



**EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY
THE NEW TESTAMENT FAITH JOURNEY
Devotion And Discussion Guide**

2 Corinthians 8:1-7 ESV

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴ begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵ and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. ⁶ Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. ⁷ But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

Opening Thoughts:

- The Macedonians show us there is a grace for giving. Grace is the enabling power to be all Jesus is, do all Jesus does, and fulfill all Jesus wants. In what ways have you experienced grace?
- The grace of giving is God's power working within us to give as Jesus gave. We can see this grace at work in chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians.
- Read 2 Corinthians 9:3-5. What did you learn from these verses and the background to all that is happening in this letter Paul wrote concerning the generosity of the Macedonians?

Key Takeaway: True giving flows from a heart filled with grace.

- Paul's heart is that the church in Corinth will embrace the grace for giving just as the Macedonians.
- Giving is not done under pressure, but to be done willingly from a heart filled with grace.

Let's consider how we can know when this gift of grace is at work in our lives through out giving.

1) Give despite circumstances (2 Corinthians 8:1-2)

- The Macedonians were in deep poverty and suffering from a severe tribulation. They had every natural excuse to withhold, yet they gave beyond their means.
- Consider this formula: Great Affliction + Deep Poverty x Grace = Outpouring.
- Read Exodus 35:5-6, 1 Chronicles 29:6-9, and 2 Corinthians 6:10. How do you see this equation demonstrated in these three scenarios? What does this equation mean to you? Do you believe this is a Kingdom principle? Have you ever experienced this?
- Life Principle: When you have experienced the grace of God in your life, you do not use difficult circumstances as an excuse for not giving.

2) When we give enthusiastically (2 Corinthians 8:3-5)

- The Macedonian churches needed no prompting or reminding, as did the church at Corinth.
- Do you look for opportunity to give, or do you usually have to be prompted or reminded? Do you give enthusiastically with faith, or grudgingly with fear?
- Life Principle: Grace opens more than our hands; it opens our hearts.

3) When we give as Jesus gave (2 Corinthians 8:6-9)

- The Macedonians gave themselves to God and to others. They followed Christ's example. Paul used the impoverished Macedonian church to encourage the prosperous Corinthian church.
- As you reflect on your life, has the grace of giving exemplified the grace of giving on Jesus' life? In what ways do you enjoy giving (time, talents, treasure)? In what area do you find yourself holding back? Does your generosity reflect the generosity Jesus displayed and called us all to?
- Life Principle: When we have given ourselves to the Lord, we have given everything.

4) When we give willingly (2 Corinthians 8:10-12)

- Paul reminds the church that they had the initial desire, made the commitment, celebrated it, now it was time to complete it.
- Read 2 Corinthians 9:7. Do you give with joy or reluctantly?
- Life Principle: How we gives reveals our heart.

5) When we give by faith (2 Corinthians 8:13-24)

- Read Exodus 16:18-20. Paul used the miracle of the manna to illustrate the faith principle. No matter how much manna the Jews gathered each day, they always had what they needed. Hoarding did not accomplish anything, for the manna would decay and smell.
- Read Matthew 6:11. How does the miracle of the manna speak to you in your faith journey? Is there any tendency in you to waste, squander or hoard what God has blessed you with? What is God asking you to give by faith?
- Life Principle: God will see to it that you will not be in need if you trust Him and obey His Word.

Application:

- **Key Takeaway: True giving flows from a heart filled with grace.**
- When you embrace the grace for giving 4 things happen:
 - Your giving will bless others (2 Corinthians 9:1-5).
 - Your giving will bless you (2 Corinthians 9:6-11).
 - Your giving will bless the Kingdom (2 Corinthians 9:12).
 - Your giving will bless the Lord (2 Corinthians 9:13).
- Is God in control or are your circumstances?
- Does your generosity reflect the generosity Jesus displayed and called us all to?
- Do you give with joy or reluctantly?
- What has God graced you to give by faith?