

**RISKING ALL FOR LOVE****The Grace of Giving      2 Corinthians 8:1–15**

*“But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” 2 Corinthians 8:7*

**Background:** The Corinthians had begun a collection earlier for the poor believers in Jerusalem, but the troubles in their church seem to have derailed it. Paul now urges the Corinthians to finish what they began.

**Day 1: Read 2 Corinthians 8:1–15.**

1. What word does Paul use all through this passage for giving? (vss. 1, 6, 7, 9; also vs. 4, translated “privilege” in the NIV) How can this word inform your view of giving?
2. Who is the source of this gift? (vs. 1; cf. 1:3–4) Who then gains glory when Christians give generously?
3. If generous givers don’t get the credit, what reward will they ultimately receive? (Mt. 6:1–4, 19–21) In contrast, what reward comes to those who seek public acclaim for their giving?

**Day 2: Read 2 Corinthians 8:1–5.**

4. The Macedonians were those who lived in northern Greece, including the Thessalonians, Philippians, and Bereans, while the Corinthians lived in Achaia, the southern region of Greece. What circumstances were the Macedonians facing when they took their collection? (vs. 2a; cf. Phil. 1:27–30; 2 Thess. 1:4)
5. Fill in the following surprising equation from verse 2:  
overflowing \_\_\_\_\_ + extreme \_\_\_\_\_ = rich \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who took the initiative in the Macedonians’ giving? (vs. 4) Who usually has to do the pleading?
7. What do you think it means to give beyond one’s ability (vs. 3)?
8. Commentator Scott J. Hafemann writes that “we know who we are by how we spend our money.” What does the way you spend your money say about you?

**Day 3: Read 2 Corinthians 8:6–9.**

9. What gifts does Paul list in verse 7? How is giving also a gift? (cf. Rom. 12:6–8) If “contributing to the needs of others” (Rom. 12:8) is one spiritual gift among many, does that let everyone who doesn’t have that particular gift off the hook? (cf. 9:7; Acts 20:35; Jms. 2:15–17; 1 Jn. 3:17)
10. Look more closely at the exchange in verse 9.
- In what ways did Christ become poor for us? (Jn. 17:24; Phil. 2:5–8; Heb. 2:17–18; Lk. 9:58) How was he “rewarded” for this generosity? (Phil. 2:9–11; Heb. 2:9; Rev. 5:8–14)
  - How were we poor, and how are we now rich? (5:21; Gal. 4:3–7; Eph. 1:3–8)

**Day 4: Read 2 Corinthians 8:10–12.**

11. How did Paul instruct the Corinthians to take their collection? (1 Cor. 16:1–2) Why is this a wise method?
12. Consider this passage along with Mark 10:41–44, Luke 12:48, 1 Corinthians 13:3, and 2 Corinthians 9:7. What makes a gift pleasing to God?
13. Even if it’s not the amount *per se* that makes our giving pleasing to God, we still need to make decisions about when and how much and to whom we will give. How do you think we should go about making such decisions?

**Day 5: Read 2 Corinthians 8:13–15.**

14. What is the goal of the kind of giving the Corinthians are being asked to do?
15. In verse 15 Paul quotes Exodus 16:18, from the narrative of how God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness. Read Exodus 16:11–21. What does this story illustrate about the way God provides for his people and the way his people receive that provision?
16. How do you think the principle of the plenty of some supplying the need of others should work itself out in today’s church, both at the local level and worldwide? What role do you think God is calling you to play at this time in your life?