

PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-12
PRINCIPLE

FIRST THINGS FIRST! THE MACEDONIAN

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And 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. So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with 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. And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

1. It's not uncommon for us to view the world around us through pragmatic LENS.
2. Jesus' entry into the human arena defies earthy ways of looking at life and CREATES a new lens through which we view our world.
3. The key to faith is to follow the Macedonian example of first GIVING OURSELVES to the Lord.
4. Once we have given ourselves to God we are moved to act in CHRIST'S NAME.
 - Once a need is evident, we are seized by this overwhelming COMPASSION toward people who are hurting.

- Ministering to others in Jesus' name is a **PRIVILEGE** not an inconvenience.

5. Those who receive God's grace have the **JOY** of extending God's grace to others.