

Give Generously

The Apostle Paul, a powerful follower of Jesus, established the Church in Macedonia. They were a church made up of people who lived in 'extreme poverty'. They are not alone. There are many very poor people who have followed Jesus through the centuries. The Macedonians faced many troubles and did not have many possessions or much money. They were also extremely generous. In 2 Corinthians 8:1-7 we read about them and their powerful story.

The Macedonians were more generous than others expected them to be. They did not just give what they had to spare or what was easy for them. Remember that they were extremely poor with many people suffering. They were incredibly eager to give. That is why Paul holds them up as an example of giving. This is what Paul said of them: "For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people."

It seems like upside down thinking! It is like they said, 'We are poor and we do not have much so let's give to others.' Why did they do this? The passage says that, "their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity". They had so much faith and trust in God that it enabled them to have such great love for others that they gave generously out of their extreme poverty. They counted others as more deserving of their money than themselves. How often do we do think like that?

A fantastic truth of this passage is that all of us, whether rich or poor, need to worship God together with our generosity. This passage is not about one person giving alone, it is about a whole group of believers giving together. Often it is difficult to do something on our own. Maybe you think, 'What is the point of me giving when I can only give a small amount?' Together we can do great things. If we put our gift together with the gifts of others then that small amount becomes a larger amount. That is the power of group generosity. It is really easy to look at our circumstances, whatever they are, and decide whether we can or cannot give to others. Can I encourage us to be generous to others together, just like the Macedonian church?

Put it into Action!

The great thing about generosity is that we can start right where we are! With your group, or a group of friends, decide together to give just like the Macedonian Church to people poorer than yourselves. Why not take a collection of money, food, or something else for those who are less fortunate in your village or community? You could give clothing, time, in fact anything, as long as it costs you and you give it generously. Whatever you are able to give will be great help.

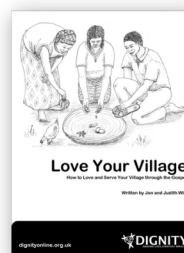
Pray that:

- 1) God will take the gift you give and multiply it to bless those you give to.
- 2) As you give you will discover overflowing joy!



Pastor Esau* recently attended a Life Group training course. He was so inspired by what he heard that he gave N\$120 (£6) to those leading the training. Pastor Esau could have used that money to meet many other needs, but he chose to bless the work and help others learn about Life Groups, investing in his community.

- Pastor Esau,* Yinsu, Namibia



This lesson is inspired by "Give like the Macedonian Church" a lesson from Love Your Village.

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