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# 7 QUALITIES OF A GIVER



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A friend told me the story of his brother's experience one day at McDonald's. He had just purchased a meal for his son and was seated with him at one of those hard plastic booths. The father reached over to sample one of the boy's French fries and said, "Mind if have one of these?" The son gave his father a stern look and said, "No, those are mine." He didn't want to share, didn't want to give even a single french-fry to his dad. Unamused by the boy's reaction, the father had three immediate thoughts about his son...

1. He doesn't understand where french-fries come from.
2. He doesn't realize that I could take all those fries from him or bury him in fries.
3. He doesn't know I can get my own fries and don't need his.

I look at those three observations and see some remarkably astute spiritual lessons:

1. We often fail to see where our things come from, not recognizing the true source.
2. We frequently think that we're in full control of our possessions, forgetting the sovereignty of God.
3. We think that what we have is actually our own, missing the fact that everything is God's and that we need Him but He doesn't need us.

I'm sure that the father in this story wanted a willing heart in his son more than he wanted the boy's french-fries. That's the way it is with God, too: He wants our willingness to see that He is our source, that He is sovereign, and that He doesn't really need anything from us, but He wants us to be willing to give.

Giving is the essence of God Himself, for giving is a pure expression of love. "For God so loved the world that He gave." Giving is right at the core of God's character, and when we give, we reflect that character.

In 2 Corinthians 8, in Paul's description of the Macedonian believers, one thing is abundantly clear: they were givers. Giving was their overarching quality and the way they gave teaches us how to give. Let's learn a few lessons from their example.

## 1. They Gave Sacrificially. (8:2-3)

The Macedonians were poor; yet they were able to sacrifice. It did not lessen their generosity but actually magnified it. Somehow, even in their sparse circumstances they found a way to give. They weren't able to do much, but they gave all they could.



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## 2. They Gave Supernaturally. (8:3)

They gave “beyond their ability” because their giving was empowered and enlarged by God. The fact is, you don’t have to possess large sums of money to be a large giver. God’s Spirit makes it possible for you to give far beyond your natural ability.

## 3. They Gave Joyfully. (8:2)

The Bible says that they gave out of “their abundance of joy...” As 2 Corinthians 9 reminds us, “God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that having all sufficiency in everything you may have an abundance for every good deed.” The grace of God is directly connected with giving. When we fail to see giving as a grace it becomes a burden instead of a blessing.

## 4. They Gave willingly. (8:3)

The believers of Macedonia “gave of their own accord. “They weren’t forced into giving and they didn’t wait to be asked. They saw a need and responded voluntarily. They weren’t drafted—they enlisted.

## 5. They Gave Eagerly. (8:4)

Read the full account and you’ll see that it was the people, not the pastor, begging to support the saints. They were eager to give because to them was a privilege. Perhaps they remembered the word of the Lord, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

## 6. They Gave Unexpectedly. (8:5)

Paul wrote that they gave “not as we had expected.” Paul implies his own reluctance to encourage the Macedonians to contribute since he knew of their desperate poverty. “Grace giving” always has an element of the un-expected.

## 7. They Gave Personally. (8:5-6)

The Macedonians “first gave themselves to the Lord...” They knew that God wanted them before He wanted their gifts, and their giving to others was preceded by their giving of themselves.

I urge you: Give! Not out of a sense of duty, but out of a desire to please the One who gave Himself for you.

