

Letters to the church in...



Corinth

Focus: 2 Corinthians 8:1-24

Lesson 25-Christian Liberty in Giving

- **The generous and loving spirit of the Macedonians—recommended also for the Corinthians (v.1-7).**
 - (v.2,3) *They were poor, but they gave much! “...according to their ability” (and beyond!)*
 - (v.4) *They insisted that the apostles take the gift! An **insisting** spirit is hard to say no to.*
 - (v.5)-*The Macedonians had consecrated themselves fully to God and His service, thus making a living example of “...doing the will of God from the heart!” (Ephesians 6:6). We must have such an experience with God!*
 - (v.6,7) *Titus came to labor for the Corinthians. He was sent there to do this work with and for them (ref. 2 Cor. 8:17; 12:18).*
- **Sacrificially giving as Christ has given to us (v.8-12)**
 - (v.8) *Seeing and comparing what has happened with the other churches in Macedonia, to see if such would occur at Corinth.*
 - **(v.9) Christ gave everything for us. Will we give everything for Him?** Christ gave of His own heavenly riches and time to live in this filthy and sin-sick world so that He might help and save us. What can we do for Him and for others, in His name?
 - **(v.10,11)—the willingness was there. Now, the doing and the completion of the task is necessary. (We need one more step beyond willingness—that is, action!) The reference to willingness to give would most likely be referring back to the offering of 1 Cor. 16:1,2.**
 - **(v.12)—God wants us to use and to give what we have.** He will bless and the rest is up to Him. **God loves to see a “willing mind” and heart!!** (for giving). He counts that as a treasure in and of itself. **Some want to give, but they don’t have much. Let them give what they can, and God is well-pleased to see their small means, but great sacrifices given—**just as much, if not more, than when some wealthy person gives a large sum of money. **(See Mark 12:41-44). Don’t ever think that your small gift to God cannot accomplish something wonderful for God’s Kingdom!!** *The Lord will bless that little bit that you can give for Him (notice the situation in Matthew 14:15-21; God knows how to make a lot come from just a little).*
- **God’s purpose for extra wealth; and extra wealth for God’s purposes (v.13-15)**
 - (v.13)—*we are not to have an unfair system as with a Socialistic/Communitistic economy that might encourage the laziness of some (as if we might be rewarded equally for doing nothing!).*
 - (v.14) *But, God has provided the gift of extra means to help others who are in need—NOT to fatten ourselves!! Christians are not to have the exacting, selfish, and penurious spirit of the world!! But, rather we are to have a generous and giving spirit—seeking to*

help poorer souls by our means. **God sends a curse on self-serving, self-seeking, selfish rich men of the last days** (and surely of every age) (see James 5:1-5). —often, people have gotten rich by exploiting the efforts and labors of the poor. The poor worked ever so hard and diligently for mere pennies! They got almost nothing for their poor families, but the rich exploiters were lining their pockets with great riches and fatness for themselves. They should have shared the wealth more evenly with those who were hurting for money. **There should be distribution of our excess to those who are truly in need**, so that there may be a proper equality.

- (v.15)—here Paul quotes from Exodus 16:18.
- **The collection for the saints in Jerusalem was to be gathered by Titus and another brother (v.16-20)** (v.19) This can be compared with 1 Cor. 16:3,4.
- **Very trustworthy, respectable, and proven men were chosen to carry the gift of the Corinthians to Judea (v.21-24).**
 - (v.24) “...before the churches...” They (as do we) needed to set a good example of generosity towards God’s work, among all the churches. Raising funds for God’s work among His churches is entirely biblical and has been practiced since the very early days of God’s people. It is needed, not only for the money’s sake, but for our heart’s sake.
 - **We need to have more sympathy for our hurting brothers and sisters of humanity. We who are in wealthy nations can do a lot of good to help the poor and suffering who have almost nothing** (we only need to make some sacrifices and think of the good of others—we don’t need everything. Some people have almost nothing. How can we be of help to them, in the name of Jesus Christ?).

Question (s) for the Heart:

Will you pray and choose to have a loving, kind, and generous heart towards God and His work? _____
(not to give for the sake of corruption, as it has been in some places, but for the sake of the Lord’s work)