

## **II CORINTHIANS: MINISTERING TO BELIEVERS FACING FALSE TEACHERS**

### **II. Paul's Directives On Collections For Needy Believers, 2 Corinthians 8-9**

#### **A. Righteous Qualities Of Godly Giving**

**(2 Corinthians 8:1-6)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. False teachers, claiming to be apostles, had entered the Church at Corinth, and they had tried to promote their own views while discrediting the person and message of the Apostle Paul. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 552)
- B. This was a difficult situation for Paul: his readers were immature believers who had been saved out of corrupt backgrounds in a city known for its vice, so they were easy prey for false teachers, and Paul had to be careful how he handled the situation lest his readers think he was being unjustly defensive and thus discredit himself.
- C. 2 Corinthians 8:1-6 provided Paul's insight on donations in the church to meet the needs of fellow believers. Of necessity, Paul did not want to appear to be unrighteous with the issue of donations to believers who had been influenced to doubt his character, so Paul's teaching on giving had to reflect God's righteousness.
- D. We thus view the passage for our insight in righteously approaching the practice of giving:

#### **II. Righteous Qualities Of Godly Giving, 2 Cor. 8:1-6 (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Cor. 8:1-6)**

- A. Godly giving is performed in the sphere of God's grace, His true unmerited favor, 2 Corinthians 8:1, 6:
  - 1. Paul mentioned in 2 Corinthians 8:1 and 8:6 that godly giving is actually a "grace," what constitutes and reflects the unmerited favor of God that is at work in a believer's heart.
  - 2. To explain, later in 2 Corinthians 9:7 NIV, Paul wrote that giving should be done "not reluctantly nor under compulsion," neither from false guilt from within nor from false guilt from without by another party.
  - 3. The grace of God, namely, the results of God's work of unmerited favor in one's heart, should be the motivation from within a believer to lead him to give, 2 Corinthians 9:7 NIV.
- B. Godly giving is willfully performed even out of poverty, 2 Corinthians 8:2:
  - 1. Paul reported that the believers in Macedonia under duress of affliction and deep poverty nevertheless were motivated with great joy to give liberally to meet the needs of the materially needy believers in Judaea, 2 Corinthians 9:2. (Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 573)
  - 2. This way of giving contrasted greatly with how false teachers would motivate people to give by means of external pressure and guilt. Ungodly giving sprang from a sense of obligation where godly giving was the overflow of a spiritually fulfilled heart.
- C. Godly giving is an expression of spiritual fellowship, 2 Corinthians 8:4:
  - 1. Paul observed that the Macedonian believers had "urgently pleaded" with Paul's ministry team to have the privilege of sharing in the contributions that were being made for the needy Jerusalem believers, v. 4.
  - 2. This motivation resulted from the spiritual fellowship that the Macedonian believers sensed they had with believers of like faith whom they likely had not even met, what contrasts greatly with ungodly giving where there is no such spiritual fellowship between the donor and the recipient.
- D. Godly giving is preceded by the dedication of oneself to God to where one views and hence uses his material assets as an extension of his commitment to the Lord, 2 Corinthians 8:5:
  - 1. The Apostle Paul added that the believers at Macedonia did not do as his ministry team had expected them to do in simply giving to needy believers. Rather, they gave themselves first to the Lord in devotion and then to Paul's ministry team in keeping with the Lord's will, 2 Corinthians 8:5 NIV.
  - 2. Thus, there was an awareness in the Macedonian believers that they themselves belonged to the Lord, what led to their commitment to give as a reflection of their relationship with Him.
  - 3. Since Paul's ministry team had been influential in leading these Macedonians to Christ, and Paul's team had received the Gospel from the needy believers in Judaea, the Macedonian believers saw their devotion to the Lord necessitating their need to give to God's people in Judaea.

***Lesson:*** Paul explained to his Corinthian readers that godly giving involves a ministry that is performed in the sphere of God's work of grace in one's heart, it is willfully performed even out of financial poverty, it is an expression of one's spiritual fellowship with its recipients, and it is preceded by the dedication of oneself to God by which one views himself and hence all that he possesses as an extension of his commitment to the Lord.

***Application:*** May we NOT give out of a sense of feeling obligated to appease a sense of guilt, but INSTEAD give as a reflection of God's work of grace in us that overflows to express itself both to the Lord and to the recipient.