

3 Day Quest

Ingest

2 Corinthians 8:1-24 (NLT)

¹ Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. ² They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. ³ For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. ⁴ They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. ⁵ They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do. ⁶ So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving. ⁷ Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. ⁸ I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches. ⁹ You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich. ¹⁰ Here is my advice: It would be good for you to finish what you started a year ago. Last year you were the first who wanted to give, and you were the first to begin doing it. ¹¹ Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have. ¹² Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have. ¹³ Of course, I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves. I only mean that there should be some equality. ¹⁴ Right now you have plenty and can help those who are in need. Later, they will have plenty and can share with you when you need it. In this way, things will be equal. ¹⁵ As the Scriptures say, "Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered only a little had enough." ¹⁶ But thank God! He has given Titus the same enthusiasm for you that I have. ¹⁷ Titus welcomed our request that he visit you again. In fact, he himself was very eager to go and see you. ¹⁸ We are also sending another brother with Titus. All the churches praise him as a preacher of the Good News. ¹⁹ He was

appointed by the churches to accompany us as we take the offering to Jerusalem—a service that glorifies the Lord and shows our eagerness to help. ²⁰ We are traveling together to guard against any criticism for the way we are handling this generous gift. ²¹ We are careful to be honorable before the Lord, but we also want everyone else to see that we are honorable. ²² We are also sending with them another of our brothers who has proven himself many times and has shown on many occasions how eager he is. He is now even more enthusiastic because of his great confidence in you. ²³ If anyone asks about Titus, say that he is my partner who works with me to help you. And the brothers with him have been sent by the churches, and they bring honor to Christ. ²⁴ So show them your love, and prove to all the churches that our boasting about you is justified.

Digest

- 1) Prayerfully reflect on these verses Monday through Wednesday.
- 2) What are some truths that God is showing me through the verses?
- 3) Was it reckless for the Macedonians to give more than they could afford?
- 4) Is Paul being crass or manipulative when he says, "I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches." in verse 8? What do you think of this tactic? How would you react if someone in the church said that to you?
- 5) What is the difference between giving according to what you have and giving according to what you don't have? (v12)

Manifest

- 1) Apply what you have learned to current life situations.
- 2) If you come to the Wednesday gathering, enjoy the group quest as we consider the verses together and, if God permits, be a part of the discussion.