

A Community Shares Its Resources

Key Verse:
“Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.”
—II Corinthians 8:7

Selected Scripture:
II Corinthians 8:1-14

she had. (Luke 21:1-4) Thus, those who were devoted to serving God, as were the Macedonian believers, delighted to render needed assistance to other Christians as opportunities arose.—II Cor. 8:1-4

In view of the blessings that the Macedonian brethren received as a result of their unselfish giving, Paul urged Titus to bring this same subject to the attention of the Corinthian church. (vss. 5,6) In our Key Verse, Paul first acknowledged the Corinthians' faith, knowledge, and love, as well as other virtues he had observed in them. However, he desired for them also to excel in the spirit of benevolence as an evidence of their sincerity in

AS A MEANS OF ENCOUR-
aging the Corinthian brethren towards demonstrating generosity, Paul writes to them concerning the example of Macedonian brethren who, though in great poverty, rejoiced to contribute funds that would benefit the poor saints in Jerusalem. A similar example of such largeness of heart was mentioned by our Lord, who commended a widow that had given “two mites” to the treasury. This was all the money

following Christian principles, and as a demonstration of their sanctified condition of heart.

A broader lesson to be understood during the time of the Early Church as well as today is the fact that consecration implies not merely giving to assist others with their temporal necessities. Believers, rather, have pledged to give their all in serving the Master. The most wonderful gift which could have been provided by the Heavenly Father to manifest his great love for the human family was imparted by sending his Son as its Redeemer.—John 3:16,17

As Jesus carried out his calling during his earthly sojourn, we note the doing of God's will caused him to be consumed and physically spent. Day after day he walked upon dusty roads preaching, teaching, and enduring the opposition of sinners. One aspect of Jesus' suffering was the fact that he had no permanent residence of his own at which to rest, although he was a welcome guest in various homes.—Matt. 8:19,20

The spirit of service and sacrifice would prompt the laying down of life itself by believers, especially in promulgating the good news of God's kingdom to all who may have a hearing ear. The ultimate object of our having appreciated the precious promises contained in the Scriptures is not merely to give us an intellectual knowledge of God's plan, but to assist us in the transformation process. Thus, through the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, we may develop a Christ-like character.

Unselfishness on our part will prompt us to activity in serving the Master's cause. May we give diligence to this imperative so that we can demonstrate our love for God, his righteous principles, and ultimately share in the work of reconciling humanity back to the Heavenly Father, as mankind is restored to the perfection that was lost in Eden. Let us daily engage in self-denial and cross-bearing as we follow our Master.—Luke 9:23 ■