

DISPLAYING GRACE BY GIVING

2 Corinthians 8 and 9

The Corinthian Church

They had evidently desired to give and committed some help to the Jerusalem church at one time and Paul was getting things ready so that he might come to collect that money.

An Example for the Corinthians *2 Corinthians 8:1-7*

- ❑ It is God's grace in their life when someone is able to give.
- ❑ The Macedonian Christians displayed this grace by giving even beyond their means.
- ❑ They entrusted themselves to God, knowing that He would care for them. Verse 5
- ❑ The Corinthians should complete and excel in this "act of grace." Verses 6-7
- ❑ Notice that Paul is telling them to excel in this just like they are to excel in faith, speech, knowledge and love. Do you pursue giving like this?

Following Through with Their Plans *2 Corinthians 8:8-12*

- ❑ Paul is actually testing their sincerity in love by comparing their giving to the willingness of others.
- ❑ Paul's reason for doing this is the gospel. Jesus gave everything so that we would be rich. This being rich is not necessarily in money or material things, but rather salvation is in mind. You have been given salvation, what more could you need?
- ❑ They are to finish the work they started by giving what they desired to give.
- ❑ Being willing to give is the important part. On top of that, give what you can according to your means. If you really want to give, then you will give all you can.

Equality in Christianity *2 Corinthians 8:13-15*

- ❑ If you have more, you should be willing to give.
- ❑ This illustrates our need for one another in a powerful way.
- ❑ Our struggle with this is usually the desire to save up for future difficult times. If in your saving you are ignoring the needs of others, you must reevaluate your plans.
- ❑ God provides for each and sometimes He plans on using us to do it.

Paul's Confidence in Them *2 Corinthians 8:16-24*

Paul is sending Titus to get things ready for when he comes. By having money ready for Paul, these Christians would be showing proof of their love. Paul is confident that they will give. *2 Corinthians 7:16*

Giving is a Service or a Ministry *2 Corinthians 9:1-5*

- ❑ They already knew the need and they had an eagerness to give.
- ❑ By not giving, they would shame not only themselves, but Paul who was talking about their love and desire to give.
- ❑ He sends people ahead so that the gift could be prepared and so that they would not feel compelled to give, but rather give generously.

God Loves a Cheerful Giver, so Give Cheerfully *2 Corinthians 9:6-11*

- ❑ We often make this passage say that we should only give when we can give cheerfully.
- ❑ Paul seems to be saying, give as much as you can. Instead of asking, "How much can I keep? We should be asking, "How much do I have to keep?"

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- ❑ One of the reasons we should give as much as we can is because it is sowing seeds which in the context will result in thankfulness to God (this is the harvest).
- ❑ Even the quote from *Psalms 112:9* points us to the idea of giving gifts away. This is one way we can show our new heart and love toward others.

Ministry to the Glory of God *2 Corinthians 9:12-15*

- ❑ It is ministry to provide for the needs of other Christians.
- ❑ Since the desire and ability to give is God's grace in a person's life, it will result in thanksgiving to God and ultimately God is glorified.
- ❑ Giving is an example of obedience that comes from believing the gospel.
- ❑ God gets the glory and for this we should be thrilled!

A Bit About Where to Give

Biblically, we are told to give to:

- ❑ Our elders because they lead and care for us *1 Timothy 5:7-18, 1 Corinthians 9:1-14, Galatians 6:6*
- ❑ Other believers in need *James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:17, Galatians 6:7-10*
- ❑ The poor *Luke 3:11, 14:13, Matthew 25:31-46, James 1:27*

So What?

- ❑ We should ask God to give us this ability to give freely.
- ❑ In this prayer we are basically asking to be freed from our desire to keep the money.
- ❑ Giving is a conscious act of war against the following sins:
 1. Selfishness
 2. Idol worship *Colossians 3:5*
 3. Greed or the love of money *1 Timothy 6:10*
- ❑ Giving is an act of thanksgiving and results in more thanksgiving and ultimately the glory of God.
- ❑ We should seek to grow in giving like we seek to grow in loving.
- ❑ Willingness is the issue. Are you willing to give?
- ❑ God provides for needs and sometimes He uses Christians to do it.

Implications

- ❑ Do I have a plan for giving?
- ❑ What can I give up so that I will be able to give more?
- ❑ When I receive extra money, what do I do with it?
- ❑ Do I want to glorify God even with my money?