

Biblical Foundations

Excelling in the Grace of Giving

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

—2 Corinthians 8:1–7 (NIV)

In Paul's second letter to the believers at Corinth, he wrote about giving. What does God teach us about giving in this passage?

1. A spirit of generosity is a grace from God.
2. Sacrificial giving can lead to abundant joy.
3. Giving is a practical way to partner with others in God's work.
4. A gift to others can, in a very real way, be a gift to God.
5. Generosity can inspire others to give generously as well.
6. Abundant giving is a discipline we should pursue.

Notice that Paul's emphasis is not on the recipients of the gift. It's on the givers themselves. While there are obvious practical benefits to those who receive a gift, there are numerous and abundant benefits to the giver. Among these is overflowing joy.

