

"TO THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT CORINTH" PAUL'S LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH



The Second Corinthian Letter Chapter 8

2 CORINTHIANS 8

¹ Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, ² that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. ³ For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, ⁴ begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, ⁵ and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. ⁶ So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so

A GODLY STANDARD HELD UP FOR AN EXAMPLE OF GIVING — APPEAL #1

- ☀ Explain how the grace of God was responsible for the generosity of the churches of Macedonia?
 - ☀ Is giving a gift or talent? (Romans 12:6-8)
 - ☀ Which churches would the churches of Macedonia be?
 - ☀ _____
 - ☀ _____
 - ☀ _____
 - ☀ What ordeals of affliction are we aware of in these churches?
 - ☀ Philippi
 - ☀ Thessalonica
 - ☀ Berea
 - ☀ How does abundance of joy and deep poverty overflow in liberality?
 - ☀ When Paul talks of liberality, is he talking about large amounts or generosity?
 - ☀ What does "according to their ability" mean?
 - ☀ What would it mean to people who were in deep poverty?
 - ☀ What does "beyond their ability" mean?
 - ☀ What does "begging", "urging", and "the favor of participating" say about their attitude in giving?
 - ☀ What does Paul say was the reason for this liberality? (v. 5)

he would also complete in you this

gracious work as well.

⁷ But just as you abound in everything, in

faith and utterance and knowledge and in

all earnestness and in the love we inspired

in you, see that you abound in this

gracious work also. ⁸ I am not speaking

this as a command, but as proving through

the earnestness of others the sincerity of

your love also. ⁹ For you know the grace of

our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was

rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so

that you through His poverty might

become rich. ¹⁰ I give my opinion in this

matter, for this is to your advantage, who

were the first to begin a year ago not only

to do this, but also to desire to do it. ¹¹ But

now finish doing it also, so that just as

there was the readiness to desire it, so

there may be also the completion of it by

your ability. ¹² For if the readiness is

present, it is acceptable according to what

- ☀ What work is Paul talking about that Titus would complete?

ABOUND IN THIS GIFT, TOO — APPEAL #2

- ☀ Why do you think Paul spoke of the liberality of the Macedonian churches before he makes an appeal to the church in Corinth to be generous?

- ☀ Had Paul's teachings always been happy ones?

- ☀ Is there a possibility that he had "offended" some wealthy brethren?

- ☀ So, what do you think Paul was trying to accomplish?

- ☀ Thinking about vs. 7, how gifted were the Corinthian brethren?

- ☀ What was Paul challenging them with regarding giftedness?

- ☀ What does Paul mean by "proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also"?

CHRIST'S EXAMPLE— APPEAL #3

- ☀ In what way was Christ rich? He was a carpenter's son, right?

- ☀ So how much did Jesus give up to enrich us?

- ☀ What's Paul's point here?

YOU WERE THE FIRST TO COMMIT TO THIS PROJECT — APPEAL #4

- ☀ Why is Paul pointing out that they were the first to begin setting aside money for this project? (see 1 Cor. 16:1,2)

- ☀ How generous had the Macedonians been, who had had less time to set aside money for this project?

- ☀ What is Paul's point?

- ☀ What does vs. 11 imply that Paul was afraid of?

- ☀ On the other hand, in vs. 12 what is Paul reassuring them of?

- ☀ To whom do you think Paul was directing this idea that "it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have"?

- ☀ How does apply to today?

a person has, not according to what he does not have. ¹³ For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality— ¹⁴ at this present time your abundance being a supply for their need, so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality; ¹⁵ as it is written, “HE WHO gathered MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO gathered LITTLE HAD NO LACK.”

¹⁶ But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. ¹⁷ For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord. ¹⁸ We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches; ¹⁹ and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this

IT'S ONLY FAIR — APPEAL #5

- ☀ What objection does Paul appear to be answering in vs. 13?
 - ☀ The abundance that the Corinthians (and all the Greek churches) had was what?
 - ☀ In what way were they in need?
 - ☀ What was the abundance that the Judean churches had?
 - ☀ What were they in need of?
- ☀ What Old Testament story does “HE WHO gathered MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO gathered LITTLE HAD NO LACK.” come from?
 - ☀ What was Paul’s point?
 - ☀ How does this apply today?

THIS WILL ALL BE “ABOVE BOARD” — APPEAL #6

- ☀ What is Paul saying, when he says, “God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus”?
 - ☀ Who appears in vs. 17 to be the carrier of this letter to the Corinthians?
 - ☀ Why did Titus volunteer to come back to Corinth? (vs. 17)
- ☀ Who is this brother “whose fame in the things of the Gospel has spread through all the churches”?
 - ☀ Read Acts 20:4 for a list of possibilities.

gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, ²⁰ taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; ²¹ for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. ²² We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of his great confidence in you. ²³ As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ. ²⁴ Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

☀ Why is he coming? (vs. 19)

☀ What is this precaution that Paul speaks about in vs. 20?

☀ What lesson can we draw from Paul's principle: "we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men"?

☀ Who is Paul now talking about in vs. 22? (Consider the larger context)

☀ What is the benefit of testing someone first before giving them a big responsibility? (see 1 Tim. 3:10)

☀ How were the Corinthians to view the accompanying group that might come with Titus?

☀ What would be the "proof of your love"?

☀ What had Paul apparently boasted about the Corinthian church?

☀ What if the Corinthians failed to live up to Paul's boast?