

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

Nothing is easier than to have good intentions but, without an understanding of how an economy works, good intentions can lead to counterproductive, or even disastrous, consequences for the whole nation. Many, if not most, economic disasters have been a result of policies intended to be beneficial ---and these disasters could often have been avoided if those who originated and supported such policies understood economics.

While there are controversies in economics, as there are in science, this does not mean that the basic principles of economics are just a matter of opinion, any more than the basic principles of chemistry or physics are just a matter of opinion. Einstein's analysis of physics, for example, was not just Einstein's opinion, as the world discovered at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Economic reactions may not be as spectacular or as tragic, as of a given day, but the worldwide depression of the 1930s plunged millions of people into poverty, even in the richest countries, producing malnutrition in countries with surplus food, probably causing more deaths around the world than those at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Conversely, when India and China--- historically, two of the poorest nations on earth-- began in the late 20th century to make fundamental changes in the economic policies, their economies began growing dramatically. It has been estimated that 20 million people in India rose out of destitution in a decade. In China, the number of people living on a dollar a day or less fell from 374 million---one third of the country's population in 1990-- to 128 million by 2004, now just 10% of the growing population. In other words, nearly a quarter of a billion Chinese were now better off as a result of a change in economic policy.

Things like this are what make the study of economics important--- and not just a matter of opinions or emotions. Economics is a tool of cause and effect analysis, a body of tested knowledge--- and principles derived from that knowledge.

Money doesn't even have to be involved to make a decision to be economic. When a military medical team arrives on a battlefield where soldiers have a variety of wounds, they are confronted with the classic economic problem of allocating scarce resources which have alternative uses. Almost never are there enough doctors, nurses, paramedics to go around, nor enough medications. Some of the wounded are near death and have little chance of being saved, while others having a fighting chance if they get immediate care, and still others are only slightly wounded and will probably recover whether they get immediate attention are not.

If the medical team does not allocate its time and medications efficiently, some wounded soldiers will die needlessly, while time is being spent attending to others not as urgently in need of care or still others whose wounds are so devastating that they will probably die in spite of anything that can be done for them. It is an economic problem, though not a dime changes hands.

Most of us hate even to think of having to make such choices. Indeed, as we have already seen, some middle-class Americans are distressed at having to make much milder choices and trade-offs. But life does not ask us what we want. It presents us with options. Economics is one of the ways of trying to make the most of the options.

7. (2 Corinthians 8:13-15) Stewardship— Giving: the seventh challenge is to meet the needs of one another—equally.

2 Corinthians 8:13-15 (NASB)

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

¹⁴at 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;

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

It is critical to note that these verses are not dealing with possessions or property, not with what a person has, **but with needs**.

1. One person’s need is not to be eased while another person has a need.
2. Each need is to be equally met. This is an explosive principle, for it goes contrary to what society practices. It eliminates the hoarding and keeping of goods beyond our needs. God wants the needs of the starving and lost masses met. The only way they can be met is by giving all we are and have ***beyond what is needed*** to take care of our own families.
3. The Old Testament Scripture supports this principle ([Exodus 16:18](#)).

Exodus 16:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“When they measured it with an **omer** [**a heap, or dry measure**], he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat.”

When God miraculously fed Israel with the manna from the sky, the people were to gather only what they needed. If they gathered too much and attempted to hoard and put it back, it spoiled overnight. If a person was unable to gather enough due to some illness or inability, his need was either met by the help of others or by God Himself.

The point is striking: every believer is to use all he has and give it to meet the needs of a desperate world. He is to particularly meet the needs of fellow believers.

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.”

Acts 20:35 (NASB)

³⁵ “In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

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.”

Ephesians 4:28 (NASB)

²⁸ “He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.”

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NASB)

¹⁷ “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

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

¹⁹ storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”

Hebrews 13:16 (NASB)

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

THE EQUALITY IN PROVISIONS— [2 Corinthians 8:12-15](#)

2 Corinthians 8:12-15 (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.

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.

However, we also have the tremendous responsibility to teach our brothers in the Philippines. They cannot and should not be allowed to remain the same if they do not learn how to give.

In **1865**, when **Hudson Taylor** founded the **China Inland Mission [CIM] (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 unfailing 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.

Stewardship with Integrity Calls for Giving That Balances Resources in the Body of Christ

2 Corinthians 8:13-15 (NASB)

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

¹⁴at 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;

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

Some of the Corinthians may also have been reluctant to give because of the charge of favoritism leveled against Paul by the false apostles. They accused him of being prejudiced in favor of the predominantly Jewish church at Jerusalem, since he also was Jewish. Thus, according to the anti-Paul faction, the apostle’s goal in collecting the offering was to prejudicially enrich his countrymen at the expense of the Corinthians’ deprivation.

Anticipating that objection, Paul assured the Corinthians that the collection was **not for the ease of others**. His goal was not to raise the Jerusalem saints’ comfort level by causing the Corinthians **affliction** and hardship. He was not out to make the rich poor and the poor rich. Instead, his goal was to oppose favoritism and instead to bring about some **equality**—not economic egalitarianism in a Marxist or socialist sense, but a balancing of resources.

Paul wanted those with more than they needed to help those who had less than they needed. Such an attitude is the mark of a genuine believer. “**Whoever has the world’s**

goods,” John wrote, “and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?” ([1 John 3:17 NASB](#)). John rightly questions the salvation of such a person.

Paul expressed this same principle to Timothy, telling him to “¹⁷instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share” ([1 Timothy 6:17-18](#)).

There is nothing wrong with being rich if God so blesses. But the rich are not to be conceited or to trust in their riches. Instead, they are “to be generous and ready to share.” There was nothing wrong with the Corinthians having more than the Jerusalem believers. But it would have been wrong for them to be unwilling to share. Christians are not isolated individuals but members of one body ([Romans 12:5](#)). Therefore, they are responsible to meet one another’s needs.

Romans 12:5 (NASB)

⁵“So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

That does not mean, of course, that the church is to support those who choose not to work. The Bible does not approve of indolence. In fact, Paul declared forcefully regarding those who refuse to work, “If anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either” ([2 Thessalonians 3:10](#)). The church’s responsibility is not to indulge laziness but to meet the basic needs of those unable to provide for themselves.

2 Corinthians 8:14 (NASB)

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.”

Though at the present time the Corinthians’ abundance was a supply for the Jerusalem saints’ need that might not always be the case. The fortunes of life could change, and the time might come when persecution or disaster could impoverish the Corinthians. Should that happen, the Jerusalem saints’ abundance would then become a supply for the Corinthians’ need.

2 Corinthians 8:15 (NASB)

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

Paul illustrated his point with a quote from the Old Testament. He introduced it with the familiar phrase as it is written, the common New Testament way of introducing an Old Testament quote (cf. [2 Corinthians 9:9](#); [Mark 1:2](#); [Mark 7:6](#); [Luke 2:23](#); [Luke 3:4](#); [John 6:31](#); [John 12:14-15](#); [Acts 7:42](#); [Acts 15:15](#); [Romans 1:17](#); [Romans 2:24](#);

[Romans 3:4, 10](#); [Romans 4:17](#); [Romans 8:36](#); [Romans 9:13, 33](#); [Romans 10:15](#); [Romans 11:8, 26](#); [Romans 15:3, 9, 21](#); [1 Corinthians 1:31](#); [1 Corinthians 2:9](#); [1 Corinthians 10:7](#)).

[2 Corinthians 9:9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹“**as it is written**, “HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER.”

[Mark 1:2 \(NASB\)](#)

²“**As it is written** in Isaiah the prophet: “BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY.”

[Mark 7:6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶“And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, **as it is written**: ‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.’”

[Luke 2:23 \(NASB\)](#)

²³“**(as it is written)** in the Law of the Lord, “EVERY *firstborn* MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD”).”

[Luke 3:4 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴“**as it is written** in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.’”

[John 6:31 \(NASB\)](#)

³¹“Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; **as it is written**, ‘HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT.’”

[John 12:14-15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁴“Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; **as it is written**,

¹⁵“FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SEATED ON A DONKEY'S COLT.”

[Acts 7:42 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴²“But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; **as it is written** in the book of the prophets, ‘IT WAS NOT TO ME THAT YOU OFFERED VICTIMS AND SACRIFICES FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, WAS IT, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL?’”

[Acts 15:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵“With this the words of the Prophets agree, just **as it is written**.”

[Romans 1:17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁷“For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; **as it is written**, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

[Romans 2:24 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴“For “THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,” just **as it is written**.”

[Romans 3:4 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴“May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found* a liar, **as it is written**, “THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.”

Romans 3:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ “**as it is written**, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE.”

Romans 4:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ “**as it is written**, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.”

Romans 8:36 (NASB)

³⁶ “Just **as it is written**, “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”

Romans 9:13 (NASB)

¹³ “Just **as it is written**, “JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.”

Romans 9:33 (NASB)

³³ “just **as it is written**, “BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”

Romans 10:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ “How will they preach unless they are sent? Just **as it is written**, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!”

Romans 11:8 (NASB)

⁸ “just **as it is written**, “GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY.”

Romans 11:26 (NASB)

²⁶ “and so all Israel will be saved; just **as it is written**, “THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

Romans 15:3 (NASB)

³ “For even Christ did not please Himself; but **as it is written**, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.”

Romans 15:9 (NASB)

⁹ “and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; **as it is written**, “THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME.”

Romans 15:21 (NASB)

²¹ “but **as it is written**, “THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE, AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND.”

1 Corinthians 1:31 (NASB)

³¹ “so that, just **as it is written**, “LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.”

1 Corinthians 2:9 (NASB)

⁹ “but just **as it is written**, “THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND *which* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.”

1 Corinthians 10:7 (NASB)

⁷ “Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; **as it is written**, “THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY.”

2 Corinthians 8:15 (NASB)

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

The quote, “**He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little had no lack**” comes from the account of Israel’s wilderness wanderings. In response to the people’s grumbling ([Exodus 16:2-3](#)), the Lord promised to send them bread from heaven ([Exodus 16:4](#)).

Exodus 16:2-3 (NASB)

²“The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

³The sons of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the LORD’S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Exodus 16:4 (NASB)

⁴“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction.”

When they gathered the manna, “some gathered much and some little” ([Exodus 16:17](#)).

Exodus 16:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“The sons of Israel did so, and *some* gathered much and *some* little.”

Yet “**he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack**” ([Exodus 16:18](#)).

Exodus 16:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“When they measured it with an omer, **he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat.”**

Apparently, they shared what they gathered, so each person and family had enough to eat. So, it is in the body of Christ; those who have an abundance share with those who are in need, so that everyone has enough.