

**Victoria Fellowship Church**  
**International & Interdenominational**  
**Bible Study Worksheet – October 23, 2022**

**Theme: The World Eagerly Awaits Your Manifestation    Topic: Excel in Generosity**

**Main Texts: 2 Corinthians 8:1-7**

**Key verse: 2 Corinthians 8:5** – *“And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God” (NKJV)*

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**INTRODUCTION:** The believers in Jerusalem were going through a difficult period, necessitating a need for support from other believers. Their difficulties may have been due to persecution or the result of the famine Agabus predicted in Acts 11:27-29. And it would seem the Church in Corinth pledged to send help as did other disciples. But they were yet to fulfill that pledge (2 Corinthians 8:10-12). In these first verses of 2 Corinthians 8, Paul addresses the subject, and uses the incredible generosity of the Macedonians, to spur the Corinthian brethren. The Macedonian churches included the churches at Philippi, Berea, and Thessalonica. Generosity seems to run in the veins of these Macedonian believers. It started with Lydia who insisted on hosting Paul and his companions in her home while they are in Philippi (Acts 16:15). Next was the jailer, who showers hospitality on Paul and Silas after he and his family come to faith in Christ (Acts 16:32-34). Their generosity transcended these isolated incidences. Apostle Paul writes about the various times the Philippians generously supported his ministry, even after he left their region. And while he was in prison, they sent Epaphroditus to minister to Paul, along with a gift of money he carried (Philippians 2:25; 4:15-16).

1. **Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-5. (a) What do you make of Paul’s description of the Macedonians’ generosity given their peculiar situation? (b) To what does Apostle Paul attribute the generosity of the Macedonian believers? (See 2 Corinthians 8:1,5). (c) How do you understand the command to “abound in this grace” of giving? And how can a believer abound in this grace of giving regardless of the difficulties we face in Nigeria?**

To excel in something is to be extremely good at that thing. **Perisseuō** is the Greek word translated as ‘Excel.’ It means to abound in, overflow, to have an excessive amount of something. 2 Corinthians 8:1 makes it clear that this extraordinary generosity demonstrated by the Macedonians was due to the grace of God. Interestingly also, 2 Corinthians 8:4 talks about how the Macedonian believers *‘begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.’* If the need was there, the Macedonian believers were ready to help as many times as the opportunity presented itself. And in urging the Corinthians to also abound in this grace of giving, God shows that the grace for such a level of generosity is available to all believers.

2. **Read 2 Corinthians 8:3-5 (a) What words does the Bible use in describing the attitude of the Macedonian believers towards giving? What can we learn from them in this regard? (b) The Macedonians saw abounding in generosity as a privilege. What does 2 Corinthians 9:7b point to as additional motivation to seek this privilege? (c) What would it look like if members of VFC saw generous giving as a privilege?**

The believers in Judea were going through a tough time, and so were the Macedonians. Yet, rather than try to preserve what they have, the Macedonians gave both what they could afford and more still. And all because they had first given themselves to God and to His purposes (through the Apostles). According to Jesus Christ, our view and attitude towards money is an effective barometer of our spirituality (Matthew 6:19-21). True generosity is one which follows the pattern shown by the Macedonians (2 Corinthians 8:5). Our Lord wants our hearts, so it does little good to give to His work from a heart that is not first completely surrendered to Him. Excellence in generosity is not merely obedience to a command but a privilege to further the work of the Kingdom.

3. **(a) Let participants mention common reasons Christians use to refrain from giving generously? How does the example of 2 Corinthians 8:5 speak to these reasons? (b) What principles does 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8:5; 9:5-7 offer to anyone who wants to excel in generosity? (c) What practical steps can you take today to evaluate and increase your financial support of the work of God?**

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**Prayer:** *Lord, You want us to excel in generosity. Please give us hearts that desire to excel, and willing to rise above whatever excuses which might be hampering our excelling in generosity. In Christ’s Name. Amen*