

Giving Generously

Key Verse: “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”
—II Corinthians 8:9

Selected Scripture:
II Corinthians 8:7-15

abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints.”—II Cor. 8:1-4, *Revised Version*

The believers in Macedonia, though poor, were especially appreciated by Paul because they devoted their lives to God’s service. As an outgrowth of their consecration, they placed their trust in the apostle to distribute funds they had collected to assist the poor saints in Jerusalem.—vs. 5

As Titus was the bearer of this epistle, Paul desired that he would encourage the brethren in Corinth to

ONE EVIDENCE OF SPIRITUAL development among the followers of Christ is that of manifesting generosity towards others in need. During the time of the Early Church, Paul wrote to the brethren in Corinth regarding the spirit of sacrifice exhibited by the believers in the churches of Macedonia.

“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia; how that in much proof of affliction the

manifest a similar spirit of benevolence and sincerity towards Christian believers in Jerusalem.—vs. 6

Our Key Verse, although penned during the first century, has applicability for all the consecrated followers of the Master throughout this Gospel Age. Jesus willingly left his exalted position in the heavenly realm, and came to earth. Throughout his earthly ministry as Christ, he laid down his human life in sacrifice by humbling himself, even to the death of the cross, in order to purchase the dying race of mankind according to the Heavenly Father's will.

Although circumstances may differ today among brethren, consecrated followers of Christ should look for opportunities to serve believers in whatever way possible according to their ability. In some instances, we will be reminded to write to or visit an isolated brother or sister we may have neglected for a time, while being caught up in perhaps doing other things throughout the year. We can strive to be more attentive and make special efforts to fulfill requests for prayers given in testimonies. Recalling some of the specific trials some of the Lord's dear ones are experiencing, we will want to bring them into remembrance, as we petition the Lord to give them more grace and strength. Perhaps we can volunteer for an ecclesia service or to assist some of the brethren in certain ways which we may not have done before, trying to be of service in some of the tasks that we may have left for someone else to do.

A very important aspect of the New Creature's growth and development is an increased manifestation of kindness toward the brethren and to the entire world of mankind. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." "Brethren, ... support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."—Gal. 6:10; I Thess. 5:14,15 ■