

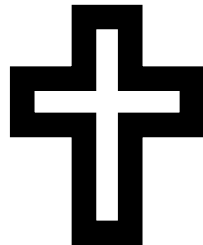
**Twelve Lessons**

*on*

# **II Corinthians**

**Volume II**  
**(Chapters 8-13)**

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## **THE PARTNERSHIP OF GIVING – PART I – LESSON 1**

### **II Corinthians 8:1-9**

**Introduction:** Beginning with chapter 8, Paul reminds the Corinthians of the great need of the Jerusalem saints. To provoke the Corinthians to giving he points to the generosity of the Macedonian churches. In chapters 8 and 9, we see the principles which should govern New Testament giving. We are obligated to share in the ministering of the saints.

#### **Lesson Goals:**

1. Review the history of the establishment of the Macedonian churches.
2. Identify the characteristics of the giving of the Macedonia churches.
3. Show how giving relates to ones love.

#### **Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:**

1. Liberality – Munificence; bounty; a particular act of generosity; a donation; a gratuity.
2. Entreaty – Urgent prayer; earnest petition; pressing solicitation; supplication.
3. Forwardness – Cheerful readiness; promptness. It expresses more than willingness. Eagerness; Ardor; Boldness; confidence; assurance; want of due reserve or modesty.

### **I. THE ILLUSTRATION OF GIVING – 8:1-6 – The liberality of the Macedonian churches**

#### **A. Acknowledgment of their Giving** – vs. 1

1. Paul sought to lead the Corinthian church into the fellowship of ministering to the saints. In the first 6 verses of chapter 8, Paul uses the sacrificial giving of the Macedonian churches to encourage the Corinthians to become involved in helping the poor saints in Jerusalem.
2. Paul states “*we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.*” The phrase “to wit” comes from “gnorizo” which means “to make known, to declare, to be recognized.” Paul felt an acknowledgment of the Macedonian churches’ sacrifice would create a desire in the Corinthians.

#### **3. The churches of Macedonia** – Established as a result of Paul’s obedience to the Macedonian call

##### **a. The church at Philippi**

- 1) Began under the ministry of Paul in Acts 16:11-40
  - a) The conversion of Lydia and her household
  - b) The Philippian jailer and his family were saved
  - c) Persecution forced Paul to leave the city
- 2) Paul wrote to the Philippians to encourage them
  - a) The Philippians had sacrificially given to help Paul in his ministry – Phil. 1:3-5; 4:10
  - b) The Philippians had suffered greatly for their testimony of Christ – Phil. 1:27-30

##### **b. The church at Thessalonica**

- 1) Began under the ministry of Paul in Act 17:1:10
  - a) Many were converted under Paul’s preaching
  - b) Persecution followed their profession forcing Paul to leave suddenly
- 2) Paul wrote to the Thessalonians commending them for their faithfulness
  - a) They continued to have trouble – I Thess.2:14; 1:4-5
  - b) They proved their sincerity through their love for the brethren – I Thess 4:9-10
4. These churches had suffered tremendous persecution, but they still participated in giving to others.

#### **B. Attributes of their Giving** – vs. 2-5

- 1. Sacrificial giving** – “*in a great trial of affliction*” – The churches were giving although they were in the midst of great persecution. Sacrificial giving is giving amid trouble. Paul uses two words here.
  - a. “trial” – The term denotes a test. Usually it refers to metal purified by fire. Paul described the trial as being “great” which means the trials of the church were “large, many, and much.”
  - b. “affliction” – From “thlipsis” meaning “a pressing together, oppression, distress.”
- 2. Joyful giving** – “*the abundance of their joy*” – Sacrificial giving produces joy that overcomes trials.
- 3. Voluntary giving** – “*willing of themselves*” – This phrase comes from “authairetos (ow-thah'-ee-ret-os)” and is defined as “self-chosen, i.e. (by implication) voluntary; of free choice, of one's own accord.”
- 4. Insistent giving** – “*Praying us with much intreaty*” – The Macedonian churches begged Paul with persuasive language to receive the gift they were sending. Paul probably was hesitant to receive this gift due to the affliction the churches were experiencing. However, they insisted he take the contribution.

**5. Personal giving** – *“but first gave their own selves to the Lord”* – These people gave as they did because of their own personal commitment to the Lord. The cost of giving is not calculated and debated by those who have already dedicated themselves holy to the ministry of the saints.

**C. Attitude of their Giving** – vs. 2-5

- 1. Giving concerns priorities not problems** – The churches could have focused upon their own problems. They could have been requesting an offering of helps. However, their first priority was being helpful to the people of God. Therefore, they overlooked their own need in order to help others.
- 2. Giving concerns willingness not wealth** – The willingness of the churches overcame their poverty. God always focuses on the quality of the gift and not the quantity. Jesus’ commendation of the widow’s gift of two mites illustrates this truth (Luke 21:3-4). It was from deep poverty that their liberality abounded.
- 3. Giving concerns opportunity not obligation** – They sought for an opportunity to give. These poor people who were suffering great atrocities were literally begging to give away what they did not have.
- 4. Giving concerns Lordship not legislation** – They first gave themselves to the Lord. If your relationship with Christ is correct, your relationship to man will be right. Commitment to Christ is foundational if compassion for men is to be expressed. Notice submission to the authority of Christ is followed by submission to the authority of God’s man. They also gave themselves unto Paul.

**D. Abundance of their Giving** – vs. 1-3

- Vs. 1 – *“the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia”* – The obedience of the churches obligated God to bless them. The term “bestowed” refers to a gift giving by God. The more one sacrificially gives, the more God returns blessings of grace.
- Vs. 2 – *“the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded”* – God used the joy and poverty of the saints as the avenue of blessing to others. Though they were poverty stricken, they were joyful. Having the correct attitude allowed God to turn their trouble in to triumphs.
- Vs. 3 – *“beyond their power they were willing of themselves”* – When God becomes involved in our ministry of giving, we are able to give beyond our own power. God’s power will supersede our abilities and resources. God miraculously multiplied their gift so that it abounded more than expected.

**II. THE INSTRUCTION OF GIVING – 8:7-9**

**A. The Perfection of Giving** – vs. 6-7 – *“finish in you the same grace... see that ye abound in this grace”*

- Paul desired that the burden presented to the churches by Titus would have the same affect on the Corinthian church as it had on the other believers.
- Paul had mentioned the collection for the Jerusalem saints in his last letter. See I Corinthians 16:1-5. Evidently, the Corinthian church had made a commitment to help Paul with collection a year earlier. The Macedonian churches had fulfilled their obligations and Paul writes to the Corinthian to remind them of their commitment. Surely the prosperous Corinthians could help with the offering if their poverty stricken brothers and sisters in Christ had become involved.
- Paul likens the grace of giving to all other graces of God. Many believers love to boast of their faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence, and love, but in matters requiring real sacrifice they lack. Remember the first letter to Corinth rebuked the church for hypocrisy. They loved to speak in tongues and display their “spirituality” in outward manifestations. Paul asks that they be just as desirous to abound in giving.
- Giving is a legitimate gift. It is a proof of true spirituality. Many shy away from giving because it requires visible, real sacrifice and not mere lip service.

**B. The Proof of Giving** – vs. 8 – *“to prove the sincerity of your love”*

- Paul was not speaking to the church *“by commandment”*. Paul was not writing to give the church a mandate. He was not using his authority to demand they become involved.
- Paul gives two reasons for his writing.
  - “by occasion of the forwardness of others”* – The Macedonian churches had hastened to help the Jerusalem saints. They were earnest, diligent, and promoting the idea of helping. Paul is informing the Corinthian church of the interest the Macedonian churches had in being a blessing to others in need. Paul is telling the church that the Philippians, Thessalonians, and Bereans are bearing the burden.
  - “to prove the sincerity of your love”* – If the Corinthians availed themselves of the opportunity of giving they would show evidence that their love for God and man was legitimate. True love always manifests itself in genuine commitment of sacrifice. (Ex. marriage, family, children commitments)

**C. The Pattern of Giving** – vs. 9 – *“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”*

- Paul turns the attention of the Corinthians to the sacrifices Christ made on the behalf of all men.
- Their salvation had acquainted them with the benevolent love of Christ. Paul speaks that they “know” the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. They had been made aware of his love by association. Their

introduction to Him had brought them blessing and benefit. Paul is saying our association with others should produce the same effect as Christ's involvement in our own lives. Who has benefited from you?

3. Christ possessed all the riches of glory. He was rich beyond measure and had the security of His divine wealth and glory.
4. Unselfishly, He abandoned all His wealth for our sakes. He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. His love made Him willing to take our place of suffering, poverty, and misery that we might enjoy the position of wealth which He Himself had.
5. Genuine generosity manifests itself in one's willingness to take the place of another in suffering and need. II Corinthians 5:21 beautifully illustrates this principle. It reads, "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*"
6. Selfishness is the greatest hindrance to sacrificial giving. Pride causes believers to withhold gifts because they are worried more about their well-being than they are the needs of others.