

# Content - When your cup runneth over

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## BIG IDEA – What to do when our cup overflows

scripture focus - Psalm 23:5 NIV “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”

God pours out His favor in a cup that keeps overflowing.

Imagine the blessings of so much water in your cup that is constantly running over, sloshing out.

It seems hard to handle it when it's so full.

You have choices: **you can consume it**, **you can let it sit there and waste it** or **you can pour it out for someone else**. Yet **God deals in abundance, wanting to give more**. Even as our cup empties, God wants to fill it back up.

**This is where contentment pairs well with generosity.** You could say that generosity is contentment's greatest friend. **When our cup runneth over, we can give some of it away!**

The Apostle Paul, **writing 28 percent of the New Testament in thirteen letters to the churches is spirit-filled, spirit-inspired genius when it comes to explaining deep ideas and experiencing deep change.**

**Remember last week where Paul wrote to actually teach the churches in Macedonia, specifically Philippi, about how he learned to be content with his content?** Well Paul also **used the churches in Macedonia to teach something to the churches in Corinth!**

### **What to do when their cup runneth over!**

To the churches in Corinth, Paul spends 15 verses on the “why to give” and the “how to give.”

**First, he starts with COMPARING them**

And he compares them to churches much smaller, less gifted, less influential.

2 Corinthians 8:1-6 NLT

“Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, **what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia.** They are being tested by many troubles, and **they are very poor.** But **they are also filled with abundant joy,** which has **overflowed in rich generosity.** For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And **they did it of their own free will.** **They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.** They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do. So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and **encourage you to finish this ministry of giving.**”

I am left SPEECHLESS to how much is packed into Paul's words about the Macedonian churches!

### **Who were the churches in Macedonia?**

- congregations in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea (Ac 16–17)

### **Why is Paul comparing these two churches?**

- Corinthians were more affluent than the Macedonians

### **Isn't contentment not about comparing?**

- Apparently, when it comes to loving and giving, it is generally a completion to give your best! Romans 12:10.

### **What's different in the act of giving?**

- **These churches were POOR!**
- **But somehow they are also filled with abundant joy,** which has **overflowed in rich generosity.** It sounds to me like they were the epitome of content!
- **Paul writes that the Macedonia churches were outright GIDDY to GIVE!** He says they “**deomai: begged**” Paul. He then uses two powerful words in the New Testament and **applies them to the attitude behind their giddiness.** Paul says they have the grace and **koinónia: fellowship** ((lit: **partnership**) (a) contributory help, participation, (b) **sharing in, communion**) to **diakonia: service, ministry** (waiting at tables) to be able to give to those in need!

### **Second, Paul appeals to their ego.**

Okay, truth is Paul plays to the church's strengths.

## 2 Corinthians 8:6-9 NLT

“So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving. **Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving.** I am not commanding you to do this. **But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches.** You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.”

Since you excel in so many ways—in your **faith**, your **gifted speakers**, your **knowledge**, your **enthusiasm**, and **your love from us** —I want you to **excel also in this gracious act of giving**. Paul is referring to his introduction of this letter (1 Corinthians 1:4-9 NLT) where he thanked God for their unique gifting.

**Let's just throw in generosity and call it all good!**

**I'm not commanding you to give, but this is a test. Don't you just hate it when your teacher/professor says, "it's up to you to do the reading and research, but I can tell you THIS WILL be on the test!"**

**Third, Paul advises them on generosity.**

## 2 Corinthians 8:10-15 NLT

**“Here is my advice: It would be good for you to finish what you started a year ago.** Last year you were the first who wanted to give, and you were the first to begin doing it. Now you should finish what you started. **Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have. Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have.** Of course, **I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves.** I only mean that there should be some equality. **Right now you have plenty and can help those who are in need.** Later, they will have plenty and can share with you when you need it. In this way, things will be equal. As the Scriptures say, “Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered only a little had enough.””

They started in eagerness; they should finish with the same.

Give:

- In proportion to what you have
- Only give what you have
- Don't give making life harder on yourself

- Those who have plenty can help

These strong words about giving are simply because the Corinthian Churches had the money, they promised to give the money and they were lacking in follow-through. **2 Corinthians 9, Paul gives the most counterintuitive advice about asking for money that I've ever heard.**

**Don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure  
For God loves a person who gives cheerfully**

**It does us no good to give out of guilt, shame, or even duty** (which is honorable). God wants us to **experience the joy of gratitude** in generosity. God desires us to understand that **giving and generosity is very much a part of contentment.**

Later in the letter, Paul writes, "You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And **don't give reluctantly** or in **response to pressure.** "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."

In **2 Corinthians 9:7 NLT** Paul uses these two greek words, **lupē - mental and emotional anguish or grief and anagké** ("In classical Greek many words take their stem from *anank-*. The verb *anankazō* denotes the **outward influence or pressure exerted by someone upon another.** . . . At times there is implied in **anankazō the idea of 'force,' thus it can even mean 'to torture' someone**" (*Liddell-Scott*). The root word **agchó** (to compress, press tight).

**Don't mentally, emotionally stress over giving and certainly do not feel tortured or squeezed to do so.**

Back In 1 Corinthians 8:15, **Paul is quoting from Ex 16:18** and it comes from the Israelites' **first experience with gathering daily manna. God saw to it that those who gathered little had enough and those who gathered much did not have a surplus.** **2 Corinthians 8:15 (FSB): Just as God provided equally for His people then, the Corinthians should look to provide equality among believers now.**

This year we are coming into the biggest spending season ever, one we haven't seen in a long time! All indications are that businesses want our money AND we can't wait to give it to them.

**I can't speak for everyone, but some folks really enjoy spending money.** Plus, much of the money we are **spending is done so to give experiences, playful delight and enjoyment of life and celebration of this season.** **At the root of our SPENDING there are echoes of generosity! And that's good.**

However, when we look at this word CONTENT, we also need to be aware that for some there is abundance and many of us have cups that runneth over.

**We pause to thank God - count your blessings.**

We transfer some of that generous spending thrill to those who are not so fortunate, not experiencing abundance, joy, and overflowing cups. These are folks whose cup has little or is bone-dry.

**Did you know that GIVING MONEY AWAY makes our brains happy?**

Neuroscience has demonstrated that **giving is a powerful pathway for creating more personal joy and improving overall health.**

While the brain is remarkably complex, **the neurochemical drivers of happiness are quite easy to identify. Dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin make up the Happiness Trifecta.** Any activity that increases the production of these neurochemicals will cause a boost in mood. It's really that simple.

**If giving allows us to secrete all the chemicals at once, we owe it to ourselves to give as often as possible!**

I am not saying **GIVE TO GET high.** I am simply following one of the Biblical patterns to **teach and inspire you about giving, about generosity - and it completely fits with being CONTENT.**

Because **Content is to accept as adequate despite wanting more.**

And when you get more. When you find that you're cup runneth over. And there is extra - GIVING is an excellent way to help us maintain contentment.

**Next Sunday, November 20, is our yearly "Thanksgiving Gift" and for over 45 years was celebrated as Miracle Sunday. The building we enjoy was paid for in cash by our church at that time. When interest rates in 1979 were 11.20% and banks wouldn't loan money to a small church of 110 people, Pastor Larry Pyle asked folks to give a "reverse tithe" on November 19, 1978. They would give 90% of that weeks income and trust God to live on 10%! This building was built and dedicated on February 3, 1980 - debt free. We've been debt free ever since.**

**I hope you received the letter explaining the three projects we are raising funds for this year.**

All offerings given on November 20, unless otherwise designated, will be considered a Thanksgiving Offering.

**This year's offering will be directed to three areas:**

- Project number one is **Convoy of Hope**, giving towards the [disaster relief in Florida](#).
- Project number two is [The Gateway Project](#), giving towards house churches, clean water and Champion Centers (special needs children) in Egypt.
- Project number three is [Preborn!](#), giving towards **saving babies and their mothers**, equipping pregnancy clinics throughout the United States.

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## NOTES

My cup runneth over - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My\\_cup\\_runneth\\_over](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_cup_runneth_over)

## Scriptures

### **Psalm 23:5 NIV**

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows."

### **2 Corinthians 8:1-6 NLT**

"Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.

### **2 Corinthians 8:6-9 NLT**

"So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving. Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches. You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich."

### **2 Corinthians 8:10-15 NLT**

“Here is my advice: It would be good for you to finish what you started a year ago. Last year you were the first who wanted to give, and you were the first to begin doing it. Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have. Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have. Of course, I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves. I only mean that there should be some equality. Right now you have plenty and can help those who are in need. Later, they will have plenty and can share with you when you need it. In this way, things will be equal. As the Scriptures say, “Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered only a little had enough.””

### **2 Corinthians 9:7 NLT**

“You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.””

## **Questions**

Q: Who are the churches in Macedonia?

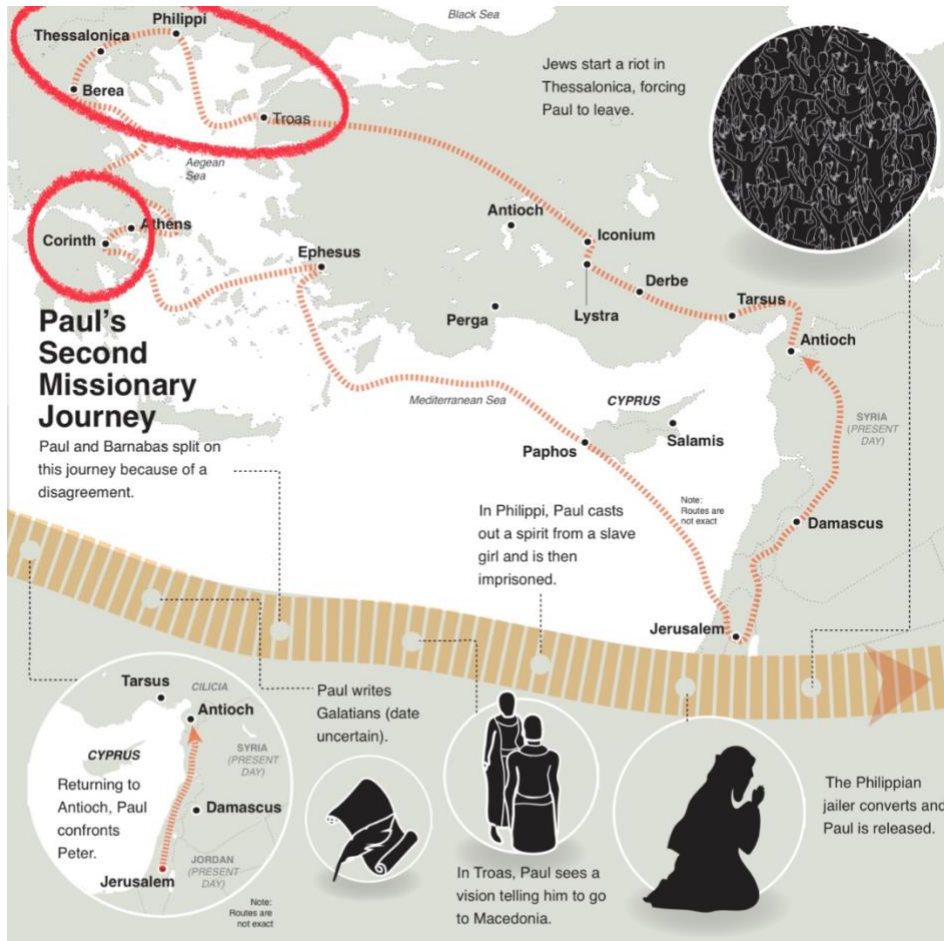
Q: Why is Paul comparing these two churches?

Q: I thought contentment wasn't about comparing. How's giving different?

Q: When it comes to money and generosity, where is the balance of encouraging and inspiring compared to sounding commanding and overbearing? How do you like to be asked to do something that's right and healthy for you?

Q: What are you thankful for?

## **COMMENTARY REFERENCES**



## CSB Study Bible

### 2 Corinthians 8:1–8:

- 8:1 The churches of Macedonia were **congregations in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea (Ac 16–17)**.
- 8:2–3 These churches had been born in affliction (Ac 16–17). Moreover, **they were limited in financial resources; yet these factors had not impeded their giving.**
- 8:4 The same word (ministry) previously used to describe Christian service (4:1; 5:18; 6:3) is now used to describe Christian giving. **Financial stewardship is ministry.**
- 8:5 Here is the key to understanding giving as a ministry. When believers offer themselves wholly to the Lord, they have no difficulty in offering their wallets to him.
- 8:6 **Paul's collection for the Jerusalem Christians had been a long-term project. He had evidently put Titus in charge of at least part of it.** The Corinthians had "been ready since last year" (9:2) to give, but had not completed the task. The recent trouble in Corinth, causing Paul's sorrowful visit and the severe letter, had surely been the major factor. Now that the



Corinthians were restored, it was time to finish the task, but it would only be done the right way if it was prompted by God's grace (v. 1).

- 8:7 The **Corinthians were more affluent than the Macedonians**; therefore they could give more generously, and this is what Paul expected to happen (excel also in this act of grace).
- 8:8 The **generosity of the Macedonians set a challenging standard for giving**. Only love for God by his grace would enable the Corinthians to pass this test.
- 8:15: **The quotation from Ex 16:18 comes from the Israelites' first experience with gathering daily manna. God saw to it that those who gathered little had enough and those who gathered much did not have a surplus**. In the wilderness God enforced this principle of equality (Ex 16:20). Paul calls on the Corinthians to be equitable voluntarily, trusting God that they would have enough.

## **lupē - mental and emotional anguish or grief**

Greek pronunciation [LOO pay]

CSB translation **grief**

Uses in 2 Corinthians 6

Uses in the NT 16

Focus passage 2 Corinthians 7:10

**The Greek noun lupē means pain, grief, or sorrow. The related verb lupeō means to cause pain or to grieve and occurs twenty-six times in the NT (15 of them in Paul's writings; 12 in 2 Corinthians). In ancient Greek both lupē and lupeō could refer to pain experienced by the physical body, but most of the time the terms were used figuratively for mental and emotional anguish.**

Four times in Paul's writings lupē refers in a negative sense to his deep sorrow about spiritual matters, such as Israel's unbelief (Rm 9:2), the pain he experienced because of the attitude of other Christians to his ministry (2Co 2:1, 3), and the sorrow he felt at the near death of a fellow worker in the Lord (Php 2:27). Paul also used lupē to describe the grief caused by sin in the life of a Christian (2Co 2:7) **and to explain that Christian giving should not be done reluctantly (lupē) but by a cheerful heart (2Co 9:7)**. In 2Co 7:10 Paul contrasted the false grief of the world with the "godly grief" that leads to repentance, warning against the notion that any form of repentance is genuine.

### **Faithlife Study Bible**

2 Corinthians 8:1–15: 8:1–15 Paul introduces the topic of the collection for the church in Jerusalem (8:1–9:15). **He uses the example of the Macedonian churches' generosity to encourage the Corinthians to also give generously** (vv. 1–6).

2 Corinthians 8:1: 8:1 the grace of God that has been given Refers to God's kindness and grace as expressed in the generosity of the Macedonian churches. Paul also references the Macedonians' generosity in Romans (see Rom 15:26) Romans 15:26 (FSB): 15:26 Macedonia and Achaia Roman provinces located in modern-day Greece. Macedonia would have included the churches at Philippi and Thessalonica; Achaia would have included Corinth. **Contribution - Paul uses the Greek word koinōnia here; this word is literally rendered as “fellowship” and in this instance refers to joining others via financial support.** The Macedonian and Achaian churches offered financial support for the disadvantaged believers in Jerusalem. Paul hoped that through the collection, Gentile believers could show their generosity and love for their Jewish brothers and sisters. He also hoped that it would promote unity among the believers. See 2 Cor 8–9.

### The New Bible Commentary

2 Corinthians : 8:7–15 The Corinthians urged to excel

7–8 **Acknowledging that the Corinthians excelled in other graces**, Paul urges them to excel also in the grace of giving. However, this urging is not a command to obey—generosity cannot be elicited by command—rather he is using the opportunity which the collection appeal affords to test the genuineness of their love.

### **Paul applies a little help, by sending “the brothers” ahead of him in chapter 9 but insists it’s not to pressure them! (2 Corinthians 9:5-9 NLT)**

“So I thought I should send these brothers ahead of me to make sure the gift you promised is ready. But I want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly. Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. **And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”** And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say, “They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.””

### **The Psychology of giving - the Happiness Trifecta**

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/vitality/201404/the-neuroscience-giving>

Neuroscience has demonstrated that giving is a powerful pathway for creating more personal joy and improving overall health.

While the brain is remarkably complex, the neurochemical drivers of happiness are quite easy to identify. Dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin make up the *Happiness Trifecta*. Any activity that increases the production of these neurochemicals will cause a boost in mood. It's really that simple.

But the benefits don't stop at moods! Serotonin is connected to sleep, digestion, memory, learning, and appetite. Dopamine is connected to motivation and arousal. Oxytocin "the cuddle hormone" is among the most ancient of our neurochemicals and has a powerful effect on the brain *and* the body. When oxytocin begins to flow, blood pressure decreases and the foundation for sexual arousal is built. Bonding increases, social fears are reduced and trust and empathy are enhanced. Oxytocin is also an anti-inflammatory and reduces pain and enhances wound healing.

**So if giving allows us to secrete all the chemicals at once, we owe it to ourselves to give as often as possible!**

### **For even more... Coined: The Rich Life of Money and How Its History Has Shaped Us by Kabir Sehgal**

Kabir writes, "Money also stimulates the brain: The thought of expected gain activates the nucleus accumbens, part of the reward center of the brain." And, "Whether someone hoards \$2,500 or donates it to the Red Cross **may reveal their values, character, and even religious beliefs.**"

Kabir explains how the brain even affects our spending. He writes about people who continue actually spend more money in a recession, because they may have made more money in the past. However they do not take in the idea that prices have increased, wiping out their bump in income.

And most interesting, he writes, "The idea of gaining money is more of a neural stimulant than money itself."

## **Summary Review**

1. Paul starts with COMPARING them to other churches. And, he compares them to churches much smaller, less gifted, less influential.

2. Paul appeals to their ego, playing to the church's strengths.
3. Paul advises them on generosity and how they should give.