

THIS ACT OF GRACE

2 Corinthians 8:1–8:15

Key Verse: 8:9

1. What is the context of this passage (Ro15:25-27; 1Co16:1-3; Gal2:9,10)? What is the commitment the Corinthian believers made (8:10b; 9:1,2)? Describe the living condition among the Macedonian believers¹ and their giving behavior (8:2-4). Would you give as they did if you were living in the same condition?
2. What was given to the Macedonian believers before they gave (8:1)? How can God's grace enable such giving (8:2; 9:8; Mk12:41-44)? Why is it important to give ourselves first to the Lord before giving material things (8:5b)?
3. What does Paul ask the Corinthian believers to do (8:6,7)? Why does he call such giving an act of "grace"² (8:7)? What can happen if we give because we feel obligated (8:8a; 9:5,7)?
4. What makes their giving genuine and why (8:8b,9a)? What does it mean that Jesus was "rich" but became "poor" (8:9b; Jn1:1-3; Jn17:5; Lk2:7)? How does His grace make us rich (Eph1:3-7; Re21:10,11)? Were the Macedonian believers rich? Do you feel rich?
5. Why should the Corinthian believers follow through on their previous commitment (8:6,11; 1Jn3:17-18; Mt6:21)? How does Paul evaluate their giving (8:12)? Why is it fair for the Gentile believers to materially help the Jewish believers (8:13–15; Ro15:25-27)?

¹ Acts 16:6-17:15 records Paul's missionary journey in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea).

² 'charis' is the original Greek word translated to grace, which appears ten times in ch 8-9. It can mean several things such as (1) God's merciful kindness upon undeserved humanity/sinners, (2) power of divine influence on one's life and heart, and (3) gracious gift.