

2 Corinthians 8

Verse by Verse



**Paul's
Defense of
His Ministry**



2 Corinthians 8

Godly Giving: Part 1



Introduction

The Text of
2 Corinthians 8

Conclusions

Introduction to 2 Corinthians 8



**Previously in
2 Corinthians**

**What's in
2 Corinthians 8?**

Key Verse



Previously in 2 Corinthians

There are **four main themes** in 2 Corinthians. We have already seen something on each of the first three:

1. Paul Explains His Ministry.
2. Paul Asserts His Authority.
3. Paul Declares God's Comfort.

But we have not seen anything on this last one,

4. Paul Encourages Their Generosity.

Introduction to 2 Corinthians 8



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What's in 2 Corinthians 8?

Key
Word

- **Chapters 8 and 9** make up a section in which Paul encourages generous giving for the church in Judea.
- **In Chapter 8** Paul will inform the Corinthians that the believers in Macedonia have already been generous.
- He will remind them that giving to this particular collection was something they intended to do.
- He will introduce the men to whom the funds were to be entrusted.

Key Word

From Alan
Redpath

Grace: We probably most often think of God's grace in reference to our *salvation* - as in "We are saved by grace through faith."

- This chapter points to the role of grace in our *sanctification*.
- The word **grace** appears 5x in ESV (7x in Greek) in a chapter that has little to do with conversion. (3x more in Ch. 9)
- The phrase "**act of grace**" appears 3x in ESV emphasizing the fact that God's grace prompts us to activity.

Once you see the matter of giving is centered in this lovely word grace, it lifts the whole act away from mechanics, from pressure and duty, from obligation and mere legalism. It lifts us up into the most lovely atmosphere of an activity which seeks by giving to convey to others all that is lovely, all that is beautiful, all that is good, and all that is glorious. What a lovely word this word is... For there is no area in the Christian life in which grace shines out so much, so beautifully, so delightfully, and so happily as when giving comes from the background of poverty.



Alan Redpath (1907 - 1989),
British evangelist and pastor

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2 Corinthians 8:9

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**Macedonia's
Example
8:1-7**

**Corinth's
Intent
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**Titus and His
Team
8:16-24**



Macedonia's Example 8:1-7

2 Corinthians
8:4

2 Corinthians
8:5

2 Corinthians
8:7

- The churches in Macedonia would be Thessalonica, Berea and Philippi - maybe others not mentioned in Acts.
- These were not well off churches. The Corinthians were probably wealthier on the whole.
- But the Macedonians were generous. They gave sacrificially - "beyond their means, of their own accord" (v.3)
- Rather than Paul begging them for money, the Macedonians begged earnestly to give (v.4).

2 Corinthians 8:4

"begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints"

- **Favor** = grace (*charis*)
- **Taking part** = fellowship (*koinonia*)
- **Relief** = service (*diakonia*)
- The words Paul uses about giving money need not apply to money but rather to Christian life and ministry.
- He is not speaking in terms of drachmas, denarii and shekels.
- He wants to see the fruit of God's work in the lives of the Corinthian believers - in this case through giving money.



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2 Corinthians 8:5

"and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us."

- It is possible to give generously without giving ourselves to the Lord first.
- A lot of money can be raised for causes that do not really glorify Christ.
- On the other hand, it is not possible to give yourself to the Lord without that resulting in concrete generosity.

From
Chuck Smith



Chuck Smith (1927-2013),
founding pastor of the
Calvary Chapel
Movement

Once we commit ourselves completely to the Lord, recognizing that everything we have came from Him and belongs to Him, then giving becomes a natural outgrowth of that realization. If you can give yourself, the rest is easy and natural.

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2 Corinthians 8:7

"But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you – see that you excel in this act of grace also."

- There were many positive points about the Corinthian church.
- Paul wants to be sure to point them out.
- The phrase "our love for you" seems almost out of context. The original reads something like "the from us in you love" which is hard to translate.
- Paul might be trying to focus on a love that they have mutually for each other.

**From
Warren
Wiersbe**



Warren Wiersbe,
pastor and Bible
teacher.

The Christian who remembers that his gifts are gifts will be motivated to give ...

I have met pastors and missionaries who have argued that, since they devote their whole time in serving the Lord, they are not obligated to give. Paul argued just the opposite: since you are wonderfully gifted from God, you ought to want to give even more!

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The Text of 2 Corinthians 8



**Macedonia's
Example
8:1-7**

**Corinth's
Intent
8:8-15**

**Titus and His
Team
8:16-24**



Corinth's Intent 8:8-15

- In the previous year (v.10) the Corinthians expressed a desire to join in this project of giving.
- Paul wants to make sure that they follow through on their good intentions.
- The Macedonians had already followed through on their giving and Paul wants Corinth to do the same.
- The churches in Judea would benefit from the generosity of the Greek churches.

**Not as a
Command**

**The Example
of Christ**

**Giving as
Something
Proportional**

Not as a Command

- Paul sort of commanded them to give in v.7.
- He kind of does so again in v.11 and then in v.24.
- So what does he mean "not as a command"?
- Probably he means that there is no direct command from Christ regarding the time or amount of our giving.
- Nor does the NT ever quote the OT commanding the tithe or any specific rules about giving.
- Paul is simply telling the Corinthians that they need to give because it is the right thing to do.



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The Example of Christ

- We have been brought into the family of God through the work of Christ
- We need not look any farther than Jesus for the ultimate example of giving.
- Once the love of God takes root in our hearts, one of the inevitable responses will be giving.
- The more we give in response to God's grace, the more we will look like Jesus.

Key Verse

**From
Tony Evans**

**From
Warren
Wiersbe**



Key Verse

2 Corinthians 8:9

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 by his poverty might become rich.

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The eternal Son of God had enjoyed heavenly glory and fellowship with the Father from all eternity. But “he emptied himself” and took “on the likeness of humanity” (Phil 2:7). Then he gave “his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Christ exemplified the spirit and attitude that Paul longs to see from the Corinthian church. It wasn’t asking too much to prompt them to honor what Christ did for them by meeting the needs of fellow saints.



Tony Evans, pastor
and Bible teacher

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Warren Wiersbe
(1929 - 2019),
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Christian giving does not depend on material circumstances so much as spiritual convictions ... Christian giving flows from the heart, the spontaneous expression of love to Christ for His full and free salvation ... For us to profess to be spiritual, and yet not give faithfully to the Lord, is to deny what we profess ... To give is to be Christ-like, for His whole life was spent in giving.

The Example of Christ

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- We need not look any farther than Jesus for the ultimate example of giving.
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Giving as Something Proportional

- At this moment the Corinthian church was probably better off than many others.
- Still, that does not mean that each and every person in the church was rich.
- Paul is advocating that the believers give each according to their means.

2 Cor. 8:12 For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

Tithing?

**The
Widow's
Offering**

Tithing?

- Tithing is nowhere precisely commanded in the New Testament.
- If Paul wanted to implement a strict tithe this would have been a nice place to do it.
- Instead he instructs the Corinthians to give and not be concerned about whether they can give a lot or a little.
- They should give depending on how much they have.
- That sounds something like tithing, just without a definite percentage attached.

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The Widow's Offering Mark 12:41-44

41 And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. 43 And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. 44 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

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Titus and His Team 8:16-24

- Titus was one of Paul's key disciples. The letter to Titus is written to him.
- His name appears 8x in 2 Corinthians, but only 4x everywhere else - 1x in the letter Paul wrote to him.
- We know he was a Greek (Galatians 2:3) and therefore not circumcised. This made him a good representative of the Gentile churches.
- Paul is also sending **two other brothers**, but we do not get their names.

**The Two
Brothers**

**Financial
Integrity**

**2 Corinthians
8:24**

The Two Brothers

8:18 With him [Titus] we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel.

8:22 And with them [Titus and the above brother] we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you.

8:23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers [Greek *apostles*] of the churches, the glory of Christ.



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Financial Integrity

- The fact that Paul would send a team of three men - all of good reputation - speaks of a desire to show that this was all honest.
- It is important that in our financial dealings - whether at home, in our business or at the church - we implement policies that can withstand the scrutiny of either the church or the world.
- A number of years back the IRS visited our office with questions about our books going back years before that.
- It was a tense and tedious process - Ask Cassie! - But in the end they did not find anything wrong.



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So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.

- Paul had already assured the Titus and the team that the Corinthians were ready to give.
- Now he expects them to follow through.
- They themselves said they were ready a year ago. Paul told others they were ready. Now they had to act upon their words.
- Paul respects their property and respects their choice, but encourages them to give as evidence of their love.



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How did the
Corinthians
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The Spiritual
Nature of
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From
Warren
Wiersbe

A Final
Prayer

How did the Corinthians respond?

Romans 15:25-27

25 At present ... I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. **26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. 27 For they were pleased to do it,** and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.

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The Spiritual Nature of Giving

Paul has used theological words like grace, sharing or fellowship, service or ministry in describing the collection for the saints.

He expects the Corinthians to give as evidence of their love - as the fruit of their faith and fellowship with Christ.

Giving is not God's way of raising money, it is his way of raising children, and conforming us into the image of His Son.

It is not mainly about earthly budgets but more about heavenly treasure.

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Grace giving is an exciting adventure! When you learn to give “by grace, through faith” (just the way you were saved), you start to experience a wonderful liberation from things and from circumstances. Instead of things possessing you, you start to control them; you develop a new set of values and priorities. You no longer measure life or other people on the basis of money or possessions ...

Grace giving enriches you as you enrich others.

Grace giving makes you more like Jesus Christ.

Conclusions



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A Final Prayer

- Heavenly Father,
- We realize that we owe you everything - and that everything that we have is ultimately from you and truly belongs to you.
- We now ask that we can learn from Jesus, from Paul and from the early Macedonian and Corinthian Christians.
- Please make us generous givers like them.
- Help us to give out of love for you and for others.
- Help us to give in such a way as to express our faith and participate in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- In his name we pray,
- Amen.

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