



## “Give More During Tough Times”

**2 Corinthians 8:1-5 Lesson Text: 2 Corinthians 8:2-5; 9; 15**

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Last week you learned the ancient, proven system from God’s Word on “How to Solve Your Financial Worries.” I trust that you have started to try God’s proven formula for living prosperously. There is no excuse on earth for anyone to worry about his or her finances during these very austere economic times.

The Macedonians were a great example of giving because they gave (1) during afflictions, (2) in spite of great poverty, (3) with great joy, (4) beyond their means, and (5) freely. In fact, (6) they pleaded for the privilege of sharing their wealth with other believers, and (7) they gave themselves to the Lord and to others.

The most detailed passage on giving in the New Testament is found in 2 Corinthians 8:9. Paul wrote these verses because false teachers were implying that Paul was pocketing contributions earmarked for the poor believers in Jerusalem. Consequently the Corinthians, despite their announced willingness to give, had not donated to the cause.

Paul defended his integrity (1:12). He used congregations in Macedonia as his example. The following is a summary of what Paul wrote and it is still relevant for us today:

**Who Should Give?** All believers can and should contribute to the cause of Christ. The congregation at Macedonia was notoriously poor, yet they “asked” for the privilege of being allowed to give (8:4) out of “their deep poverty” (8:2).

**How Much Should We Give?** Nowhere does the New Testament give a specified percentage or amount. Paul simply exhorts each contributor to “give as he/she purposes in their heart” (9:7). We should give generously (9:5) with liberality (9:11). The overall theme of this passage suggests sacrificial giving. From the Old Testament, which is fulfilled in the New Testament, we learned that God requests that we give to His storehouse (i.e. the church) only 10% and we can then legally keep the other 90%. What a bargain!

**Why Is Giving So Important?** In Paul’s words, it tests the sincerity of our love for and trust in God and others. To paraphrase the word of Christ in Matthew 6:19-21, how we handle material wealth is a barometer of our spiritual health.

**What Will Be The Results of Our Giving?** We should not give primarily to get, but Paul makes it clear that giving does lead to abundance. Cheerful givers experience God’s love in a special way (9:7).

Give More During Tough Times, because Jesus gave His all during His toughest times.

Jesus was rich. - Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58; 10:30; 17:5; Colossians 1:15-18; 2:9; Hebrews 1:3.

Jesus became poor. - John 1:14; Romans 1:3; 8:3; Galatians 4:4; Colossians 1:20; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:17; Philippians 2:5-8.

As we continue to be faithful and diligent in honoring our pledge to the Ignite the Spirit Capital Campaign, remember the words in Romans 8:17 “that if we suffer with Jesus during tough times, and do not lose faith, we will become joint heirs with Christ.”—A Partnership to Prosperity and Ending Financial Worries.

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