

# *Excel in the Grace of Giving!*

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Paul wrote to the Corinthians: *But just as you excel in everything ... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others"* (2 Corinthians 8:7-8).

Paul was comparing the church at Corinth to the churches in Macedonia, whose believers had generously given out of their poverty even beyond their ability. How do you compare? Most of us bristle at the thought of being compared to another, especially in the area of our giving. The idea that the sincerity of our love can be measured by what we give can't be scriptural, can it? With this thought comes the temptation to count some portions of Scripture as less important than others.

This challenge to **excel in the grace of giving** brings discomfort to us, because we know we can't fool God. Does our giving reflect that God is first in our lives, or do we give out of our leftovers? He knows our incomes, and he knows what we're capable of giving. Not too many of us give sacrificially or even generously. God knows our hearts. He knows our frail natures. He knows our struggles. He hears our prayers of repentance and requests for strength and commitment. He forgives, regenerates, and renews our efforts to serve him with all we are and have. May God transform each of us to be more faithful and generous in our giving.

