

2 Corinthians 8:1-*"Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:"*

Paul's entire assignment was aimed at getting the gospel out. The gospel is not the Bible; it is a specific message written to the church about God's grace. Our relationship with God is based on Jesus' obedience, not our own (Romans 5:19).

Grace is what God does for man independent of their performance. Anytime we step outside of peace, we step away from the awareness of grace, because they are experienced together in our daily walk. All of Paul's letters open with grace and truth—this is not a casual introduction, but a life-changing revelation.

In the opening of this chapter, Paul now shifts into giving and offerings. Paul always had a heart to give, and those in Corinth had a desire to give but had not yet taken action. The offerings being collected were intended to help the poor saints in Jerusalem.

Grace is reflected in giving. When there is a true revelation of the grace of God, there will be little room for stinginess because we begin to see how much God has given to us (Romans 8:32).

Our Father was pleased to give us His kingdom (Luke 12:32), everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3), and every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3). God gave, and this same nature and character is in us. It shows that we have not only heard about grace but have a revelation of it. "For God so loved the world that He gave..."

The action behind love is giving. There are unbelievers who are prospering financially more than some believers because they understand laws that govern the kingdom and principles of money and stewardship. Many believers tend to hoard what they have rather than sow it or invest it, but money is meant to circulate and flow. Too often, people are working for money instead of allowing money to work for them.

Poor people talk about people, middle-class people talk about events, and rich people talk about ideas. Our money should be placed in assets that produce, rather than liabilities that consume (cars, clothing, etc.). The Lord desires that we be blessed, as He promised Abraham (Genesis 12:2), but that blessing is always tied to being a blessing to others (Genesis 12:3).

2 Corinthians 8:2- *"that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality."*

Joy and poverty do not naturally appear to go hand in hand. I do not believe the Lord desires His people to remain in poverty, as that would conflict with Psalm 35:27, which states that He delights in the prosperity of His servant. So what is happening here?

I see that joy is a decision, not something dependent on circumstances. Yes, we can rejoice in all things. I believe it is our perspective that produces joy. Here, the believers were in deep persecution and severe trials, yet they still chose to be generous and give.

You may be thinking, “I have nothing to give.” But God’s response, as we see consistently in Scripture, is, “What do you have?” The widow in 1 Kings was asked this by Elijah. Jesus operated in this principle with the five loaves and two fish, and in John 2 with the water turning into wine.

God does not see lack or insufficiency—He sees supply. There is always something you have to give, and through giving, joy will abound, because it is more blessed to give than to receive.

2 Corinthians 8:3- *"For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing,"*

Being willing and being forced are two different things. Many people can relate to this from times when fellowship with God felt like obligation—being told to go to church or read the Word. But now, there is desire rather than pressure. Anything done out of obligation will eventually produce resistance and possibly hate.

Even though they were being persecuted, they gave not only according to their ability, but beyond their ability.

The more we are dead to ourselves, the more we walk in victory. Seeing ourselves as stewards of what we have rather than owners helps us release what is in our hands. No one is truly an owner of anything. Even what we call “home ownership” is ultimately God’s. In the same way, none of us are self-made. We are Christ-made (2 Corinthians 3:5). To the degree we understand that our lives are not our own, we will experience liberty and freedom (Galatians 2:20).

2 Corinthians 8:4- *"imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."*

Those in Macedonia were eager and urgent in their desire to give to Paul. There are not many people today who carry that same urgency to give. Instead, many attend church primarily based on what they are going to receive and their motive was not forced or manipulated, but pure.

The word *fellowship* in Greek means participation or partnership. Giving is not simply handing someone money; it is a form of partnership.

I remember in Bible college, I was preparing for a mission trip and planned to cover the \$2,500 cost myself and move on. However, after hearing the importance of inviting others to participate, I realized my perspective was off. It was not simply about asking people for money, but about allowing them to partner with me in the mission.

My perspective shifted, and I was grateful I allowed others to sow into the trip so they could share in the harvest. We saw healings, salvations, and baptisms in the Holy Spirit, and those who sowed into the trip were part of that fruit. The one who is sent is just as important as the one who sends, and the partners are just as important as the preacher.

2 Corinthians 8:5- *"And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God."*

This verse reveals the proper order of all things. Those in Macedonia had a heart to give willingly because they first gave themselves to the Lord. It is impossible to truly care for others if we have not first surrendered to God.

The moment we get to the end of ourselves is the moment we come to the beginning of God (Galatians 2:20). Christianity takes place vertically in our relationship with God, and then we see the effects of that relationship horizontally with others.

God's heart is a giving heart (John 3:16). When we give ourselves to the Lord, we will not struggle to give to others, including financially, because we have stepped into a surrendered life. This becomes easier when we are dead to ourselves, but sadly many of us are still living for ourselves.

Before resources and offerings, they gave themselves. This is kingdom order at its finest and, I believe, the foundation of this entire chapter. Matthew 6:33 reveals this flow- surrender then supply and relationship then resources.

If we are struggling to give, the diagnosis may be that we have not first fully given ourselves to God.

2 Corinthians 8:6- *"So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well."*

Titus was sent to ensure those in Corinth followed through. Anyone can start something, but the goal is not only to begin, but to finish. The Corinthians had a heart to give, but they needed help to complete what they had started.

Titus was sent as accountability, and this pattern applies to believers as well. The enemy often uses isolation and loneliness as a strategy. Having someone to be accountable to is not weakness—it is maturity.

Notice this refers to "this grace in you." Grace is not only unmerited favor; it is also God's power and ability working in us to do what we cannot do in our own strength. In and of ourselves, we would not even be willing to give something as small as a piece of gum unless there was something in it for us.

2 Corinthians 8:7- *"But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also."*

The word *abound* in Greek means to be in excess, to supersede, to excel, or to overflow.

Paul lists several areas in which they were already abounding: faith, speech, knowledge, diligence, and love toward him and his companions. All of this comes in the context of a letter of correction. His heart is that they would not only excel in these areas, but also abound in giving.

Generosity reflects the heart of the Father. If we excel in areas for ourselves but do not release it toward others, then the benefit remains incomplete. God, with all He had in heaven, did not hoard it for Himself but handed it to His children.

What you have is meant to reach others and God never gives a gift that stops with you. If you have a teaching gift, the word you carry is meant to be released to impact others. If you have a gift of compassion, the world needs to feel the Father's love through you.

2 Corinthians 8:8- *"I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others."*

Under the law there was a commandment to give; under grace there is willingness.

Those in Macedonia were generous givers, and Paul used their example to encourage the Corinthians, not to create comparison, but to inspire growth. In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul is speaking to the Corinthians while pointing to the Macedonians as an example.

We learn the sincerity of love not merely by what is said, but by what is done and how others are treated. At Jesus' most difficult moment, He taught on love in John 13, right after Judas left to betray Him and before Peter's denial was predicted.

2 Corinthians 8:9- *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."*

The ultimate giver is God. He gave His Son (Romans 8:32). This is speaking about Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

Jesus was not poor during His earthly ministry; He supported twelve men for three and a half years and had a treasurer for His ministry. You do not need a treasurer if you are completely without resources. Yet God went from being worshiped to being rejected, from praise to being ignored, from limitless to willingly stepping into limitation. On the cross, He went from rich to poor, redeeming the believer from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13). Poverty is a curse, never a blessing.

This is why we call Christianity the exchanged life, He stepped into limitation so we could step out of it (John 6:63).

2 Corinthians 8:10- *"And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago;"*

Paul is not demanding that they give, but encouraging them to finish what they had already started. Grace invites; it does not demand (Titus 1:11–12).

You can have a willing heart and still never put action to it. What dream or desire is sitting inside of you that may never be released, only remaining unfinished? Please do not let your purpose or dream land at the graveyard. The cemetery has more songs that were never written, business that were never started, and organizations that were never birth all because of inactivity.

Willingness and desire are good, but follow-through is the goal. I heard someone once tell me, a vision without action is nothing more than a daydream- it has stayed with me all these years.

2 Corinthians 8:11- *"But now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have."*

Intention is good, but in all transparency, it is about what you complete, not only what you desire.

We can all have a dream like Martin Luther King Jr., but the difference is that he paired vision with action. As I just stated previously, a vision without action is nothing more than a daydream, and action without vision is a nightmare.

2 Corinthians 8:12- *"For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have."*

God does not look at what you don't have; He sees what you do have. It is dangerous to compare yourself with other people.

God looks at the heart and is not going to ask you what you don't have, but what you do have.

2 Corinthians 8:13- *"For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened;"*

This is an interesting verse that provides balance in giving and generosity. Paul is emphasizing that while giving is important, God does not intend for it to become a burden or pressure that overwhelms the giver.

Do you have bills to pay, maintenance on your car, or groceries to provide for your children? We need to steward what we have well, honoring the commitments we've made in our homes, rather than giving in a way that neglects our own responsibilities.

Paul is not trying to make the needy comfortable while others become burdened.

He expands on this in the next verse.

2 Corinthians 8:14- *"but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack—that there may be equality."*

At that time, those in Corinth had abundance while others in Jerusalem had need. Paul describes a principle of balance: today one group supplies, and tomorrow the roles may be reversed.

The word *equality* in Greek carries the idea of fairness or evenness. The body of Christ is designed to function in mutual support, where no one is permanently left lacking and no one carries all the weight alone.

This establishes a balanced supply among believers.

At the same time, it is important to maintain wisdom and stewardship. Giving should not become enabling dependency or neglect of personal responsibility. Scripture also teaches the importance of working and providing for oneself (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

There are seasons where help is needed, but those seasons are not meant to become a lifestyle of dependence without responsibility.

2 Corinthians 8:15- *"As it is written, 'He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack.'"*

Paul is drawing from Exodus and referring to the children of Israel and the manna provided in the wilderness. Those who gathered much had nothing left over, and those who gathered little still had no lack.

Verse 13 emphasizes giving that does not become a burden. Verse 14 speaks of equality. Verse 15 confirms this principle through God's pattern in the wilderness.

Together, these verses reveal a balanced design in God's provision among His people.

2 Corinthians 8:16- *"But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus."*

God is no respecter of persons (Galatians 2:6; Romans 2:11; Acts 10:34).

It is impossible to be a true giver without the nature of God working within us. God placed into Titus' heart a genuine care for those in Corinth. God's love has been shed abroad in our hearts, but it must also be released through us (Romans 5:5).

Paul is commending Titus and recognizing the work of God in him.

2 Corinthians 8:17- *"For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord."*

This is amazing. Titus did not visit those in Corinth out of obligation, but from a genuine desire and willingness.

Where did he adopt this nature? God Himself chose to become man and die on our behalf—no one forced Him. His love was not cautious but extravagant, beyond human reasoning.

Titus received this kind of heart from God, his Father (Ephesians 5:1).

2 Corinthians 8:18- *"And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches."*

Not only Titus, but another brother was also sent to the Corinthians. The context here is the collection of the offering, and Paul is emphasizing that he is sending trusted men for this responsibility.

Ministry in general requires faithfulness, including in financial matters. If God cannot trust someone with small things, why would He entrust greater responsibility (Luke 16:10)?

The churches had heard about this brother, which indicates that he had a strong and trustworthy reputation.

2 Corinthians 8:19- *"and not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind."*

This verse reiterates what is stated in the previous one. This brother traveled with Paul and was chosen by the churches.

You will know a tree by its fruit. This does not mean that everyone will like you. I often say that at least 10% of people will dislike you in the area where God has gifted you. If you are bold, there will be people who are offended—but if 90% are receiving and responding to your boldness, then continue. Your greatest strength is often what the enemy attempts to assault and weaken by sending voices that encourage you to dilute it or water it down.

I have seen people with a mercy gift who are told they are “too much” or “too sensitive.” But God made you uniquely, and the very area the enemy wants to suppress is often the area God intends to use to impact people.

2 Corinthians 8:20- *"avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us;"*

Prosperity often offends people. It is interesting that in any setting where you receive a meal, you are expected to pay for it, yet when a minister feeds people spiritually, there is sometimes criticism regarding finances or prosperity.

Ministers, particularly those who labor in the gospel—teachers and preachers—are worthy of double honor (1 Timothy 5:17–18).

2 Corinthians 8:21- *"providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men;"*

God sees all and knows the heart, but people do not. While we should desire for others to trust us and think the best of us, Scripture shows that wisdom also includes accountability.

It is important to implement systems that ensure integrity and protection. Many ministers fall in areas such as moral failure and finances when there is a lack of accountability. For this reason, careful stewardship and transparency matter.

We document all spending from our ministry account and clearly track what it is used for, so that everything remains honorable both before God and before people.

2 Corinthians 8:22- *"And we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, because of the great confidence which we have in you."*

Sending someone who is faithful in other areas is important when it comes to handling money and responsibility. If someone cannot be faithful in what is least, why would they be trusted with greater stewardship (Luke 16:10)?

If a person cannot take care of their own home, it raises the question of why they would be given greater responsibility in God's house, the church. But many people struggle with stewardship and management. We often ask God for a nicer car, yet do not take care of the one we already have.

2 Corinthians 8:23- *"If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ."*

Paul is establishing the authority of those he has chosen to send. Titus and the other brother are not acting independently, but are recognized and endorsed as trusted representatives in this work.

2 Corinthians 8:24- *"Therefore show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf."*

Paul is encouraging those in Corinth to demonstrate their love and to validate why he has spoken highly of them. This becomes an opportunity for their sincerity to be made visible both to Titus and to the churches.