

## II CORINTHIANS: MINISTERING TO BELIEVERS FACING FALSE TEACHERS

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

#### B. Righteous Reasons For Godly Giving

(2 Corinthians 8:7-15)

#### 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. Accordingly, on the subject of giving of one's money, Paul could not afford to appear to be unrighteous before believers who had been led to doubt his character and who might think that he was trying to influence them for his own interests of greed, so in 2 Corinthians 8:7-15, Paul gave righteous reasons for godly giving.
- D. We view the passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

#### II. Righteous Reasons For Godly Giving, 2 Cor. 8:7-15 (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Cor. 8:7-15)

- A. One reason for godly giving is for believers to abound in every aspect of the grace of God, 2 Corinthians 8:7:
  - 1. The believers at Corinth had excelled in faith, speech, knowledge, earnestness of motivation, and love that Paul's ministry team had kindled in them for Paul's team, 2 Corinthians 8:7a NIV.
  - 2. Accordingly, Paul desired that his readers also excel in God's grace in the realm of giving, 2 Cor. 8:7b.
- B. A second reason for godly giving is for believers to prove the reality of their love, 2 Corinthians 8:8:
  - 1. Other believers like those in Macedonia had shown by their earnestness to give to needy believers in Judaea the genuineness of their love for such needy Christians, 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 with 8:8a.
  - 2. Paul thus wanted his readers to prove the reality of their love by giving to needy believers, 2 Cor. 8:8b.
- C. A third reason for godly giving is for believers to imitate the grace of God in Christ's example, 2 Cor. 8:9:
  - 1. Jesus Christ was indescribably rich as a member of the Trinity in heaven with all of its glory, 2 Cor. 8:9a.
  - 2. However, on behalf of a lost world of which the Corinthian believers were once a part, Christ became indescribably poor in going to the cross to pay for the sins of the world, 2 Cor. 8:9b with Philippians 2:5-8.
  - 3. The result of that great cost of the Son of God had resulted in Paul's readers becoming indescribably rich in God's many blessings, 2 Corinthians 8:9c.
  - 4. Accordingly, believers should give financially of their material assets to imitate their Savior.
- D. A fourth reason for godly giving is to give balance in the material resources of Christ's body, 2 Cor. 8:10-15:
  - 1. Paul desired that his Corinthian readers complete the work that they had initially planned to perform by actually donating to the needs of the believers in Judaea, 2 Corinthians 8:10-11a.
  - 2. However, Paul was careful not to apply undue pressure on his readers, for he directed that they give "out of what you have" (ESV) or "according to your means" (NIV), 2 Corinthians 8:11b. Paul clarified in verse 12 (ESV, NIV, KJV) that the gift from his readers, if it was given out of their willingness, was according to what they already possessed, not according to what they did not possess. This directive counters the practice of "faith-promise" giving where believers are encouraged to imagine what they would **like** to give and then promise to give God that amount, trusting that God would provide the income! Such a practice actually seeks to manipulate God to endow the believer with the amount the believer chooses – a practice that is not taught in Scripture and that functions in insubordination to the Lord. God has already given what He wants a believer to possess, and the believer is to select a portion of that amount to give to others.
  - 3. The goal was to provide balance in the body of Christ, that believers aim to have believers who are materially more endowed to give toward those who have less, 2 Corinthians 8:13-14. This principle was applied in Israel's collection of the manna in Exodus 16:18, and it applies to giving today. (2 Cor. 8:15)
  - 4. Note: This is **not communism** where resources are *forcibly seized* from the "haves" and given to the "have nots," a form of stealing (Exodus 20:15), but the practice of *willingly* giving to help needy believers.

***Lesson:*** Believers should give that they might abound in every aspect of God's grace, that they might prove the reality of their love for needy believers, that they might imitate the grace of God in Christ's example, and that they might willingly seek to balance the material resources of the body of Christ.

***Application:*** Armed with these Biblical purposes in giving, may we give in accord with the will of God.