

## 2 Corinthians 8:1-15, The Grace of Giving

<sup>1</sup> And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. <sup>2</sup> In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. <sup>3</sup> For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, <sup>4</sup> they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. <sup>5</sup> And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. <sup>6</sup> So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. <sup>7</sup> But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. <sup>8</sup> I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. <sup>9</sup> For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. <sup>10</sup> And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. <sup>11</sup> Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. <sup>12</sup> For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have. <sup>13</sup> Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. <sup>14</sup> At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, <sup>15</sup> as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."

### Notes:

- 2 Corinthians chs. 8-9 is the longest teaching on giving in the New Testament.
- The basic principles here are that giving should be generous (v.2), sacrificial (v. 3), cheerful (v. 9:7), and proportional (v. 12), and motivated by Christ's sacrifice for us (v. 9).
- What Paul means by equality (v. 13) is further explained in vv.14-15 which includes a reference to God's supply of manna in the desert.

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### Questions

1. Why should we give and what for?
2. What impediments do we have to giving?
3. How does Jesus sacrifice for us empower generosity?
4. Are we compelled to give? Why or why not? How much should we give?
5. We are often quite private about our money. Should we be? How do we encourage accountability and discipleship when it comes to how we handle our money?