

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

3. [\(2 Corinthians 8:8\)](#) **Stewardship— Giving:** the third exhortation is to prove the sincerity of your love.

[2 Corinthians 8:8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸“I am not speaking *this* as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.”

Note that Paul does not command the Corinthians to give. If giving is forced or coerced, **it benefits nothing; it does not please God**. God is pleased only with gifts that are **willingly** and **cheerfully given**. He blesses only those who willingly help others.

Therefore, giving must be based upon two things.

1. Giving must be based upon **love for those who are lost and needy**. Giving must be based upon love for the Lord Jesus who has commanded us to go into all the world to reach and help the people of the world.

2. Giving must be based upon the **example of those who give sacrificially**. In the case of the Corinthians, they had the dynamic example of the Macedonians. The Corinthians should have been stirred to follow the example of such sacrificial giving. In our case, we should be stirred to follow the dynamic example of all those who give willingly and sacrificially.

Note how love is proven by action. Love cannot be known unless it is demonstrated by deeds of compassion and giving. Love demands sacrificial giving. **In fact, there is no love unless there is sacrificial giving.**

Matthew 22:39 (NASB)

³⁹“The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”

John 13:35 (NASB)

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

John 15:12 (NASB)

¹²“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”

Ephesians 5:2 (NASB)

²“And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”

1 Thessalonians 3:12 (NASB)

¹²“And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also *do* for you.”

Giving Is Proof of Love

2 Corinthians 8:8 (NASB)

⁸“I am **not speaking this** as a **command**, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.”

As he concluded his discussion of exemplary giving, Paul reminded the Corinthians that he was **not speaking** by way of **command**. That emphasizes yet again the fundamental principle that giving to the church is **voluntary, freewill giving**. Had Paul prescribed an amount or a fixed percentage, the Corinthians’ giving would have been in obedience to a **command**.

2 Corinthians 8:8 (NASB)

⁸“I am **not speaking this** as a **command**, but as proving **through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also**.”

Instead, Paul challenged the Corinthians to prove **through the earnestness of others the sincerity of** their **love also**. The others to whom he referred were the Macedonians; the apostle urged the Corinthians to follow their example and prove the **sincerity of their love also**. The true test of love is not feelings, but actions: **“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also” (1 John 4:20-21)**.

The voluntary, generous, sacrificial giving modeled by the Macedonians was an example not only for the Corinthians but also for all believers. It is the path to experiencing God’s rich blessing in time and eternity.

THE EAGERNESS AND EXAMPLE OF OTHER CHRISTIANS

As Paul challenges the Corinthians to finish what they started about giving to the Jerusalem believers, he makes it very clear that he is not giving them a command about this matter of giving. Grace-giving is to be done voluntarily and with a willing heart, or else it is not grace-giving at all. He does, however, endeavor to challenge and inspire them with the **enthusiasm**, **concern**, and **commitment** of the Macedonian churches and the supreme example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a **“command”** cannot accomplish, an **“example”** can. **Mark Twain** said, “Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.” What a blessing it was for Paul to be able to point to the example of the Macedonian Christians to **teach**, **challenge**, and **inspire** the Corinthians to a greater level of spiritual maturity.

Beloved, your example is important whether you realize it or not. Your financial status does not determine whether you are more or less important than someone else. The Macedonian’s were dirt poor, yet, greatly used as an object lesson of faith and generosity to a wealthy church. They continue to be used today!

The Macedonian believers were determined to finish their course for Christ. They wanted to finish what God had started in them. **How does this happen?** You finish by doing what the Lord leads you to do, one day at a time. As one task is completed, another opportunity to serve Him will arise. **What kind of example are you? Are other believers challenged by your life? Can they point at you and use your life to challenge not only themselves, but others?**

The Corinthians demonstrated great growth in so many areas and now the Apostle Paul wanted them to be leaders in the area of generosity. Giving is a natural response of love.

The love of the Macedonian believers for the Lord, and for others, sparked their generosity. They proved their love by their sacrificial giving. Paul urged the Corinthians

to follow their example and prove the sincerity, authenticity, or genuineness of their love, by finishing what they started to do in giving to the believers in Jerusalem. By their giving, they would demonstrate their faith, trust in the Lord, and the sincerity of their love. They would reveal what was really going on in their hearts.

Ecclesiastes 11:1 (NASB)

¹“Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days.”

Beloved, when we give, we reap what we sow. Solomon said, **“Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days”** ([Ecclesiastes 11:1 NASB](#)). The truth of these principles is seen in a story that took place in France. Some years ago, there was a celebrated artist in Paris whose name was Ary Scheffer. On one occasion, he wished to introduce a beggar into a certain picture he was painting. Baron Rothschild, the famous banker, and one of the richest men in the world, was a particular friend of the artist. He happened to come into his studio at the very time when the artist was needing a beggar to be a model.

“Wait till tomorrow,” said Rothschild, “and I will dress myself up as a beggar, and make you an excellent model.” The artist was pleased with the proposal and said, “Very well.” The next day the rich banker appeared, dressed up as a beggar, and a very sorry looking beggar he was. While the artist was engaged in painting him, another friend of his came into the studio. He was a kind, generous-hearted man. As he looked on the model beggar, he was touched by his wretched appearance and as he passed by him he slipped a French gold coin into his hand. The pretended beggar took the coin, and put it in his pocket.

Ten years after this, the gentleman who gave this piece of money received a check from the bank of the Rothschilds for ten thousand francs. This was enclosed in a letter which read as follows: “Sir, you one day gave a gold coin to Baron Rothschild in the art studio of Ary Scheffer. He has invested it, and made good use of it. Today, he sends the capital you entrusted to him, together with the interest it has gained.” It was signed, James Rothschild. Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.