

Paul said they abounded in everything. This word “**abound**” is from the Greek word *perisseuo* {*per-is-syoo’-o*} which means “**to exist in abundance; overflow; to be abundantly furnished with something; to excel or be excellent.**” This word was used to describe a flower going from the budding stage to full bloom. What a beautiful picture of what took place in the Corinthian church. Paul listed **five important** areas where they excelled in Christian growth and bloomed like a rose.

1. They Excelled in Conviction and Confidence in God: “*in faith*”

The Corinthians excelled in “**faith.**” This is from the word *pistis* {*pis’-tis*} which means “**conviction of the truth of anything, belief; assurance.**” Faith is mentioned first because faith in the Lord is the root of all Christian growth.

Hebrews 11:6 (NASB)

⁶“**And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.**”

If they are going to respond to Paul’s challenge to finish what God has started in their lives in the area of giving, then they will need confidence and trust in the Lord. When you excel in faith, you will have the foundation you need to grow in all other areas of your Christian life. If you are struggling to trust in the Lord, then it will be difficult for you to finish what you started.

Jeremy wore coke-bottle glasses and a perfect bowl haircut. He knew the answers to everything and was the teacher’s pet. This really ticked everybody off. One day, after an

uncharacteristic absence from school, Jeremy showed up in class with a big grin on his face, wearing a goofy-looking Mickey Mouse hat. The teacher asked Jeremy where he got the hat. “I went to Disneyland yesterday!” he said excitedly. “Oh really,” said the teacher. “Why don’t you tell us about your trip to Disneyland.”

“Okay! Well, I got to Disneyland and the first thing I saw was the parking lot,” Jeremy said. “That parking lot must hold about a million cars! I got on a tram that carried me around the parking lot until I got to the place where you buy the tickets. So, I got off and stood in line. I bought a ticket and I also bought this cool hat!” “And then what did you do?” asked the teacher. “Well, I got back on the tram and rode around the parking lot some more,” said Jeremy. “That was really fun! I rode that tram all day!” “All day?” asked the teacher. “Did you go through the turnstiles and under the bridge to *Main Street USA, Adventureland, Fantasyland, Tomorrowland*, and the rest of the park?”

Jeremy thought for a moment and said, “No. Was I supposed to?” Jeremy never experienced the fun of Disneyland because he never went beyond the ticket booth. He had his ticket in his hand and could have gone into the park any time. Instead, he settled for a ride around the parking lot, watching happy people come out of Disneyland with smiles on their faces, but he never found out what they were smiling about.

Have you “bought a ticket to Heaven” by inviting Jesus Christ into your life to be your Savior?

Have you gotten past the ticket booth or are you still riding around the parking lot, missing out on all that Christ has for you?

Do you hear other Christians talk about the joy they experience as a follower of Jesus and living by faith, but you’re clueless to what they are talking about?

Don’t settle for merely watching other Christians experience their walk with God and living by faith. Experience it for yourself. Trust the Lord with your life.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NASB)

⁵“Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.

⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.”

2. They Excelled in Communicating with Others: “utterance”

2 Corinthians 8:7 (NASB)

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

This word “**utterance**” is from the word *logos* {*log’-os*} which means “**speech, a conception of ideas, discussions with others, doctrine.**” Many have faith who want utterance, but these Corinthians excelled most churches in spiritual gifts, and particularly in utterance. They knew how to share their faith in Christ and explain their doctrinal beliefs.

These believers excelled in communicating the message of salvation as spiritual knowledge. With their mouths, they proclaimed the spiritual knowledge that they believed in their hearts. **Do you do this?**

Romans 10:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

3. They Excelled in Comprehension and Circumspection: “*knowledge*”

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.”

This word “**knowledge**” is from the word *gnosis* {*gno'-sis*}. It means “**understanding, moral wisdom for right living, and general knowledge of the Christian faith.**” Knowledge is the ability to apply doctrine to the issues of life. They understood the doctrines that Paul taught them and it affected their behavior. What you believe affects your behavior. Doctrine affects your deportment. **Do you have moral wisdom that influences your conduct and choices?** You will need God’s wisdom if you are going to finish what you have started.

4. They Excelled in Carefulness and Commitment: “*in all earnestness*”

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.”

The Corinthians had grown in the area of “**earnestness.**” What does this mean? This word is derived from the Greek word *spoude* {*spooday*} which means “**haste, carefulness, enthusiasm, energy, earnestness in accomplishing or striving after anything.**” Those who have great knowledge and ready utterance are not always the most diligent Christians. Great talkers are not always the best doers, but these Corinthians’ were diligent to do, as well as to know and to talk. They **were putting their faith into action. If you are going to finish what you** have started or what God has started in your life, then you need put feet to your prayers and your faith.

5. They Excelled in Compassion: “*in the love*”

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.”

For a time, these believers were cold toward Paul. They realized the errors of their ways and made this matter right with God and with Paul. They abounded in love toward him. This was the noble love of self-sacrifice. Christ had not only affected their heads,

but also their hearts. **Has the Lord affected your heart? Do you abound in love for other people?** Jesus put a premium on love.

John 13:35 (NASB)

³⁵“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

1 Corinthians 13:1-2 (NASB)

¹“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

²If I have *the gift of prophecy*, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”

Because of Christ’s love for mankind, He stayed on the cross and died for the sins of the world. Love enables us to finish what we have started. A story is told about a man who, after twenty years of marriage, decided to divorce his wife. In preparing for the financial settlement, he began to rummage through his old checks. One canceled check after another stirred up the memories of a long-forgotten past. He found the check to the hotel where he and his wife had spent their honeymoon. Then there was the check for their first car, the check for the hospital bill for the birth of their daughter, and the check for the down payment on their first home.

Finally, he could not stand it any longer. All those feelings for his wife came back to him. He pushed the checks aside, reached for the telephone, and called his wife. He told her they had invested too much in each other to throw it all away and asked her if they could start over with a new beginning. His love motivated him to finish what he started.

Our checkbook tells the story of our life too. In most cases, it reveals our values, lifestyle, and our financial priorities with the Lord because it shows the location of our treasure. It reveals whether we give to the Lord’s work. This is where the Corinthians were being challenged. Paul was challenging them to *excel in charitableness and contributing to the needs of others*.

6. They Needed to Excel in Charitableness and Contributing to the Needs of Others

To be totally complete and balanced, they needed to grow in this area. Their excellence in their confidence in God, their communication skills, their comprehension, commitment, and compassion were all a great foundation for learning to give to the Lord and others. Despite all their good qualities, they were incomplete, and Paul wanted them to grow in grace giving. God’s grace had produced those virtues in them, and the apostle wanted it to flow out through their giving. They had a need to mature in this area.

Perhaps, this is where you need to grow in your relationship with Christ. Beloved, there is no way to grow to spiritual maturity without committing your finances to the

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Lord, **Jesus can have our money and not have our hearts, but he cannot have our hearts without our money.** We will not be able to finish what God has started in us without surrendering to the Lord in the area of our finances. Whether you like it or not, they belong to Him. We are only stewards of His blessings.