



# Man Disrupted:

How Jesus changes men for the better

## Devotion #4

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

You'll be pleased to know that I am not about to give you a sermon.

Most likely you have heard this passage used in preparation for a financial appeal at least once. Or perhaps you are more familiar with the line from 2 Corinthians 9:7, that God 'loves a cheerful giver.' Either way, as we read a passage like this we can feel like we see the application coming from a long way away!

But look closer.

Yes, it is about money, and the giving of money. Yet this passage isn't primarily about giving money to your own church. It's part of Paul's appeal for the Gentile churches to share their resources with the poor church in Jerusalem, who were suffering greatly at that time.

Now look even closer, for this is more than just a feel-good piece about how heroic the Macedonian churches were in their giving. Paul's point is that the Macedonian Christians were following a pattern that reflects the very heart of God. Verse 9 is the key here:

'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.'

What is it that motivates an authentic practice of generosity? Guilt trips work for a time, but they fizzle out in the end. A strenuous sense of obligation can work somewhat, but it will not produce a cheerful giver.

What unlocks Gospel generosity is being the recipient of Gospel grace. If you want to know what generosity is like, look at Jesus. He poured out His riches on a rebel like me. He invited the runaway to His table and threw a lavish party for me (Luke 15:11-32). It is quite overwhelming if we stop to think about it!

And as we revel in having been forgiven, healed and adopted into God's family, we find that the grace of God not only wipes our slate clean, it changes us from the inside out. We see the generous way of Jesus is something not merely to be applauded, but as a pattern to be imitated. We too can pour out our riches in the service of others, because generosity is the essential character of the God in whose image we are made.

And so this passage isn't about how amazing the Macedonians are. It's about how amazing Jesus is. Once you grasp how deep His love for you is, and how amazing is His grace, who knows what kind of generosity that might unleash in you?

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## Verses for Meditation

- Job 29:7-17
- Romans 8:31-39

## Reflection Questions

1. When did you last spend time relishing the love that God has shown you in Christ Jesus?
2. When you thinking about “spending yourself” on behalf of others, is it guilt or grace which motivates you?
3. What do you want to say to God right now, in response to his generosity?

## Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the generous love you have shown me in Jesus. You have loved me at my worst. When I was living in the poverty of my sin, you gave me the undeserved riches of eternal life. You want me to delight in your grace. And you want me to changed by grace, to adopt the same generosity as my own posture and practice. Father, help me to see my life as an opportunity to love, to spend my life and gifts in the service of others. May the generosity of my life point people to the grace of Jesus. Amen.

**BASECAMP**

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