

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

6. [\(2 Corinthians 8:11-12\) Stewardship— Giving: the sixth challenge is to give readily and willingly.](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:11-12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹“But now finish doing it also, so that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability.

¹²For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a person* has, not according to what he does not have.”

ECONOMIC CAPSULE

What is Economics?

THE ROLE OF ECONOMICS

Among the misconceptions of economics is that it is something that tells you how to make money or run a business or predict the ups and downs of the stock market. But economics is not personal finance or business administration, and predicting the ups and downs of the stock market has yet to be reduced to a dependable formula.

When economists analyze prices, wages, profits, or the international balance of trade, for example, it is from the standpoint of how decisions in various parts of the economy affect the allocation of scarce resources in a way that raises or lowers the material standard of living of the people as a whole.

Economics is not simply a topic on which to express opinions or vent emotions. It is a systematic study of cause and effect, showing what happens when you do specific things in specific ways. In economic analysis, the methods used by a Marxist economist like Oscar Lange did not differ in any fundamental way from the methods used by a conservative economist like Milton Friedman. It is these basic economic principles that this teaching is about.

Oskar Ryszard Lange (27 July 1904 – 2 October 2 1965) was a Polish economist and diplomat. He is best known for advocating the use of market pricing tools in socialist systems and providing a model of market socialism. During his stay in the United States, Lange was a sought-after academic teacher and researcher in mathematical economics. Later in communist Poland, he was a member of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and a believer in centrally-managed economy.

One of the ways of understanding the consequences of economic decisions is to look at them in terms of the incentives they create, rather than simply the goals they pursue. This means that consequences matter more than intentions---and not just the immediate consequences, but also the longer run repercussions.

6. (2 Corinthians 8:11-12) Stewardship— Giving: the sixth challenge is to give readily and willingly.

2 Corinthians 8:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ **“But now finish doing it also, so that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability.**

¹² **For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a person has*, not according to what he does not have.”**

Four quick points are made in these two verses, points that give clear directions on missions to any church that is willing to listen. **Note:** Paul is no longer giving advice; **he is now charging the church to give itself to missions and to undertake this particular mission project.**

1. Give yourselves to missions. This is implied, understood. Paul is dealing with one mission project, but underlying the whole discussion is the absolute necessity for a permanent commitment to missions. After a mission need has been met, there is always

another need to meet—a need just as critical. The world reels under the weight of **sin** and **disease**, **corruption** and **death**, **hunger** and **thirst**, **poverty** and **ignorance**, **homelessness** and **exposure to the elements**. Literally thousands die prematurely and without Christ every day—die because no one cared enough to help them. The call of missions is the constant call of Christ:

Matthew 20:28 (NASB)

²⁸ “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Matthew 28:19-20 (NASB)

¹⁹ “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Luke 19:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

2. Finish the mission. The Corinthian church had begun the project; they needed to finish it. The church is to reach out in mission projects all over the world, and it is to finish the projects. Remember that Jerusalem was a foreign field to the Corinthians.

3. Give readily and willingly—lay hold of “a willing mind.” Note that this is the first requirement when a person gives. Above all else, he is to give willingly.

4. The reason is simply stated: God is going to judge us for what we give. The idea is this: in the Day of Judgment God is going to look at what we gave and at what we kept back. If we have banked, hoarded, and lived extravagantly, He is going to reject us. **But if we gave all that we had beyond our needs**, then we will be “accepted,” that is, approved to live in the presence of Christ who sacrificed all He had for us.

Luke 11:41 (NASB)

⁴¹ “But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.”

Luke 12:33 (NASB)

³³ “Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.”

Luke 18:22 (NASB)

²² “When Jesus heard *this*, He said to him, “One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

Acts 11:29 (NASB)

²⁹ “And in the proportion, that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send *a contribution* for the relief of the brethren living in Judea.”

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.”

2 Corinthians 8:12 (NASB)

¹²“For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.”

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NASB)

⁷“Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Deuteronomy 16:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.”

Stewardship with Integrity Calls for Faithfulness to Complete the Commitment

2 Corinthians 8:11 (NASB)

¹¹“**But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it** by your ability.”

One of the most vexing, disturbing and troubling aspects of the ministry is dealing with those who make a good beginning but never finish what they start. It is not easy to carry things through to completion; it takes **discipline, devotion, and faithfulness**. There are many who start, even make promises to give, but fail to complete that promise.

All the Corinthians' good intentions would have meant little had they failed to complete the collection, so Paul urged them to **finish doing it**. Their **readiness to desire** to give was meaningless apart from **the completion of** the project. The apostle was concerned that, though they were willing, they might fail to perform.

At the end of **1 Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:2)** Paul instructed the Corinthians, “**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.**” The giving was to be done in a systematic, orderly, routine manner on the Lord's Day; Paul did not want hasty collections to be taken only when he arrived.

As noted above, the Corinthians' giving was not halted by apathy or selfishness, but by the rebellion against Paul incited by the false apostles. One of their most devious lies about him was that he was in the ministry for the money; that he was “**walking in craftiness**” (**2 Corinthians 4:2**).

2 Corinthians 4:2 (NASB)

²“**But we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness** or adulterating the word of God, but by the **manifestation of truth** commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”

But unlike the false apostles, Paul was not guilty of “**peddling the word of God**” ([2 Corinthians 2:17](#)).

2 Corinthians 2:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“**For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.**”

Nevertheless, the false accusations against him had raised doubts about his integrity among the Corinthians, effectively halting the collection. Nothing cripple’s people’s willingness to give as much as a loss of confidence in their leaders. But since the relationship between the apostle and the Corinthians had been restored, it was time for them to complete what they had started.

Stewardship with Integrity Calls for Amounts That Are Proportionate to What One Has

2 Corinthians 8:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹“**But now finish doing it also, so that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it **by your ability.****
¹²**For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.**”

Though Paul expected the Corinthians to give generously, he did not expect them to give beyond their means. The Greek phrase translated **by your ability** literally reads, “**out of what you have.**” As the apostle wrote in his first inspired letter to them, “**Each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper**” ([1 Corinthians 16:2](#)).

Even the exemplary giving of the Macedonians was “**according to their ability, and beyond their ability**” ([2 Corinthians 8:3](#)); that is, they gave out of what they had, **but in sacrificial amounts**, using money needed for the basic necessities of life.

2 Corinthians 8:12 (NASB)

¹²For **if the readiness [*prothumia*] is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.**”

But **if the readiness** (*prothumia*; “willingness”; “eagerness”; “zeal”) to give sacrificially with unique generosity **is present, it is acceptable** to God for believers to give beyond what would be expected. But God expects giving **according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.** Believers should not, however, borrow to give. Going into debt to give with no ability to repay is foolish.

When believers are moved to give beyond their ability, and make sacrifices to increase their ability to give, they are following the example of the poor widow, of whom Jesus said, “⁴³Truly I say to you, **this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;** ⁴⁴**for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on**” ([Mark 12:43-44 NASB](#)).

Some of the Corinthians may have been using their lack of resources as an excuse not to give. It is true that those who, like the poor widow, have minimal resources can only give a little, while those with more substantial resources can give larger amounts. **But with God the amount is not the issue but the attitude of the heart.** He expects believers to give in proportion to their resources, not more, but also not less. Any ministry that attempts to pressure people to give beyond their resources is operating outside the bounds of biblical stewardship. So also, are those who fail to give in proportion to their resources.

THE EQUALITY IN PROVISIONS—2 Corinthians 8:13-15

2 Corinthians 8:12-15 (NASB)

¹² For if the readiness [*prothumia*] is present, it is acceptable according to what *a person* has, not according to what he does not have.”

¹³ “For *this* is not for the ease of others *and* for your affliction, but by way of equality—

¹⁴ at this present time your abundance *being a supply* for their need, so that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your need, that there may be equality;

¹⁵ as it is written, “HE WHO *gathered* MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO *gathered* LITTLE HAD NO LACK.”

Paul tells the Corinthians that whatever they give is acceptable if they give it willingly and eagerly. They were to give, based on their ability to do so. The gift was to be based on what they had, not what they lacked. The apostle did not want them to put themselves in a position of hardship. Their own families were not to be neglected. Sacrificial giving must be responsible. Paul wants believers to give generously, but not to the extent that those who depend on the givers must go without having their basic needs met. Give until it hurts, but don't give so that it hurts your family and/or relatives who need your financial support.

It was Paul's desire to ease the burden the believers in Jerusalem were facing. The bounty of the believers in Corinth would help to balance out the burdens and the poverty the Christians in Jerusalem were facing. It would help to ease their trials and the needs they had in their lives. This is the principle the Jews lived by when they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. If too much manna was gathered by a family, then it was shared with those who did not gather enough on that particular day. The surplus of one family was used to balance out the shallow amount of another.

We are so blessed to live in the United States of America. Even the poorest of us would be considered wealthy in other countries where the people have very little. The reason we have sent some of our bounty to poor churches in countries like the Philippines, is to help them with their ministries. Because of their poverty, it is difficult for them to build and expand their churches or have books to study God's Word. With our bounty, however, we can be a channel of blessing to aid them in meeting their needs. The result is God's abundant blessings and provisions for our church family. Let me ask, “Are you a channel of blessing?” If that is your desire, then step out by faith and give to

the Lord and watch what He does with you and for you. You'll be glad you did. Finish what God has started in you and leads you to do with your life.

In **1865**, when **Hudson Taylor** founded the **China Inland Mission** (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship), he determined to depend on God alone for the needed finances. From that day, no direct solicitation of funds has occurred, yet, the mission's needs have been continuously met from unexpected sources at critical times, in answer to prayer. Several years ago, **Phyllis Thompson** chronicled many stories of God's faithfulness to **CIM** in her little book, *Proving God*. "Through the ninety and more years of its history," she wrote, "although no public or private appeal for funds has ever been authorized, its work and workers have been sustained by an unailing supply."

For example, Thompson recalls that in December, 1954, when funds were especially low, mission personnel heard of a gift coming their way from a wealthy American lady. Nobody at CIM remembered having met the lady, but she had sometimes sent small donations to the mission's London office. Now she had apparently included CIM in her will to the tune of \$5,500.

As it turned out, however, the money was not for the China Inland Mission. It went instead to a Bible school organized by Chinese in the Far East. While the CIM personnel were glad for their Chinese brothers, they naturally felt a bit disappointed, but their attention was soon drawn to **2 Chronicles 25:9**, and they claimed the verse as their own: "**The Lord is able to give you much more than this.**"

2 Chronicles 25:9 (NASB)

⁹“Amaziah said to the man of God, “But what *shall we* do for the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?” And the man of God answered, “The LORD has much more to give you than this.”

Within days another communication came from the woman's estate. She had indeed remembered the mission, but not for \$5,500. The amount being sent was \$75,000, with an additional \$60,000 coming later! Mission directors met for prayer with overflowing and humbled hearts. They sang the Doxology and thanked the Lord for his goodness in sending them "**much more than this.**" Thank God, that we serve a Lord that can supply the needs we have in our lives and help us to finish what He has started in us.