

Dr. J. Ayodeji Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 9, 2 Corinthians 8 – Grace of Giving Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 9, 2 Corinthians 8 – Grace of Giving, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Ayo Adewuya's session on 2 Corinthians 8, titled "Grace of Giving," examines Paul's discussion of a collection for the impoverished Jerusalem church. This passage reveals the significance of this endeavor within Paul's ministry and his defense of his apostolic integrity. **Adewuya highlights Paul's rhetorical approach, using the example of the generous Macedonian churches to encourage the Corinthians to complete their long-delayed offering.** The session underscores that this collection aimed to demonstrate the unity and interdependence of Jewish and Gentile believers, embodying the essence of the gospel. **Furthermore, Adewuya emphasizes Paul's integrity in handling finances, ensuring transparency and accountability in this act of Christian charity.**

2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 9 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → 2 Corinthians).



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3. Briefing Document: Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 9, 2 Corinthians 8 – Grace of Giving

Briefing Document: Dr. Ayo Adewuya on 2 Corinthians 8 - Grace of Giving

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Ayo Adewuya in his ninth session on 2 Corinthians, specifically focusing on Chapter 8, titled "Grace of Giving." Dr. Adewuya introduces the context and significance of Paul's discussion on the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem, highlighting its theological importance, its role in Paul's defense of his apostleship, and its practical implications for the Corinthian church and believers today.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Significance of the Collection (2 Corinthians 8 & 9):

- Paul dedicates two chapters to the collection, emphasizing its crucial role in his apostolic ministry. Although he didn't solicit personal funds, he spent about ten years collecting for the Jerusalem church.
- This section is presented as a digression but expresses the practical point of the entire letter.
- The collection was a "daring rhetorical move" (Ben Witherington) aimed at demonstrating the genuineness and confidence of the Corinthians in Paul after recent misunderstandings.
- It served two primary purposes:
 - To alleviate the needs of the Jerusalem church during a famine, showcasing the "interdependence of believers worldwide."
 - To demonstrate the transnational and transcultural nature of the church, embodying the gospel truth that "in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek..." (Galatians 3:28).
- The timing of Paul's discussion is significant; he waited until some issues with the Corinthians were resolved, reflecting "pastoral wisdom." The section begins and ends with the theme of God's grace ("inclusio").

1. The "Grace of Giving" (Charis):

- Dr. Adewuya emphasizes that giving, as presented by Paul, is fundamentally rooted in God's grace.
- Paul uses the Greek word *charis* (grace) extensively throughout chapters 8 and 9 with various connotations.
- The passage begins with "the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia" (8:1) and ends with thanks "to God for his indescribable gift!" (9:15), forming an inclusio.
- The offering of the Macedonians is directly attributed to "the grace of God" working in them.

1. The Example of the Macedonian Churches (8:1-6):

- Paul uses the Macedonian churches as a powerful example of generous giving despite their "severe ordeal of affliction" and "extreme poverty."
- Their giving overflowed into a "wealth of generosity" due to their "abundant joy." This illustrates that a believer's joy is not contingent on outward circumstances.
- Dr. Adewuya highlights four key aspects of their giving:
- They "voluntarily gave according to their means, even beyond their means" (8:3).
- They gave "entirely on their own" without coercion or manipulation.
- They "urgently pleaded with Paul for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints" (8:4), viewing it as a grace and a favor.
- They "gave themselves first to the Lord, and by the will of God to us" (8:5), exceeding Paul's expectations in both amount and manner.
- Paul presents their sacrifice as a motivation for the Corinthians without directly commanding them.

1. Paul's Rhetorical Strategy and Appeal to the Corinthians (8:7-15):

- Paul employs "deliberative rhetoric," aiming to motivate the Corinthians towards completing the collection while also reinforcing his credibility.
- He acknowledges their existing strengths: "Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving" (8:7).

- He clarifies, "I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others" (8:8).
- Paul presents the ultimate example of giving: "For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (8:9). This sacrifice of Christ is presented as the supreme motivation for Christian giving.
- He reminds them of their initial enthusiasm and urges them to "finish doing it" (8:11), emphasizing that "eagerness" makes a gift acceptable according to one's ability.
- Paul stresses the principle of "fair balance" and equality in giving, where those with abundance share with those in need, referencing the manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16). He clarifies this is not socialism but aimed at relieving acute distress.

1. Integrity and Accountability in Handling Finances (8:16-24):

- Paul introduces Titus and other brothers who are entrusted with the collection, highlighting the importance of accountability and avoiding any appearance of impropriety.
- He praises Titus's "eagerness" and the brother "who is famous among all the churches for his proclaiming of the good news" (8:18).
- Paul states his intention: "We intend that no one should blame us for this generous gift that we are administering, for we intend to do what is right, not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others" (8:20-21).
- Dr. Adewuya underscores the critical importance of "integrity in finance" and "financial stewardship" in ministry, noting that mishandling funds can discredit the cause of Christ.
- He points out Paul's unusual concern for public perception in this matter, emphasizing that those handling church money should be "above reproach," like "Caesar's wife."
- Paul's strategy of sending multiple trustworthy individuals ensures oversight and helps avoid financial temptations.

1. The Relationship Between Evangelism and Social Action:

- Dr. Adewuya addresses the false dichotomy between evangelism and social action, stating that they "go hand in hand."
- He quotes John Wesley: "There's no holiness without social holiness."
- Paul's involvement in relief work demonstrates the importance of meeting tangible needs alongside spiritual ones, using the analogy: "before you preach a sermon to the people, give salmon to the people."

1. Patronage and Clientele in Paul's Time:

- Dr. Adewuya briefly explains the social and economic context of patronage and clientele, where giving and receiving gifts could create unequal power dynamics and obligations.
- He suggests that Paul's decision not to accept financial support from the Corinthians was to avoid placing himself in a socially inferior "client" relationship under wealthy patrons, even though the Corinthians might have misinterpreted this as a lack of love.

Key Quotes:

- "Although Paul did not in any way solicit funds for himself, for personal support, he nonetheless spent about 10 years soliciting funds for what is commonly referred to as the collection."
- "In Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, nor barbarian nor Scythian, neither slave nor free, nor male nor female, as we see in Galatians 3:28." (Contextualizing the theological significance of the collection)
- "There's no holiness without social holiness." (Quoting John Wesley on the necessity of social involvement)
- "Before you preach a sermon to the people, give salmon to the people." (Illustrating the importance of meeting physical needs)
- "For during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part." (Describing the Macedonian example)
- "They voluntarily gave according to their means, even beyond their means." (Highlighting the extraordinary nature of the Macedonian giving)

- "They urgently pleaded with Paul for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints." (Emphasizing the Macedonians' eagerness to give)
- "For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." (Presenting Christ as the ultimate example of giving)
- "If there is eagerness, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have." (Paul's principle for acceptable giving)
- "We intend that no one should blame us for this generous gift that we are administering, for we intend to do what is right, not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others." (Paul's commitment to financial integrity)

Conclusion:

Dr. Adewuya's session on 2 Corinthians 8 provides a rich understanding of Paul's theology of giving. He emphasizes that giving is an expression of God's grace and should be motivated by love, exemplified by the generosity of the Macedonian churches and, most importantly, by the selfless sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the session underscores the critical importance of integrity, accountability, and transparency in handling financial contributions within the church and ministry. The discussion highlights the interconnectedness of the Christian community and the practical manifestation of the gospel in meeting the needs of others.

4. Study Guide: Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 9, 2 Corinthians 8 – Grace of Giving

Study Guide: 2 Corinthians 8 - The Grace of Giving

Key Themes:

- The Grace of Giving: Exploring the nature and motivation behind Christian generosity.
- Paul's Apostolic Integrity: How the collection relates to Paul's defense of his apostleship.
- Unity and Interdependence in the Church: The collection as a demonstration of the bond between Jewish and Gentile believers.
- The Example of Christ: Jesus' self-sacrifice as the ultimate model for giving.
- Practical Aspects of Giving: Willingness, ability, and accountability in financial contributions.
- Avoiding False Dichotomies: The interconnectedness of evangelism and social action.

Key Concepts to Understand:

- **The Collection:** Paul's initiative to gather funds from Gentile churches for the poor saints in Jerusalem.
- **Grace (Charis):** The multifaceted meaning of grace, particularly as it relates to God's favor, salvation, and the act of giving.
- **Inclusio:** A literary device where a passage begins and ends with a similar word or phrase, in this case, the grace of God.
- **Rhetorical Strategy:** Paul's deliberate use of language and examples to persuade the Corinthians.
- **Patronage and Clientele:** The social and economic relationships of Paul's time and how Paul navigated them in relation to the Corinthians.
- **Deliberative Rhetoric:** Persuasive speech aimed at influencing future action, in this case, the completion of the collection.

- **Social Holiness:** John Wesley's concept emphasizing the importance of social involvement as an aspect of holiness.
- **Equality in Giving:** The principle that those with abundance should share with those in need, leading to a fair balance.
- **Accountability in Ministry Finances:** The importance of honesty and transparency in handling financial contributions.

Guide to Reviewing the Source Material:

1. **Understand the Context:** Why are chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians focused on this collection? How does it relate to Paul's broader relationship with the Corinthian church?
2. **Identify the Purpose of the Collection:** What were the practical and theological reasons behind Paul's initiative?
3. **Analyze Paul's Approach:** How does Paul introduce the topic of the collection? What rhetorical strategies does he employ? Why does he start by discussing the Macedonian churches?
4. **Examine the Macedonian Example:** What characteristics of the Macedonians' giving does Paul highlight? What lessons can be learned from their example?
5. **Focus on the Significance of "Grace":** Track the various ways Paul uses the word "charis" in these chapters. How does it relate to God's action and human response in giving?
6. **Understand the Contrast with Patronage:** Why was Paul hesitant to receive financial support directly from the Corinthians? How did this relate to issues of honor and shame?
7. **Grasp the Appeal to Christ:** Why does Paul use the example of Jesus' incarnation as a motivation for giving? What is the significance of Christ's riches and poverty?
8. **Analyze Paul's Instructions to the Corinthians:** What does Paul encourage the Corinthians to do regarding the collection? How does he balance encouragement with avoiding commands?
9. **Understand the Principle of Equality:** What does Paul mean by a "fair balance"? How does the example of manna illustrate this principle? What does Paul *not* intend by this principle?

10. **Pay Attention to Accountability:** Why does Paul emphasize the importance of choosing trustworthy individuals to handle the collection? What does this teach about financial stewardship in ministry?

Quiz: 2 Corinthians 8 - Grace of Giving

1. According to Dr. Adewuya, what was the primary purpose of Paul spending about ten years soliciting funds for "the collection"? Why were chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians considered a "daring rhetorical move" by Ben Witherington?
2. What were the two main purposes of the collection for the Jerusalem church? How did this initiative demonstrate the nature of the church as a unified body?
3. Why did Paul choose to wait until some of the issues between him and the Corinthians were resolved before writing about the collection? What pastoral wisdom does this demonstrate?
4. What was the false dichotomy that Dr. Adewuya mentions in relation to Paul's efforts for the Jerusalem church? How does John Wesley's concept of "social holiness" relate to this?
5. According to Paul, what were four ways in which the liberality of the Macedonian churches was evidenced? What was particularly noteworthy about their financial situation at the time of their giving?
6. How does Paul use the example of the Macedonian churches to motivate the Corinthians? What aspects of their giving does he highlight?
7. Why does Paul emphasize that he is not giving a command regarding the collection in 2 Corinthians 8:8? What does he appeal to instead?
8. What is the supreme example of giving that Paul presents to the Corinthians? Explain the significance of Christ's action in relation to their own giving.
9. What does Paul mean when he says, "If eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have" (2 Corinthians 8:12)? How does this relate to the Corinthians' past enthusiasm for the project?
10. Why did Paul take great care in selecting individuals like Titus and other brothers to oversee the administration of the generous gift? What principle of ministry does this illustrate?

Answer Key: 2 Corinthians 8 - Grace of Giving

1. The primary purpose of the collection was to support the poor saints in the Jerusalem church. These chapters are considered a daring rhetorical move because Paul risked the recently resolved positive relationship with the Corinthians by urging them to complete the long-delayed offering.
2. The two main purposes were to alleviate the needs of the Jerusalem church and to demonstrate the interdependence of believers worldwide, transcending national and geographical boundaries. This initiative showed the church as a body where all are equal in Christ.
3. Paul waited until the relationship was more stable because he understood that it is not wise to raise funds when there are unresolved problems within the church. This demonstrates pastoral wisdom in prioritizing reconciliation before financial appeals.
4. The false dichotomy is the separation of evangelism and social action, which Paul demonstrates are interconnected. John Wesley's concept of "social holiness" supports this by stating that true holiness involves social engagement and care for others' needs.
5. The four ways were: they voluntarily gave according to their means, even beyond their means; they gave entirely on their own initiative and free will; they urgently pleaded for the privilege of sharing in the service; and they gave themselves first to the Lord. Their giving was noteworthy because it occurred despite a severe ordeal of affliction and extreme poverty.
6. Paul uses their example to highlight that even in difficult circumstances, the grace of God can produce abundant generosity and a desire to give. He emphasizes their willingness, their giving beyond their ability, and their eagerness to participate as a model for the Corinthians to emulate.
7. Paul does not want the collection to be perceived as a command based on his apostolic authority but rather as a voluntary act of love and a demonstration of their genuineness. He appeals to their desire to excel in this undertaking, just as they excel in other areas, and tests the genuineness of their love against the earnestness of others.
8. The supreme example is the generous act of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, became poor for the sake of humanity so that through his poverty

they might become spiritually rich. This sacrifice should be the ultimate motivation for Christian giving.

9. This means that God values the willingness and heart behind the giving, and a gift given sacrificially according to one's ability is acceptable, regardless of the amount compared to others. It reminds the Corinthians that their initial eagerness to participate was what mattered.
10. Paul did this to ensure the proper and honest administration of the funds and to avoid any appearance of dishonesty or impropriety. This illustrates the principle that leaders in ministry should maintain high standards of integrity and accountability in handling financial matters, both in reality and in perception.

Essay Format Questions: 2 Corinthians 8 - Grace of Giving

1. Discuss the various theological significances of Paul's collection for the Jerusalem church as presented in 2 Corinthians 8. How did this initiative aim to demonstrate unity and interdependence within the early Christian community?
2. Analyze Paul's rhetorical strategy in 2 Corinthians 8 as he encourages the Corinthians to participate in the collection. What techniques does he employ, and why does he begin by highlighting the example of the Macedonian churches before directly appealing to the Corinthians?
3. Explore the concept of "grace" (charis) as it is presented in 2 Corinthians 8 in relation to giving. How does Paul connect God's grace, the example of Christ, and the believer's act of generosity?
4. Compare and contrast the motivations for giving presented in 2 Corinthians 8 with other potential motivations for charitable acts. How does Paul emphasize the spiritual dimension and the heart attitude in Christian giving?
5. Evaluate the principles of financial accountability in ministry that can be derived from Paul's handling of the collection in 2 Corinthians 8. Why was it important for Paul to ensure transparency and involve multiple trustworthy individuals in this endeavor?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Apostolic Ministry:** The work and responsibilities of an apostle, particularly in spreading the Christian gospel and establishing churches.
- **Collection:** In the context of these chapters, the fundraising effort initiated by Paul among Gentile churches to support the impoverished Christian community in Jerusalem.
- **Digression:** A temporary departure from the main subject in a speech or writing.
- **Gentile Churches:** Christian communities composed primarily of non-Jewish believers.
- **Jewish Mother Church:** The original Christian community in Jerusalem, composed of Jewish believers.
- **Apostolic Integrity:** The honesty, trustworthiness, and ethical conduct of an apostle in their ministry.
- **Rhetorical Move:** A strategic use of language or argumentation to achieve a particular persuasive effect.
- **Genuineness:** The quality of being authentic, sincere, and true.
- **Interdependence:** The state of being mutually reliant on each other.
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the end times or the final events in the history of the world.
- **Inclusio:** A literary device where a similar word or phrase is used at the beginning and end of a passage, creating a frame.
- **Liberality:** Generosity; the quality of giving or spending freely.
- **Perfect Tense (Greek):** A verb tense indicating an action completed in the past with results continuing into the present.
- **The Beatitudes:** The blessings listed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-12), often involving paradoxical statements about joy in suffering.
- **Voluntarily:** Done by free will; not forced or compelled.
- **Coerced:** Persuaded to do something by using force or threats.
- **Privilege:** A special right, advantage, or benefit.

- **Entreaty:** An earnest or humble request.
- **Zeal:** Great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or objective.
- **Earnestness:** Intense sincerity and conviction.
- **Affluence:** Having a great deal of money; wealth.
- **Recession:** A period of temporary economic decline during which trade and industrial activity are reduced.
- **Socialism:** A political and economic theory advocating that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole.
- **Affliction:** Something that causes pain or suffering.
- **Detractors:** People who criticize someone or something, often unfairly.
- **Vested Interest:** A personal stake or involvement in an undertaking or state of affairs, especially one with an expectation of financial gain.
- **Misappropriation:** The act of dishonestly taking money or property that belongs to someone else and using it for one's own benefit.
- **Above Reproach:** Free from blame; irreproachable.
- **Above Board:** Legitimate, honest, and open.

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5. FAQs on Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 9, 2 Corinthians 8 – Grace of Giving, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on 2 Corinthians 8: The Grace of Giving

1. Why does Paul dedicate two whole chapters (2 Corinthians 8 and 9) to the topic of a collection for the Jerusalem church?

Paul addresses the collection at length because it held significant importance for his apostolic ministry and his relationship with the Corinthian church. While he never personally solicited funds for his own support, he spent roughly ten years organizing this collection. These chapters, though appearing as a digression, underscore a crucial practical aspect of Paul's overall message and serve as a key element in his defense of his integrity as an apostle. Furthermore, this initiative was vital for fostering unity between his Gentile churches and the Jewish Mother Church in Jerusalem, demonstrating the interconnectedness of believers and the transcendence of the church beyond national and geographical boundaries.

2. What were the primary purposes of Paul's collection for the "poor saints in Jerusalem"?

The collection served two main purposes. Firstly, it was intended to provide tangible relief to the believers in Jerusalem who were facing hardship due to a severe famine in the mid-to-late 40s. This act of giving was a practical expression of the global interdependence of Christians. Secondly, the collection aimed to visibly demonstrate the nature of the church as a unified body that transcends national and cultural divides, embodying the gospel truth that in Christ, distinctions like Jew and Gentile are no longer barriers. It also resonated with the Jewish expectation that in the end times, Gentiles would bring gifts to Jerusalem, making it a concrete representation of the inclusive nature of the gospel.

3. How does Paul initially approach the topic of the collection with the Corinthians, and what does this reveal about his pastoral strategy?

Paul approaches the topic delicately and indirectly. He doesn't immediately issue a direct appeal for funds. Instead, he begins by highlighting the "grace of God" that was at work in the churches of Macedonia, who, despite severe affliction and extreme poverty, gave generously and joyfully. He uses the Macedonians' example as a way to gently introduce the subject and inspire the Corinthians. This strategic approach reveals Paul's pastoral wisdom. Having recently reconciled with the Corinthians after a period of misunderstanding, he waits until their relationship is on firmer ground before raising the sensitive issue of money. He also starts and ends this section of his letter by emphasizing God's grace in Christ, framing giving within a theological context.

4. What key characteristics defined the giving of the Macedonian churches that Paul presents as an example?

Paul emphasizes four key aspects of the Macedonians' giving: (1) They gave voluntarily according to their means and even beyond their means, demonstrating a sacrificial generosity. (2) They gave entirely on their own initiative, without any coercion or manipulation. (3) They urgently pleaded with Paul for the "privilege" of participating in this service to the saints, indicating their eagerness and desire to give. (4) They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to Paul, in accordance with God's will, exceeding Paul's expectations in both the amount and the manner of their contribution. Their actions were motivated by God's grace working in their lives, resulting in joy amidst affliction and generosity despite poverty.

5. While using the Macedonians as an example, what even more compelling motivation for giving does Paul introduce to the Corinthians?

Beyond the example of the Macedonians, Paul presents the ultimate motivation for Christian giving: the "generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ." He reminds the Corinthians that although Jesus was rich, he voluntarily became poor for their sake, so that through his poverty they might become spiritually rich. Paul uses the same word, "grace" (charis), to describe both the giving of the Macedonians and the self-sacrifice of Christ, highlighting the divine origin and nature of such generosity. This powerful example of Christ's incarnation and sacrifice serves as the highest standard for Christian giving, urging the Corinthians to emulate this selfless act of love.

6. What does Paul advise the Corinthians regarding the completion of their own contribution, and what principles of giving does he emphasize?

Paul advises the Corinthians to finish the collection they had begun the previous year, praising their initial eagerness but stressing the importance of bringing their good intentions to completion through concrete action. He emphasizes that if the eagerness to give is present, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have. He also introduces the principle of equality and fair balance, where those with abundance share with those in need, ensuring that everyone has sufficient provision. This is not presented as a forced equalization of property but as a way to alleviate the immediate distress of fellow believers, mirroring the provision of manna in the wilderness where everyone had enough.

7. Why does Paul highlight the careful selection and trustworthiness of Titus and the other brothers who are involved in the administration of the collection?

Paul emphasizes the integrity and eagerness of Titus and the other brothers to ensure transparency and accountability in the handling of the funds. He wants to avoid any suspicion or accusation of mishandling the generous gift. By sending a team of trusted individuals, he demonstrates his commitment to doing what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of others. This highlights the importance of financial integrity and stewardship in Christian ministry, emphasizing that leaders should be above reproach in both receiving and disbursing funds to maintain the credibility of the gospel and avoid discrediting the cause of Christ.

8. What overarching lesson about financial stewardship in ministry can be derived from Paul's instructions and actions in 2 Corinthians 8?

A central lesson from 2 Corinthians 8 is the paramount importance of strict honesty and integrity in handling church or ministry finances. Like Caesar's wife, those entrusted with financial responsibilities should be above suspicion, and the manner in which funds are managed should be transparent and beyond reproach. While God knows the intentions and motives, it is also crucial that these appear honest and proper to fellow believers and the wider world. The potential for financial mismanagement to harm the testimony of Christ necessitates a commitment to high ethical standards and, where possible, the involvement of multiple trustworthy individuals in the oversight of financial matters to guard against temptation and ensure accountability.