

MORE BLESSED TO GIVE . . .

Giving to:

- Preachers, Widows and Elders:

- **1 Corinthians 9:8-15**
 - Paul is making the point that he and Barnabas had the right to receive help for their ministry, but they did not take advantage and therefore received no help from them. However, the Lord wants such men to be cared for.
- **2 Corinthians 11:7-10**
 - Brothers from Macedonia helped Paul, but he did not burden the Corinthian church. However, we see that Paul received help. We'll next consider one church from Macedonia.
- **Philippians 1:3-5; 4:15-18**
 - Yes, at one point they were the only ones who helped Paul. They sent a gift to Paul through one of their own, Epaphroditus.
- **1 Timothy 5:3, 9-10, 16**
 - Relatives of a widow should be the first to help. If not, a widow should be supported by the church.
- **1 Timothy 5:17-18**
 - Yes, we should be willing to support elders if need be, because they labor for us and are deserving.

- Saints in need:

- **Acts 2-4**
 - Early state of the church. Saints helping saints. Interesting how the apostles do not give the lame man money in chapter 3, although they show him the power and love of Jesus. No mentioning of a forced giving.
 - In fact, in **Acts 5** we learn through the example of Ananias and Sapphira that their giving was free will. They didn't have to sell their land, and when they did, it was their money to do what they'd like.
- **Acts 6**
 - A daily distribution among the Hellenists and Hebrew Christians.
- **Acts 11:27-30**
 - A prophet from Jerusalem prophesied of a coming famine over all the world (NIV has "entire Roman world" for the Greek *οἰκουμένη*, meaning inhabited, civilized world, which in that day was virtually the "Roman world." The reign of Claudius was in fact marked by a long series of crop failures in various parts of the empire—in Judea, in Rome, in Egypt, and in Greece. The Judean famine seems to have taken place during the procuratorship of Tiberius Alexander (a.d. 46–48), and Egyptian documents reveal a major famine there in a.d. 45–46 due to flooding. The most likely time for the Judean famine would thus seem to have been around a.d. 46. - Polhill, J. B. (1992). *Acts* (Vol. 26, p. 275). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.) to the church in Antioch. Disciples determined to send relief to brothers in Judea. They sent it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul who had been working in Antioch for a year. This is where disciples

were first called Christians. Notice how this was "according to his ability". We'll see this again in [1 Cor. 16:1-4](#); [2 Cor. 8:11-12](#).

- [Acts 12:25](#) states how Paul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service. This seems to reference the giving from the brethren in Antioch to help the disciples in Judea.
- [Romans 15:25-32](#)
 - We read about the collection for the saints in Jerusalem coming from Macedonia and Achai. I'm not sure why Galatia is not mentioned. Some believe [Acts 20:4](#), which includes those from Asia and Galatia, may be representatives from churches traveling with funds. I'm not sure. It is true that Paul is making his way to Jerusalem. This seems to be for the purpose of delivering the gift (see [Acts 24:17](#)).
 - Saints helping saints. Sending their gift through Paul.
 - The following passages ([1 Corinthians 16:1-4](#); [2 Corinthians 8:1-16](#); [9:1-9](#)) are connected to this passage. This was a need for the saints in Jerusalem over 10 years later (not to be confused with [Acts 11](#)).

Collecting

- In the early stage of the church you see how land and homes were being sold, the proceeds were laid at the apostles feet, and the proceeds were distributed to those who had need.
- The Philippian brethren clearly had collected a gift for Paul and sent it by Epaphroditus. We don't know anything else.
- The church in Ephesus must have had funds available, because they were given instruction to support elders and widows ([1 Timothy 5](#)).
- I'm not sure how or when they collected those funds. Your guess is as good as mine.
- However, we do see an example of a church collecting funds for saints in Jerusalem, and I believe this serves as a good blueprint for collecting.
- [1 Corinthians 16:1-4](#) Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.
 - Paul instructed the churches of Galatia and Corinth to collect on the first day of every week.
 - Why? So he didn't have to go around collecting the funds when he arrived.
 - The collection was specific (not for preaching, supporting elders or local widows) and it looks like they had not been practicing this before, but it serves as a good example.
 - We'll also take note that they weren't expected to give a specific amount, but rather "as he may prosper". We'll also learn from [2 Corinthians 8-9](#) that the church decided on their own to give. That would be consistent with [Acts 2-4](#). No one was forced - it was done out of love. Same as the church in Philippi - Paul commended them for being the only ones to help him. Churches were not forced to give, but they did so out of love. You'll also notice how the church in Corinth picked their own to deliver the gift to Jerusalem.

The reason

- [2 Corinthians 8:1-16](#)

- They (churches of Macedonia) asked to give and gave beyond their means. They begged to give. He's using them to tactfully shame the church who needed to finish what they began.
- This is an act of grace - very important.
- This isn't a command, but would be a sign of genuine love.
- **Christ is the reason and example. Look what He gave . . . what He sacrificed.**
- **Vs. 10** and **9:2** tell us they had decided to give before 1 Corinthians was written (the two letters are believed to be written only months apart).
- **2 Corinthians 9:6-9**
 - After stating how he boasted about them to the brethren of Macedonia (saying Corinth has been ready since last year) and how it stirred the Macedonian brethren up, he goes on to discuss how we give.
 - It's not about the amount as much as it is the heart.
 - Giving is not a last minute thought. You've thought it through with thanksgiving.
 - We aren't being forced nor should we hesitate. See **vs. 5**. We give cheerfully.
 - **Luke 21:1-4** Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and He saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And He said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

When we give, it's really about us playing our part of giving and showering love on God's children. It's about spreading the word and helping those in need. We're mirroring Jesus' sacrifice. He gave Himself to us . . . don't we want to give something back?