
2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-8 | MACEDONIAN GENEROSITY DESIRED IN CORINTH

- Verses 1-2 -
 - Paul now wants to make the Corinthian church knowledgeable of **the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia**.
 - The words **we do you to wit** mean "we want to make known" (**wit** is an archaic term for *knowledge*).
 - Note that **the grace of God** is *variegated* or **manifold** (1 Peter 4:10) and should not be taken as *saving grace* which is only one type of God's grace.
 - This grace is that God enabled the Macedonian's to be richly generous during a **trial of affliction**, of which we are given no further detail.
 - The Macedonian church had a heritage of generous giving, as seen here, as well as the fact that they supported Paul in his first stay in Corinth (2 Cor. 11:9). They were indeed a congregation which **abounded unto the riches of their liberality**.
 - This is a **grace of God** but one which, no doubt, can be fostered and encouraged, as Paul will do here for the Corinthian church.
- Verses 3-4 -
 - The evidence of the Macedonian generosity is that they came to Paul **with much intreaty** for him to take **the gift and the fellowship** which they considered to be part of **the ministering to the saints**.
 - Note that the Macedonians considered their gift to be **fellowship** with the ones they were supporting.
 - The word is *κοινωνία* [*koinonia*] which emphasizes a *commonality* of resources.
 - By giving, the Macedonians were saying, *we hold ministry in common with you*.
 - Further, they were giving **to the saints**, who were, in this case, undeniably the Jewish believers who were now in times of poverty and persecution.
- Verse 5 -
 - The words **not as we hoped** express that the ministry of the Macedonians was *beyond expectations* in that it was a giving of **their own selves to the Lord and unto us** even before the giving of any money.
 - Sometimes giving money is easier than giving self!
- Verse 6 -
 - Presumably, when Paul was in Macedonia looking for Titus (2 Cor. 2:13) he discovered the good work being done in Macedonia.
 - It appears (from 2 Cor. 8:10) that this work of supporting the saints had previously begun by Titus in Corinth, and now Paul was encouraging Titus to **finish in you the same grace also**.
- Verse 7 -
 - The Corinthian church abounded in manifestations of the Spirit (**faith, and utterance, and knowledge**) (see 1 Cor. 11-14), and Paul desired that the church would **abound in this grace also**.
 - Note that the grammar shows this to be a message to the local church, not to the individual (to whom Paul will speak in chapter 9).
- Verse 8 -
 - Because Paul would be teaching to give out of grace, it would be incompatible for him to **speak by commandment**.
 - It was the **forwardness of others** that spurred on what Paul was instructing, as well as his eagerness to allow the Corinthians an opportunity to **prove the sincerity of their love**.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9-12 | FINISH WHAT YOU START

- Verse 9 -

- If the wonderful work of Jesus Christ on in life, ministry, and death is not the motivation in giving, we will soon quit giving.
- Jesus **was rich** (being equal with God - Phil. 2:6) but **became poor**.
 - We cannot take this in a literal way, for it makes no *common sense* and is at odds with other Scripture.
 - We do not become *financially rich* through Jesus' *financial poverty*. Rather, through the *emptying* of Jesus on the cross we have *spiritual security* in eternity.
 - All of this becomes motivation for any financial generosity we may have.
- Some may object, saying that this chapter is about material resources, not spiritual resources. However, the verse at hand is about proving **the sincerity of your love** and uses the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as an example of sincere love (compare John 15:13).
- For an example of those who take this as a claim on material wealth, see:
 - ““When I started to claim this promise, I began praying for God to bring my husband and I the wealth that Jesus purchased for us with His poverty.”
<https://www.fromhispresence.com/radical-prayer-2-jesus-became-poor-might-become-rich/>
 - Or the tweet of Creflo Dollar: "Jesus bled and died for us so that we can lay claim to the promise of financial prosperity. #ProsperityInChrist #WealthyLiving #AbundantLife". <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/unrepentant-creflo-dollar-still-says-jesus-died-to-make-us-rich/67458.htm>
- Verses 10-11 -
 - What is the **herein** for which Paul gives **advice**? It is the proving of **the sincerity of your love** (v. 8).
 - It is of interest that Paul, speaking in a financial illustration (as in v. 9), uses a Greek word often translated *profitable*, though here translated **expedient**.
 - In the effort to *prove love*, the *profitable* thing to do would be to **perform the doing** (v. 11) of that which you **have begun before** (v. 10) and were eager to accomplish when you started the task. That is, for the proving of love, let there be a **performance also out of that which ye have**.
- Verse 12 -
 - Does this contrast with the previous verse, where Paul said that a **readiness to will** needed to be followed up by a **performance also**? No! In fact, it compliments what he has said.
 - **A willing mind** is the same Greek word as a **readiness to will** (Strong's Greek 4288).
 - What Paul is saying is that *since you have a readiness*, then the actual **performance is according to that a man hath** rather than what **he hath not**.
 - In other words, Paul is teaching them to give *from their means* rather than *above their means*.
 - This verse also addresses the "health wealth prosperity" gospel version of verse 9, since the Corinthians (as the Macedonians) seem to be of little means rather than abundant means.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:13-15 | CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

- Verse 13 - In too many cases down through Christian history (with many notorious examples in our day), the giving of the poor has become the wealth of the "pastors." The givers have been **burdened while other men be eased** in receiving the gifts. The teaching to *give 'till it hurts* is unbiblical.
- Verse 14 - Note that this is *not* a government (nor church-led) distribution of wealth. Rather, it is a voluntary donation of believers in one place who are giving to believers in another place.
- Verse 15 - Here Paul quotes Exodus 16:18 which is quoted in the context of *"how much should a man give?"* The concept, from the beginning of Paul's teaching, is that you give according to ability (see Acts 11:29-30).