

This is a wonderful and challenging chapter. It is a chapter that will make you think and that is a good thing. We should always desire to take an honest look at our heart and respond to God's promptings.

Pray and ask God to quiet your surroundings and your heart so you can hear very clearly from him. Read the chapter a couple of times in order to become familiar with it in its entirety.

Paul begins to give a report of what God is graciously doing in other areas. Locate Macedonia, Corinth and Jerusalem on the map.



1. What was his report concerning the Macedonian believers? Vs. 2 What was their life like and what was their attitude toward life?
2. There is a tendency in the United States to go through a trial and think we have an excuse for our bad attitude. Do you think it has anything to do with the prosperity all around us? Perhaps we are so accustomed to it that if something rocks our boat we want

to ask, why? We are more blessed than any other nation and yet all too often we focus on what we don't have. Is your joy and contentment easily seen?

3. How does Paul describe their giving? Vs. 3

- a. It is helpful to read this verse in several different translations. In the ESV it is "means", in the NIV it is "as they were able" and in the ASV it is "according to their power"

To what extreme did Paul say they went to in their giving?

4. There is a wonderful example of extreme giving pointed out by Jesus in Mark 12:41-44. *"And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. 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. 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."*

There are many ways to give. Often it is easier to simply give money than our time or our belongings. What is your response when you hear of a family in need? Do you look to see if anyone is going to meet the need or do you honestly consider what your part could be? What about the young mom whose children are sick, do you think to ask if they need anything from the store? Are you creative in your giving?

5. What highly unusual attitude did they have toward giving in order to relieve some of the burdens of other believers? Vs. 4 I would imagine there are a lot of pastor's that wished this was attitude of their people when an offering is being taken.
6. In verse 5 what does Paul say of their dedication? What is the order of their dedication? What difference would it make?  
Have you ever been more dedicated to God's man and what he wanted you to do than perhaps God himself?
7. Read verses 6-7, Paul urges Titus to continue gathering the Corinthian offering as planned. What beautiful name does Paul call their giving? Highlight it as often as you see it in this chapter.

Grace-the Greek word is *Charis* in the Strong's Concordance it is #5485 *the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to*

*Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues*

8. Make a list from verse 7 of the 7 things Paul tells them they excel in. Think about the things on this list how would they apply to your walk of faith?
9. Verse 8-9 can be a bit confusing at first glance. No one should command us how or what to give but our Christian leaders should encourage us to be true to our words and careful with our vows to God. If we pledge to give something we should be faithful to give it. Two Old Testament verses come to my mind.

Deut. 23:21

*If you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin.*

Eccl. 5:4

*when you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow.*

10. According to verse 9 what was the grace (the merciful kindness) of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Phil. 2:5-8 (should give us a more clear understanding)

*“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!”*

11. In verses 10-14, Paul wants them to understand he does not want to take everything they have. God is able to multiply anything we share for the needs of others. Just like the feeding of the 5000, in John 6:1-13, with only 5 loaves of bread and 2 small fishes all were fed. It is never the amount. It is the willingness of the giver to give and the power of God that will multiply it. Have you ever really given in such a way that it was truly a sacrifice? I am not only talking about money but we do seem to have a hard time giving it away.

## 2 Cor. 8 study guide with answers

12. Verse 15 is a quote from the Old Testament, Ex. 16:19-21. It is the story of the Israelites in the desert wandering and hungry and God's daily provision of sweet manna. You might want to read Lam. 3:22-24.
13. As we end this chapter this week let's look at verses 16-22. Who are the characters in these 7 verses? Write a few notes about each, facts you know from reading this section of scripture.
14. What would your spiritual leaders write about you?
15. Would they even know who you are?

2 Corinthian 9:1-5 are a continuation of Paul's thoughts. It is an unfortunate place to break for a chapter so we will continue on. Paul is giving them a bit of warning that he will soon arrive, after a visit with them he will be continuing on to Jerusalem. The help that they had promised would be collected at that time. Paul is not worried about the money; he has learned by experience the faithfulness of God's care.

16. Why do you suppose he is sending these men on ahead?
17. What is the difference between a willing gift and an exaction?
18. From all you have read of Paul's love for these people do you think he is saying he would demand it as a bill that was owed or that it would feel like that to the people if they had to come up with a large sum very quickly?
19. Other than your giving financially to meet the needs around you in what way has this lesson spoken to you about giving?
20. Is fear of running out of time, money, energy, resources hindering your giving?
21. Fear and faith cannot co-exist, read 1 John 4:7-21 make a few notes. How do these verses speak to what we have seen in 2 Cor. 8 this week?
22. Will this lesson affect your parenting? If yes, in what way? Would you say you are a giving parent or a demanding parent? (I am not referring to things you purchase for them) Are you generous with your time, your attention, words of affirmation?
23. What impact will it have on your marriage? How are you at meeting your mate's needs? Did you make any promises that need some attention?
24. Are you sacrificial in your giving? Would your gifts be labeled "acts of grace"?