

BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

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

THE EAGERNESS OF THE CORINTHIANS AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF PAUL—[2 Corinthians 9:1-2](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:1-2 \(NASB\)](#)

¹“For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints;
²for 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.”

Concerning the ministry of giving to the Jerusalem church, Paul felt it was superfluous to write to the Corinthians. The word “**superfluous**” is from the word *perissos* {*per-is-sos*} which means “**more than necessary, uncommon, extraordinary.**” Paul felt his letter was more than necessary to write the church about the offering for the Jerusalem believers because he knew their “**readiness.**”

This phrase is from the word *prothumia* {*proth-oo-mee'-ah*} which means “**zeal, eagerness, readiness of mind.**” When this burden was revealed a year earlier, the **Corinthians** were very excited about helping out. This letter is following up on their desire.

Paul said he told the **Macedonians** that the **Corinthians** had been ready a year ago. Evidently, he meant that they had been ready to start collecting a gift rather than that their gift was ready to go to Judea.

Because of problems in the church, their enthusiasm a year ago had diminished since then, but they now had been eager to participate in the offering project. It is this initial attitude that Paul commended here.

Apparently, the Corinthian Christians were taking the lead in their province that also included churches in the port city of Cenchrea, and probably other communities. This explains his reference to **Achaia**, which was that part of Greece of which **Corinth** was the capital city.

These verses reveal the importance of encouragement, especially among Christians. Paul does not hesitate to pat the backs of the Corinthian believers for their zeal to help the Judean believers. Affirmation or encouragement goes a long way with people. It means a lot to a wife when her husband praises her. A man likes to hear appreciation and praise from his wife for his love and care. Children crave the praise of their parents.

Praise your children, especially when they demonstrate character in their lives. Make a big deal out of character instead of cuteness. Inspire your family and Christian friends to live their lives for God. Bring out the best in them by your love and encouragement.

Alan Loy McGinnis, in his book *Bringing Out the Best in People*, wrote about the importance of encouragement. He said, “A proven motivator will make it to the top before a proven genius. When **Andrew Carnegie** hired **Charles Schwab** to administer his far-flung steel empire, **Schwab** became the first man in history to earn a million dollars a year while under the employment of someone else. **Schwab** was once asked what equipped him to earn \$3000 a day.

Was it his knowledge of steel manufacturing? Schwab’s snorted reply was, ‘Nonsense. I have lots of men working for me who know more about steel than I do.’ **Charles Schwab** was paid a handsome amount largely because of his ability to inspire other people.

Charles said, ‘I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm among the men, the greatest asset I possess. Any leader who can do that can go almost anywhere and name almost any price.’”

THE ENTHUSIASTIC EXAMPLE OF THE CORINTHIANS

—**2 Corinthians 9:2B**

2 Corinthians 9:2b (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.”

The enthusiasm of the Corinthians became an object lesson for Paul to challenge other believers about the joy of giving and helping others. Paul boasted about the Corinthians' attitude to other churches including Macedonia.

When the Macedonians heard that the Corinthians had been ready for a year, the Macedonians were challenged by their zealous example and gave sacrificially to this need, too. They were “**provoked or stirred,**” which means “**to stir up or excite.**”

Let me ask some questions here, “**Does your example get people ‘excited or stirred up’ about serving the Lord? What kind of example are you as a Christian?**” You are an example of something.

You are teaching lessons with your life, good or bad. **By your actions and attitudes, what are you teaching other people about life, about love, and about the Lord?** Our example should never be underestimated.

The Corinthian’s example excited other believers to serve the Lord, to die to self, and sacrificially give to others who had greater needs. They followed the challenge of Jesus. The challenge of Scripture is to let our example shine for Christ.

Matthew 5:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Sir Harry Lauder, Scottish humorist and comedian of another era, was a Christian. One evening at the Hotel Cecil, he told about an incident that might have been spoken from a pulpit. He said: “I was sitting in the gloamin’ (dusk or twilight), an’ a man passed the window. He was the lamplighter. He pushed his pole into the lamp and lighted it. Then he went to another and another.

Now I couldn’t see him. But I knew where he was by the lamps as they broke out doon the street, until he had left a beautiful avenue of lights. Ye’re lamplighters. They’ll know where ye’ve been by the lights [ye have lit].”

Beloved, that is a beautiful description of the Christian life. We are lamplighters. The light of Christ is revealed through our godly example and our witness about Him to people who do not know the Lord and are walking in darkness.

If you want to keep egg off of your face, live your life for Christ. Living for Jesus Christ will not cause you to be embarrassed or ashamed. Living for yourself or living in sin will.

Proverbs 3:35 (NASB)

³⁵“The wise will inherit honor, But fools display dishonor.”

Proverbs 11:2 (NASB)

²“When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom.”

Proverbs 13:5 (NASB)

⁵“A righteous man hates falsehood, But a wicked man acts disgustingly and shamefully.”

2. (2 Corinthians 9:3-5) Stewardship— Giving: givers who please God are not caught unprepared to give.

2 Corinthians 9:3-5 (NASB)

³“But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared;

⁴ otherwise if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we— not to speak of you—will be put to shame by this confidence.

⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness.”

As Paul travelled from place to place, he was always training young disciples in the ministry, and these disciples often travelled with him. In addition to these, Paul was

sometimes escorted to the next city by men from the place where he had just completed his ministry. This was soon to be the case: some men from Macedonia were going to escort him to Corinth.

This fact is the background for what **Paul** now says.

1. Being unprepared to give causes shame. **Paul** says that he was sending **Titus** and the two other men to reactivate the mission project among the **Corinthians**. He was doing this lest he be ashamed and embarrassed when he and the other **Macedonians** arrived. He had boasted in the **Corinthians** a year earlier, using their commitment to missions as a testimony to stir the **Macedonians** to underwrite the same project.

If he and their representatives arrived and the **Corinthians** had slipped back and failed to follow through, the situation would be a reflection upon **Christ, Paul,** and the **Corinthian church**.

Thought 1. A Christian who is unprepared to give brings shame to the very name of Christian. The very purpose for Christ coming to earth was to give—to give **sacrificially and to give all**. He gave His very life to meet the needs of desperate humanity.

Therefore, it is a shame, an embarrassment to the name of Christ for a professing Christian not to give; for Christ existed to give. The very name of Christ and of Christian means to give and to give sacrificially—to give all.

2. Being prepared shows love, not covetousness. **Paul** says that he was sending the men ahead of him so that the church could reactivate the mission project and offering. They needed to have the collection ready when he arrived. Note why **Paul** felt this was necessary: so that the **Corinthians** would demonstrate love and generosity, not covetousness.

If the mission project was still being delayed when he and the **Macedonians** arrived, the church would seem to be covetous and worldly. They would be failing in their very purpose for being on earth: to minister to those in need.

Thought 1. Honest believers and churches have to confess to covetousness. Few really give all they **are and have** to meet the desperate plight of the human race, a human race of men and women, boys and girls dying without Christ; and so many are dying prematurely from hunger, cold, disease, loneliness, emptiness, worthlessness, sin, and evil.

How terrible covetousness is! Living extravagantly, spending beyond our needs, banking, hoarding, building up estates, constructing larger and larger homes, buying more and more—all to the deprivation and destruction of human life and to the doom of human souls. Covetousness has no place in the Christian's heart nor in the church, much less upon earth. Its results are too devastating.

Believers must be prepared to give, demonstrating the very sacrificial love of Christ Himself who gave all to meet the needs of the desperate.

Luke 12:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ “Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not *even* when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”

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.”

Colossians 3:5 (NASB)

⁵ “Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed [covetousness], which amounts to idolatry.”

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 13:5 (NASB)

⁵ “*Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU.”

Hebrews 13:16 (NASB)

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

Matthew 5:42 (NASB)

⁴² “Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.”

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.”