

LESSON 14: 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-9:14

The Collection

1. How do you feel about people who raise money for Christian causes? What methods offend you? Do such methods cause you to question the validity of the cause and the one seeking the money?
2. If the instructions in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 had been followed, would there have been a problem? Why had they not followed those instructions?
3. “We want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches,” Paul writes in verse 1. Is there a connection between this grace which God has bestowed on the churches and their gift (spoken of in vv. 2-5)? Who are these Macedonians? And what do we learn about the Macedonian churches in verse 2-3, and why do you think Paul includes this information here?
4. What does Paul mean when he writes concerning the Macedonians that “they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will” (v. 5)? And how was Titus “to bring to also completion this act of grace on your part” (v. 6)?
5. What incentive is the basis of Paul’s solicitation in verse 7? What does it mean to “excel” in a grace (compare 1 Cor. 1:4-7)? What is “the grace of giving”? Why does Paul write that he’s not commanding the Corinthians, but “testing” the sincerity of their love (v. 8)?
6. Again, what are the example and the incentive in verse 9? Why is Jesus Christ the supreme example of sacrificial giving? Note the repeated uses of the word “grace” in this passage (vv. 1, 6, 7, 9; as well as 9:8, 14)!
7. What is the primary goal that governs Paul’s appeal for gifts in verses 10-15? What is the advice

he offers them (vv. 10-11; compare Ecclesiastes 7:8)? In verse 12, Paul sets forth an important principle for Christian giving (compare Mark 12:41-44). Explain it.

8. In verses 13-15, Paul sets forth what we might call the principle of equality. What is it? What is the significance of his quoting Exodus 16:18 in that context? And what does the principle of equality suggest about our bond with believers around the world? With one another?
9. What more do you learn about Titus in verses 16-19, and his role in all this? What kind of a team has Paul put together, and what is its goal (v. 19). Who do you think this “brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel” might be (v. 18)? Why all the talk of avoiding criticism for the way the gift is administered and doing right, not just in God’s eyes, but “the eyes of men” (vv. 20-21)? Consider how the integrity of Paul’s representatives reflects well on his own integrity (vv. 22-24)! How is this so also with us?
10. Read 9:1-5. Paul is really applying the pressure here! How? In what way?
11. What is suggested about the personal benefits of giving money in 9:6-11? Some people suggest today that if you give, you will receive as much or more in return. How does this fit in with what Paul has to say?
12. What is the principle that Paul sets forth in verses 6-7 (compare Prov. 11:24-25; Luke 6:38; and Gal. 6:7)? And what things does he say about God’s faithfulness (vv. 8-11; hint: what’s the key word in verse 8!?)?
13. In addition to meeting their material needs, what other benefits are produced in those who receive (9:12-14)? Why do you think Paul ends this section with the cry of praise, “Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” (v. 15)?