

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**II CORINTHIANS 8****II Corinthians 8**

Living to give is the theme of II Corinthians eight. Remember, Paul is writing to what most likely was the wealthiest of all the churches in the New Testament era. He speaks to them about the example of living to give. That is, living a life that is totally dedicated to God so that whatever you do, whatever you have, it all is in God's hands, and you owe Him everything. This is the pattern of the New Testament followers of Jesus. **Paul used the example of the poorest of the regional churches of Macedonia in what is modern-day northern Greece.** These churches would consist of the churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea that are mentioned in the Book of Acts.

"Now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the churches of Macedonia. In the terrible ordeal they suffered, their abundant joy and deep poverty overflowed into rich generosity. For I testify that they gave according to their ability and even beyond it. Of their own accord, they earnestly pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And not only did they do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us, because it was the will of God." (II Corinthians 8:1-5)

The Apostle goaded the Corinthians by telling them that the believers in Macedonia had gone far beyond expectations and had begged to have a part in the offering that was being given for the poor saints in Jerusalem. They had given so much because they had

first given themselves to God and then to the Apostle Paul's plea to help the church in Jerusalem and Judea, where the Gospel of Jesus was first trumpeted and shared with the rest of the world, including all of Macedonia and Greece.

Evidently, the Corinthians had made a commitment to Paul to give a generous donation, and Paul had written to them in his first letter, chapter sixteen. He wrote that the Corinthians should set aside something each week or as often as they were blessed, on the first day of the week, in order that when Paul or his emissary came for money, they would have it already collected so it could be taken to Jerusalem.

Paul used the example of the Lord Jesus giving His all for those in Corinth, and they should recognize that and give no less to Him.

"I am not making a demand, but I am testing the sincerity of your love in comparison to the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." (II Corinthians 8:8-9)

Paul was not commanding them to give, he was simply encouraging them to do what they promised they would do a year earlier. He gave the two examples of the Churches of Macedonia and the Lord Jesus Himself to help them understand the great honor, privilege, and responsibility to give.

Prayer and Action Steps

Lord Jesus, may my life be filled with thanksgiving and generosity as I understand how everything I have in every way is a gift from You. Please help me to give as I have been given and bless as I have been blessed and beyond. Amen