

Principles of Stewardship in First Corinthians 16:1,2 and Second Corinthians 8:1–9

By David P. Kuske

[This is the third in a series of stewardship studies which was presented to the seminary faculty and is being published by faculty resolution. The first in the series appeared in the Spring 1987 issue of the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*.]

In the eighth and ninth chapters of his Second Letter to the Corinthians, Paul discusses at length the offering, or the collection, which the Gentile Christians were gathering for their fellow believers in Jerusalem.

A famine had apparently struck in Judea again, and the Jewish Christians there were in need of help. As Christians in a Jewish community, they were hit especially hard because they were social outcasts in their society. Paul and Barnabas had brought help once before from the church in Antioch (Ac 11:29,30). This time Paul enlists the help of the churches in Galatia, Achaia (1 Co 16:1; Ro 15:26) and Asia (Ac 20:4). These Gentile Christians were prospering, and, as Paul said later in his Letter to the Romans, they had an obligation to help the poor in Jerusalem: “For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings” (15:27).

The Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were in dire need of help. In referring to their situation (Ro 15:26), Paul does not use the word *πένης*, which would have described them as poor people who survived by scratching out a living from day to day. Instead, he uses the stronger term *πρωχός*, which indicates that they were extremely poor, dependent on others for even the basic necessities of life such as food and clothing. Their dire situation explains the urgency Paul expresses as he encourages the Gentile Christians who were enjoying prosperous times to act quickly and generously in aiding their Jewish fellow believers.

In 2 Corinthians 8–9 there are numerous references to an earlier time when the Corinthians had shown that they were ready and eager to take part in this collection (8:6, 10; 9:2). But no mention is made of the explicit directions Paul had given both the Galatians and the Corinthians about getting this gift ready to send to Jerusalem.

It would be best to take a look at those instructions as a prelude to a study of 2 Corinthians 8–9. Knowing Paul’s earlier directives will help us understand some of the things Paul says in those chapters, and it will also give us an indication of why he says them the way he does.

1 Corinthians 16:1, 2

Verse 1

Περὶ δὲ τῆς λογείας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους ὡσπερ διέταξα ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιήσατε.

Now concerning the collection, the one for the benefit of the saints, do exactly what I directed the churches of Galatia to do.

Paul speaks of the collection as a *λογεῖα*. This Greek word refers to a special tax which was assessed for a special reason. Or the term was used to refer to a collection, especially one that was being made for religious purposes. Paul also uses eight other words to refer to this collection. He calls it a grace or gracious gift (*χάρις*, 1 Co 16:3; 2 Co 8:4, 6, 7, 19), a fellowship (*κοινωνία*, 2 Co 8:4; 9:13; Ro 15:26), a service (*διακονία*, 2 Co 8:4; 9:1, 12, 13), a generosity or liberal gift (*ἀδρότης*, 2 Co 8:20), a blessing (*εὐλογία*, 2 Co 9:5), an act of worship (*λειτουργία*, 2 Co 9:12), alms for the poor (*ἐλεημοσύνη*, Ac 24:17) and offerings (*προσφοραί*, Ac 24:17).

Here in 1 Corinthians 16 the focus is on collecting the gift, so Paul uses *λογεία*. Paul was concerned that an organized effort be made to gather this gift in the coming months before he arrived in Corinth (cf v3). The article with *λογεία* underscores that this is a specific or special offering. The repetition of the article followed by “for the saints” states the reason for this offering. A special need had developed, and so Paul urges that a special collection be undertaken, one that was above and beyond their ordinary offerings and one that would last for only a short period of time.

But Paul went further than just encouraging the Corinthians to do something. He also gave them specific instructions how to organize their collection. Paul uses the verb *διατάσσω* in speaking of the orders or instructions he had given the Galatians. This verb refers to the directives which a superior gives to his subordinates. It is the verb used of an edict issued by an emperor (Ac 18:2), an officer instructing his troops (Ac 23:31), a master telling his slave what to do (Lk 17:9), God giving directions to Moses for making the tabernacle (Ac 7:44) and Jesus giving detailed instructions to the twelve when he sent them out (Mt 11:1; cf. Mt 10). Paul had used *διατάσσω* earlier in this letter (7:17) to emphasize that his instructions were those of an apostle of Christ. That is also its force here. The instructions given were not something the Corinthians could treat lightly. They were directives which Paul wanted them to put into practice.

The main verb in the sentence makes this point even more evident. The verb *ποιέω* carries the idea of actually doing something, not just having good intentions (cf. 2 Cor 8:10). The imperative mood commands that there be a doing, and the aorist tense in the imperative mood presses for action to be taken.¹ The *ὡςπερ...ὡτως* *καί* construction indicates the manner in which Paul wanted the Corinthians to carry out his directives. It was to be done in the very same way as Paul had instructed the Galatians to act.

Why does Paul mention the Galatians? These words are not intended to serve the same purpose as the words Paul later addresses to the Corinthians about the Macedonians, namely, as a test of their love (2 Cor 8:1–8). Instead, Paul often stresses the fact that he wanted this collection to be an expression of fellowship on the part of the Gentile congregations with the Jewish congregation in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:4; 9:13; Ro 15:26). The mention of the fact that the Galatians were gathering their collection in the very same way as the Corinthians would help underscore this important aspect of the offering.

Verse 2

κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν παρ’ ἑαυτῷ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὃ τι ἐὰν ἐβόδῳται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεῖται γίνονται.

Every Sunday, let each of you set aside and store at home whatever he gains (that week) so that collections are not undertaken at the time when I come.

The first instruction indicated when the collection was to be taken. It was not to be a one-time collection, but offerings were to be made *κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου*. The *σαββάτου* refers to the first day after the Sabbath, and the *κατὰ* is distributive. So we translate “Sunday after Sunday” or “every Sunday.”

The second instruction indicated who was to take part in the collection: *ἕκαστος ὑμῶν*. Each and every member of the congregation was to take part. The rich were not to excuse themselves because they were giving so much in their regular offerings already. The poor were not to excuse themselves because the little bit they might contribute wouldn’t make any difference.

The third instruction indicated how this special collection was to be administered. Paul commands (imperative mood) each member to set something aside continually (present tense) at home. The *παρ’ ἑαυτῷ* means literally “by, alongside himself,” and so indicates where the money was to be set aside. This seems to imply that the money which each person gave for this special offering was not to be brought to church weekly as their regular offerings probably were. Rather, each person was to continue (present tense) saving it up (*θησαυρίζων*) at home until Paul came. Then all these special individual collections which had grown week by week at home could be brought together, and their chosen representatives would carry their gift to Jerusalem (cf. v32).

Note that Paul urges them to save or store up their gift on a regular basis. If the gift was going to be something other than leftovers, it would require careful thought and planning week by week. And what better time would there be to do this than on that day on which their hearts were fed and warmed by the message of God's love as they gathered for worship with their fellow Christians?

The final instruction indicated what the Corinthians were to give: ὅ τι ἐὰν εὐδοῶται. There are several questions which are raised about this clause. First of all, is the tense of the verb present or perfect? Although the forms without the accent markings are the same, the presence of ἐὰν suggests that it is present subjunctive, used in a general relative clause, rather than the perfect indicative or the rarely used perfect subjunctive. The amount to be set aside by each person was not a fixed amount per week, but would vary according to whatever way (ἐὰν) each person prospered that particular week (iterative present).

The second question involves the meaning of the verb εὐδοῶ. In the passive it means to be helped on the way, to have a successful journey or a journey without difficulty (Ro 1:10). Thus some suggest the meaning here is that each Corinthian is to give whatever he can without difficulty. However, εὐδοῶ is also used in the passive in a transferred sense: to be successful, to prosper, to have plenty (3 Jn 2). Thus it carries the connotation of a person who is living in prosperity.

Heinrich Meyer argues in his commentary that even in its literal sense the emphasis of this verb is not negative ("have a journey without difficulty") but positive ("have a prosperous journey").ⁱⁱ Thus he says that the meaning here is not "let him lay up in store what is possible without burdening himself" but "let him lay up in store at home whatever he succeeds in." The meaning, Meyer says, is that if a person has success in anything, Paul was commanding him to lay up in store what he had gained.

Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich (εὐδοῶ, p 324) translates this clause "as much as he gains," and also suggests that the subject might be a thing such as "business" (i.e., "as much as his business gains"). But to supply a subject such as this seems to be putting words into Paul's mouth, especially since Bauer does not cite any other example which shows that "business" is a subject which can be supplied with this verb.

Wilhelm Michaelis shows that εὐδοῶ was used regularly in the Septuagint for the Hebrew צָלַחⁱⁱⁱ. He also points out that in many instances it is used in a context where God is directly or indirectly the one to whom success is ascribed. When εὐδοῶ is used with a personal subject in the passive, it means "to be successful" (2 Chr 18:11; 20:20; 24:20; 32:30); and when it is used with an impersonal subject, it means "to turn out well" (2 Chr 13:12; 31:21).

Michaelis agrees that at first glance εὐδοῶται in our Corinthians passage seems to be used with a personal subject (taking up the preceding ἕκαστος), but he argues on the basis of Septuagint usage that it is better to take ὅ τι as the impersonal material subject of εὐδοῶται. This, he says, gives the sense of gathering "all that he can" (as much as possible). But it is not at all clear how he gets from the meaning of this verb with an impersonal subject (cf. above, "to turn out well") to the idea of ability expressed with a personal subject ("all that he can"). This suggestion also loses what seems to be a primary emphasis in the Septuagint usage, namely, the idea of success or prosperity which is God-given. It seems better on the basis of Septuagint usage to translate either "whatever he (each one) succeeds or prospers in," using a personal subject, or "whatever turns out well for him (each one)," using an impersonal subject. A translation something like that which both H. Meyer and Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich suggest (e.g., "whatever he gains") seems to be a good English translation of either of these two possibilities.

Whichever of these ways one chooses to translate, one thing is clear from Paul's use of the verb εὐδοῶ. He uses this particular word to remind the Corinthians of their God-given prosperity. They were not just scraping by, but they had been blessed with plenty. Paul has more to say about this in 2 Corinthians 8, where he speaks about the "extreme poverty" of the Macedonians (v2) and the "plenty" of the Corinthians (v14).

Why would Paul want to remind the Corinthians of the prosperity God had given them? Simply because this was also a demonstration of God's grace which it was important for them to consider as they decided each week what to set aside for this offering. God in his grace not only gave his Son to save them, but along with him God also graciously gave them all things (Ro 8:32). As they considered all God had given them, with Jacob they would have to exclaim, "We are unworthy of all the kindness you have shown us!" (Gn 32:10).

Remembering that their prosperity was a gift of God's gracious kindness would also help them to be ready to set aside whatever they gained each week for this special offering for the poor in Jerusalem.

The third problem involves the whole ὅ τι ἐὰν εὐδοπῶται clause. Is it the direct object of τιθέτω θησαυρίζων, or is this clause an adverbial accusative expressing manner? In other words, is Paul instructing each person to set aside what he gained that week, or is each person merely to use what he gained that week as a way of measuring how much to set aside ("in keeping with his income," NIV)?

Luther's rendering, *was ihn gut duenkt*, apparently follows the Vulgate's paraphrase of the Greek ("what seems good to him"). A number of translations take the clause as an adverbial accusative (NIV, KJV, RSV, TEV, NEB). Others take it as the direct object (Jerusalem, H. Meyer, ICC, Expositor's Greek Testament, Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich). There are three syntactical considerations which suggest that it probably is best to take the ὅ τι clause as the direct object:

1. It is simplest to take this clause as the direct object; otherwise there is no object of the main verb in the sentence, and the thought of the transitive verb is left incomplete. The translations which take this clause as an adverbial accusative must add words to supply an object (e.g., TEV, "some money"; NIV, "a sum of money"; NEB, "a sum"). But when an addition changes both the construction and the meaning (as it does here), the addition should be made only if the context compels the addition (which it does not do here).
2. A check of the uses of the verb τίθημι in the NT indicates that its object is always expressed directly or is easily picked up from the clause which immediately precedes its use. For example, in Mark 4:21 Jesus says that a lamp is not brought in to be put under a bowl or a bed, and then he adds, "Don't you put (it) on its stand?" When τίθημι is used in the special sense of "to deposit money" (e.g., Lk 19:21, 22), the object is also expressed, even if it is only τι ("something") which is being deposited (Liddell and Scott, A, 7).
3. If Paul meant to express the manner in which the Corinthians were to measure their giving, one would have expected him to use καθὸ ἐάν to introduce the clause as he did in 2 Corinthians 8:12 ("according to what one has") or with an adverbial clause as Luke did in Acts 2:45 and 4:35 ("in accordance with, in conformity with, corresponding to"), or simply with καθὼς and the indicative as Luke does in Acts 11:29. Any of these constructions would have been the normal way for Paul to express the adverbial idea of the manner of giving. As it is, he used a construction (the neuter accusative ὅ τι with ἄν or ἐάν) which Robertson's *Grammar* shows is always used in the NT as an object clause (cf. p 729 where these passages are cited: Mk 6:23; Lk 10:35; Jn 2:5; 14:13; 15:16; Col 3:17; and our present passage, 1 Cor 16:2).

To summarize: Although this verse has been translated in a way which implies that Paul is commanding each Corinthian to set something aside each week in proportion to his income, the syntax suggests instead that he is telling each person to set aside whatever he gained each week. When we keep in mind the connotation of the verb Paul used, this means that he is urging each of the Corinthians to consider that his success was a result of God's blessing and then to set aside whatever God's blessing had brought him, whatever he gained.

Though we may be loathe to lose this verse as a primary passage for the principle of proportionate giving, it is not actually lost. Even with the ὅ τι clause being an object clause, the verse still teaches proportionate giving since Paul is urging each to give whatever he gained that week (cf. the use of ἐάν and the subjunctive which generalizes). This would mean that those who gained much would give much and those who gained less would give less. There are also, of course, other passages which teach proportionate giving (2 Cor 8:12; Ac 11:29; Mk 12:42–44).

Taking the ὅ τι clause as an object clause is also a plus in one sense. This passage teaches Christians to plan their giving at times in a way that they, like the Corinthians, might not think of doing without some special encouragement. When God lays a special, urgent need before Christians as he did before the Corinthians, Paul's

words suggest that each Christian consider a special kind of giving. For a number of months he might set aside whatever he gains during that time as a contribution to help meet the need which God has placed before him. Even this could not be called sacrificial giving because it would be giving the “plenty” (2 Cor 8:14) which God had given him; but if he acts willingly and not grudgingly (2 Cor 9:7), Paul’s words remind us that this special kind of giving is also pleasing in God’s sight.

One other objection might be raised against this ὅτι clause being taken as a directive by Paul as to what to give. If Paul is telling the Galatians and Corinthians what to give, wouldn’t this verse contradict what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9? Doesn’t Paul indicate several times in those chapters that he is not telling them what to give? Isn’t his purpose merely to encourage them to do something? Much more needs to be said in answer to these questions when we study those chapters. Suffice it to say at this point that there is no contradiction. In those chapters Paul wants to avoid the implication that the Corinthians had to match the Macedonians who gave beyond their ability (2 Cor 8:3). What he does urge the Corinthians to do is merely to give according to what they have (2 Cor 8:11, 12), their “plenty” (περίσσευμα, 2 Cor 8:14). This agrees exactly with what Paul says here in 1 Corinthians.

A directive to people who are living in prosperity to set aside for a time whatever they gain each week will not seem outrageous to the ears of a Christian who remembers the example of the early church in Jerusalem. Those early Christians looked upon everything God gave them as something to be used for the common good (Ac 2:44). “No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had” (Ac 4:32). This same God-given spirit has led Christians of all times to share generously what God has given them, including sharing in a special way when God places a special need before them.

Paul had let the Corinthians know that the lives of people were at stake, the lives of fellow Christians who lacked the necessities of life (Ro 15:26). In such a circumstance his general directive about what to give would not be received by the Corinthians as a legalistic demand any more than his directives about when to give, who should give and how to administer the giving. Since this directive did not spell out a fixed amount to give each week, it still gave them a great deal of latitude. As each person considered his own God-given prosperity and then determined what he had gained that week, the offering would still be what each would decide in his heart to give (2 Cor 9:7). At the same time, this directive, added to the others, surely underscored the urgency Paul wanted them to feel about making this a generous gift (2 Cor 8:20) for their needy brothers and sisters. If by chance there were misunderstandings of any of the directives, Titus would help them to a proper understanding of everything as he started them on the system Paul proposed for this special collection (2 Cor 8:6a).

In the last part of verse two Paul adds the reason for these specific instructions. He did not want collections to be undertaken (γίνωνται) upon his arrival in Corinth. A few, quick collections during the short time he would be with them before he returned to Macedonia on his way to Judea (2 Cor 1:16) would not serve the purpose of the collection. If it was to be a lavish gift (2 Cor 8:20) for the poor in Jerusalem, they needed to store it up week by week over a period of time. And if it was to provide help in the present time of need, it had to be ready when Paul came this time, not when he visited sometime later.

Before we leave 1 Corinthians, there is one expression we should note in verse three. It is one that Paul also uses several times in the first verses of 2 Corinthians 8, which we will take up next. It is significant that Paul also uses this term here in 1 Corinthians right after he has given a number of directives about how he wants the Corinthians to go about gathering their offering. Paul refers to the collection as their χάρις to the believers in Jerusalem. It is their “gracious gift” to their needy brothers and sisters. When all was said and done, it was to be a “grace,” a free gift freely given. In dealing with people whose hearts had been touched by the love of their Savior, he could be certain that specific directions urged on them would not undermine, but rather serve that end.

What do these verses have to say to us in our day? A number of things. We see that Paul urged the Corinthians to gather a special offering, one which was directed toward a special need in the church. Paul saw the need of the Jewish Christians as an opportunity for the Gentile Christians to practice their fellowship with fellow believers whom they did not know and might never get to meet. At the same time it was an opportunity

for the Corinthians to honor God with an offering which was above and beyond their regular offerings. God prepares good works in advance for Christians to do (Eph 2:10), and each time they respond to a need he places before them it is an opportunity for them to express their love for him and for those who are helped by a special offering. These verses assure us that when Christians gather a special offering in such a spirit in response to an urgent need which God places before them, it is a God-pleasing use of their possessions.

These verses also tell us that setting up a system with specific suggestions as to when to give, how to administer the collection and some general directives as to what to give does not in itself lead to giving which has the wrong motivation. It all depends on whether the suggestions are given as legalistic demands and are followed mechanically or grudgingly, or whether they are offered as a way for God's people to accomplish something in "a fitting and orderly way" (1 Cor 14:40) and are undertaken gladly and willingly by a group of Christians who see this as a way to collect a large gift in a short period of time in order "to honor the Lord himself and to show (their) eagerness to help" (2 Cor 8:19).

At the same time we need to be careful that we do not take the directives Paul gives for this one special offering and make New Testament regulations for giving out of them. As with all applications of principles in the New Testament, these verses merely illustrate for us how the general principles of Christian giving were applied in one situation. These verses do not tell Christians of all time that they must have weekly offerings. Nor do these verses tell Christians of all times that in a special offering they must give whatever they gain each week during the time that offering is being gathered. Paul's directives to the Corinthians do, however, illustrate several truths about Christian giving:

- It will help us to have an orderly system so that we plan thoughtfully and avoid giving leftovers as our Old Adam would have us do;
- It is important for Christians who are living in prosperity to remember that the "plenty" they are enjoying is a gift of God's gracious kindness;
- Giving is something in which God wants every Christian to be actively involved, whether rich or poor; and
- Encouraging one another to give generously from all that God has given us is wholesome.

We are not yet perfect Christians; rather, we still must struggle constantly with our Old Adam. Evangelical admonitions to give generously encourage us to evaluate our giving in the light of God's will. If we find greed or selfishness or a lack of trust in God preventing us from giving generously, we know the Old Adam needs to be drowned again by contrition and repentance. Then, as the Word warms our hearts with the message of God's forgiving love for us, our love for him will move us to respond to these encouragements by bringing gifts which reflect a cheerful heart (2 Cor 9:7). And if the leader of a special offering offers some specific directions about how we might gather a large offering in a short period of time to meet an urgent need which God has placed before us, these directions can also help us as they did the Corinthians "to honor the Lord himself and to show (our) eagerness to help" (2 Cor 8:19).

The Follow-up

After Paul had sent his first letter to Corinth, there was an interval of six months or more before Paul wrote the second letter. In this letter Paul again addresses the matter of the collection. Paul had not come to Corinth as quickly as he had planned. The delay had not been arbitrary on his part (1:17ff.). His first letter had called the Corinthians' attention to many problems in their midst. He had delayed his coming in order to give them time to deal with these problems on their own. He wanted to come to them and rejoice with them instead of coming to cause them pain (1:23ff.).

Paul's delay in coming may, however, have been a contributing factor to the Corinthians' failure to follow through on their original eagerness to gather an offering. Perhaps the insinuations of those who were attacking Paul had led the Corinthians to wonder whether Paul would ever come. These opponents implied that

Paul could write a strong letter but that his delay in coming indicated he did not have the courage to deal with them face to face (10:1). The Corinthians may have thought, “Why gather an offering if Paul isn’t coming?”

After explaining the real reason for his delay, Paul assures the Corinthians that he is on his way. He urges them to activate the collection again. But instead of writing only a few verses on the subject, this time he devotes two chapters to this important matter.

The Macedonian offering (2 Corinthians 8:1–5)

Verse 1 and 2

1 Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, 2 ὅτι ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως ἢ περισσειᾷ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεῖα αὐτῶν ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν·

Now I am making known to you, brothers, the gracious gift of God which has been given (and whose results continue) in the congregations of Macedonia, namely, that in a severe testing by tribulation the overflowing of their joy, combined with their down-to-the-depths poverty, overflowed into the unbounded wealth of their single-mindedness.

Paul begins by making known to the Corinthians (γνωρίζομεν ἡμῖν) some things about the way the offering was being gathered in the Macedonian congregations. What Paul is making known to them is expressed in a complicated sentence which begins in verse one and ends in verse six.

The direct object of the verb γνωρίζομεν is τὴν χάριν, and it is followed by two ὅτι clauses and an εἰς τό clause. The first ὅτι clause is a direct object of the verb along with τὴν χάριν. As such it is also an appositive and identifies the gracious gift which God bestowed on the Macedonians. The second ὅτι clause gives the reason why the assertion made in the first ὅτι clause is true. The εἰς τό clause states the result of all the foregoing.

The participle τὴν δεδομένην which modifies τὴν χάριν is attributive. It highlights the fact that the gracious gift Paul is talking about was a gift given to the Macedonians by God (τοῦ θεοῦ). This participle is also in the perfect tense, stressing that God not only had given a gracious gift, but that the result of this giving was continuing to the present time in Macedonia.

As noted earlier, the first ὅτι clause is an object of the verb along with τὴν χάριν, and so it is an appositive to τὴν χάριν. This same construction is repeated in verse nine. The gracious gift which God gave the Macedonians was the attitude with which they undertook their offering. Paul wanted the Corinthians to know all about this attitude because he wanted them to use it as a test in their own situation (cf. v8).

Times were not easy for the Macedonians. They were experiencing tribulation (θλίψεως) of some kind, most likely the continued persecution by the Jews in Berea and Thessalonica (Ac 17:5,13 and 1 Th 2:14f) and by the Roman city officials in Philippi (Php 1:28,30). As a result, their faith was being severely tested (πολλῇ δοκιμῇ). But the word δοκιμῇ does not merely indicate that a testing is taking place. It also signals that the thing being tested, such as a gold coin, has passed the test and is genuine. It was God’s gracious gift that this testing of the Macedonians’ faith did not lead them to give up. Instead, they showed that their faith was genuine by the attitude they displayed in gathering an offering at the very time their faith was being tested.

In his gracious gift God combined two things to make the Macedonians determined to help with the offering. The first was their overflowing joy (ἡ περισσειᾷ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτῶν). When one reads Paul’s Letters to the Thessalonians and Philippians, it is evident these Christians lived continually in the joy of the gospel. They were living examples of James’ exhortation to “consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds” (Ja 1:2). Tribulation did not stifle their joy; instead, by God’s grace, it made them overflow with joy.

The second thing which contributed to their determination to help was their abject poverty. They were not only lacking the necessities of life (πτωχεῖα); they were hitting rock bottom (κατὰ βάθους). How did God use this to contribute to their attitude? First of all, it may have led them to empathize with the people in Jerusalem because they knew what it meant to live in the depths of poverty. Secondly, they very likely were not

bothered by a materialistic view of life which might have prevented them from sharing what they had with others. They were not afraid that sharing what they had might mean that some day they would not have enough left to take care of themselves. They apparently had learned to depend on God for the necessities of life from day to day. They would share what little they had with the people in Jerusalem in the simple trust that God would continue to provide for them in their poverty.

God used this combination of joy and poverty to produce a single-minded determination in the Macedonians. They were set on taking part in the offering even though they might have excused themselves because of their persecution and poverty. Paul wants the Corinthians to know that the Macedonians' determination was not of an ordinary kind; it was extraordinary! Their joy and poverty overflowed (*ἐπερίσσευσεν*) with the result that their single-mindedness (*τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν*) was so rich that it knew no bounds (*εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος*). The word *πλοῦτος* speaks of what is boundless or limitless, usually in referring to wealth. Their determination to help knew no limit, and the next *ὅτι* clause explains the normal bounds through which their single-mindedness broke. They were not limited by what was possible, but they did what was really beyond their ability.

Many translations give the meaning “generosity” to the word *ἀπλότης* instead of “simplicity” or “sincerity” or “single-mindedness.” While “generosity” may make the translation easier in a context which speaks about giving, it loses the unique aspect of the word *ἀπλότης* which focuses more on the attitude of the giver than on the amount he gives. If “generosity” is explained as “generous attitude” rather than “generous gift,” it would come closer to the sense of this word.

Verses 3 and 4

3 ὅτι κατὰ δύναμιν, μαρτυρῶ, καὶ παρὰ δύναμιν, αὐθαίρετοι **4** μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως δεόμενοι ἡμῶν τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους,
(Their single-mindedness was one which knew no bounds) for (they acted) in accord with their ability, I testify, and beyond their ability. (They also acted) on their own initiative, while with great insistence continually begging of us this favor, namely, the fellowship of the special service being rendered to the saints.

Paul continues by giving the reasons why (*ὅτι* clause) he had described the attitude of the Macedonians as a determination which had no limits. This causal clause is an example of the subordination of a clause by *ὅτι* which “is often so loose that only the feeble translation ‘for’ is possible...or an almost consecutive sense ‘so that.’”^{iv}

A verb has to be supplied for the clause. Some suggest bringing “they gave” from verse five to use here (NIV). Another possibility, which amounts to the same thing, is to supply a form of the verb *ποιέω* (to act) since in Greek the verb “to do” may be omitted in lively discourse for the sake of brevity.^v

When the Macedonians gave, it was not something which they did in proportion to what they were able to do (*κατὰ δύναμιν*), such as giving what they gained each week as Paul had instructed the Corinthians to do. Their giving was really more than they were able to do (*παρὰ δύναμιν*) since they themselves were living in abject poverty. Lest this seem to be an overstatement on Paul’s part, he takes an oath before God that what he says is factual (*μαρτυρῶ*).

Furthermore, the Macedonians had acted entirely on their own initiative (*αὐθαίρετοι*). Paul had not directed them to gather an offering as he had directed the Galatians and the Corinthians. Paul had merely mentioned to the Macedonians how happy he was that the Corinthians were eager to help, and this comment alone had stirred most of them to action (2 Cor 9:2).

In fact, Paul seems to have discouraged the Macedonians. This is suggested by Paul’s statement that they kept on begging Paul (present participle of *δέομαι*) that they might also be included in the collection. When Paul apparently answered them that they could surely be excused because they did not even have enough for themselves, their pleas took the form of an insistence (*μετὰ παρακλήσεως*) which would not be denied (*πολλῆς*).

The objects of δέομαι are τὴν χάριν and τὴν κοινωνίαν. The KJV inserts a verb before each object (“*that we would receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship*”). The verb “receive,” however, is a variant found in only a few late minuscules, and the words “take upon us” are an insertion with no textual evidence, as the italics in most KJV Bibles indicate.

Another possibility is that τὴν χάριν could be understood as a synonym for the offering in the sense of “the gracious gift.” Paul does use χάρις with this meaning in verses 6, 7 and 19 which follow and also earlier in 1 Corinthians 16:3. Then the Macedonians would be asking Paul for two things: 1) a part in the gracious gift (τὴν χάριν) being gathered for the Jewish Christians; and 2) a part in the fellowship (τὴν κοινωνίαν) being practiced by the Gentile Christians in gathering this gift. While this possibility is appealing, it, too, requires the addition of words (“a part in”) which are not in the Greek.

The simplest approach is to take the καὶ between the two objects as epexegetical (explanatory). This is what most contemporary translations have done with these words (NIV, AAT, NASB, TEV, RSV, NEB, Jerusalem); τὴν χάριν is understood as “favor” or “privilege” (cf. Ac 25:3), and τὴν κοινωνίαν explains the “favor” or “privilege” the Macedonians were asking of Paul. The Macedonians wanted to fellowship with the other Gentile Christians as they joined in rendering this special service (the article τῆς with διακονίας) to the Jewish Christians in Judea (cf. Paul’s description of the collection in Ro 15:27). The participants were expressing their oneness of faith by this joint effort. The Macedonians pleaded with Paul not to deny them the privilege of joining with the Galatians and Achaïans and Asians in practicing fellowship in this way. How could Paul refuse their plea?!

Verse 5

καὶ οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίζαμεν ἀλλ’ ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν πρῶτον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ.
And (another proof of their single-mindedness was that they acted) not as we expected, but (they did more); their first action was to give themselves to the Lord as well as to us (as they were guided) by the will of God.

The climax of the reasons why Paul could speak of their single-mindedness (or generous attitude) as knowing no bounds was the commitment they made once Paul had given in to their pleas. Their commitment went way beyond what Paul had anticipated (οὐ καθὼς ἠλπίζαμεν). The verb ἐλπίζω here does not refer to directives Paul had given them, such as those he had given the Galatians and the Achaïans (1 Cor 16:2), which he “hoped” they would follow. No, they had begun this collection on their own (ἑαυτοὶ, αὐθαίρετοι), and they made their own commitment. Paul had a good inkling from their insistent plea to take part in the offering that their commitment would be a complete one. But even he had not anticipated how complete it would be. Their first step (πρῶτον) was to commit themselves (ἑαυτοὺς ἔδωκαν) to God as the Lord whom they would serve (κυρίῳ) with their whole heart and soul and mind. This commitment was like that of the widow who gave “all that she had to live on” (Mk 12:44). They were ready to serve God with all, not just some, of their possessions, meager though they were.

The addition of this verse is not an incidental point of interest which Paul mentions in passing. Rather, it is basic to the point toward which Paul is building in verse eight. Eventually Paul wants the Corinthians to use the attitude of the Macedonians as a test in their own situation.

In addition (καὶ), Paul states that the Macedonians committed themselves to Paul and his coworkers (ἡμῖν) since they were the ones who had originated this offering and were presently coordinating it as a joint expression of faith on the part of all the Gentile congregations.

Paul concludes this verse about the commitment of the Macedonians with the prepositional phrase “by the will of God” (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ). Some take this to mean that the Macedonians were recognizing Paul’s leadership in this matter as the will of God since he was an apostle. But there is another possibility, namely, that their whole action was guided by the will of God. This seems to fit better with this clause and the flow of thought in this whole section. The Macedonians’ attitude in all this, especially their recognition that the first thing to be done was to commit themselves to the Lord, was something they knew was God’s will; therefore, it

was also what they wanted to do. With this phrase Paul's thought has come full circle back to the key truth with which he began in verse one. Everything the Macedonians did in regard to this special offering was the result of an attitude which was God's gracious gift to them in their time of trial (cf. vv1, 2).

What a marvelous attitude God gave the Macedonians to motivate and guide them as they planned the use of their possessions! No wonder Paul told the Corinthians about this attitude! No wonder the Holy Spirit had these words recorded so that we also would know about the gracious gift God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia!

The spirit of the Macedonians was an exact replica of the spirit of the widow whose giving Jesus observed and praised (Mk 12:42–44). They were like the widow whose joy in God's salvation, combined with her poverty, made her free of any materialistic concerns and ready to commit first herself and then all she had into the service of the Lord. They were also like the widow because this attitude of the heart led them to bring an offering on their own. Thirdly, like the widow, they gave, not from the leftovers of the abundance God had poured out on them, but from what little the Lord gave them even though they were living in extreme poverty.

Why does the Holy Spirit record examples of God-pleasing giving such as these in Scripture? Simply because they impress on us one of the basic truths of giving: the attitude in heart and mind of the giver is fundamental to God-pleasing giving. The heart that pleases God is:

- One in which giving is a response to his free gift freely given;
- A heart which in spite of persecution or poverty abounds in its determination to thank God also with material gifts for his service;
- A heart which of its own free will gives a generous proportion of what God gave, or for a period of time gives all that is gained or accumulated, or even gives beyond what is able to be given;
- A heart which will not be denied when it is ready to give because, first of all, it has by God's grace given itself completely into the service of the Lord.

We can also learn from these words of Paul what to focus on if we cite the example of one Christian, or of a group of Christians, in speaking to other Christians. It is true that Paul does cite the example of the Macedonians in speaking to the Corinthians about Christian giving. But we must note that what he stresses is not the size of their gift. In fact, he never mentions any amount. It probably was a small amount like the widow's because of their deep poverty. What Paul wants the Corinthians and us to observe is the attitude which God had worked in the heart of the Macedonians and which was the key to the beautiful spirit in which they undertook their part in this offering. It was a spirit the Corinthians had also once had and which Paul in this letter hopes to rekindle in them.

A model for the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 8:6–9)

Verse 6

εἰς τὸ παρακαλέσαι ἡμᾶς Τίτον, ἵνα καθὼς προενήρξατο οὕτως καὶ ἐπιτελέσῃ εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην.

The result (of the Macedonians' single-minded determination and commitment) was this that we have also encouraged Titus to bring this gracious gift to completion among you in the very same way as he earlier had gotten it started.

The determination of the Macedonians to help and their commitment which went beyond what Paul had anticipated encouraged Paul to try to revive the offering in Corinth where it had come to a standstill. The Corinthians had made marvelous strides in overcoming the many problems which had plagued their congregation. Perhaps Paul was wondering whether he should leave well enough alone and say nothing about the collection. But when he saw the spirit which God had worked in the persecuted and impoverished

Macedonians, he was sure that the Corinthians in their renewed spiritual state would respond in a positive way to any words he would address to them about the collection.

The result was (εἰς τό) that Paul encouraged Titus, who had just come with good news from Corinth, to return there. Earlier, perhaps at the time of the arrival of Paul's first letter and its words of chapter 16, Titus had been instrumental in initiating (προενήρξατο) the gracious gift (τὴν χάριν) for the poor in Jerusalem. Since then Titus had been to Corinth again and had been welcomed with fear and trembling (2 Cor 7:15). He had witnessed firsthand the Corinthians' spiritual repentance and renewal (2 Cor 7:9–11). Now Paul urges him to go once more and also (καί) guide this offering to its completion (ἐπιτελέση) in the same way (καθὼς...ὁυτως) as he had initiated it earlier, namely, as a free gift freely given (τὴν χάριν).

Verse 7

ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ, ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε.

Now then, just as you are overflowing in every way—in faith and in speaking and in knowledge and in great eagerness and in the love you have for us^{vi}—please overflow also in this gracious gift.

Paul had described the Macedonians as overflowing in their determination and their commitment. Now Paul lists the ways in which the Corinthians were overflowing. In the prayer of thanks at the beginning of his first letter to them, Paul spoke of how God in his grace had enriched them in their faith (πίστει) in Jesus, in the way they spoke (λόγῳ) about Christ to one another and others, and in the knowledge (γνώσει) they had of him as their Savior (1 Cor 1:4–6).^{vii} When Paul had to admonish them, they showed great eagerness (πάσῃ σπουδῇ) to set things right, and their love (ἀγάπῃ) for Paul made them long to see him again (2 Cor 7:7,11).

But there is one more way that he as their spiritual shepherd urges them to overflow (περισσεύητε). The ἵνα clause in this verse is the equivalent of a soft command. Moule suggests that in English we might use “please” along with the command to catch the idea of a ἵνα clause which is the equivalent of an imperative.^{viii} It is more of an appeal than an outright order. At the same time, however, the ἀλλά which introduces the whole clause is the use of ἀλλά “with an imperative to strengthen the command” (Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, *ad loc.*, 6.) Bauer suggests the translation, “Now then, . . .” The effect of the ἀλλά, therefore, is to indicate that though this is an appeal and not a command, it is a strong appeal.

Titus is returning at Paul's request to urge the Corinthians to revive the collection. Paul's strong appeal to them is intended to make Titus' work easier. This free gift being freely given (ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι) for their fellow believers in the distant land of Judea would be an opportunity for them to put their faith into action in yet another way. “Please,” Paul pleads with them, “please let your spiritual overflowing also include this gracious gift for the poor in Jerusalem!”

Verse 8

Οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν λέγω ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς καὶ τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων· *I am not speaking as if I were issuing a command. Rather, I am saying this as a way of also testing that love of yours by the eagerness of others and finding it to be genuine.*

Paul wants neither what he has said about the Macedonians nor the appeal which he has just made to be misunderstood. He is not issuing an order to them (κατ' ἐπιταγὴν) telling them to do what the Macedonians had done, namely, to give beyond their means. What Paul's whole concern has been and what he has been talking about all along is not the outward gift, but the attitude in the heart of the giver. This he cannot command, but as their spiritual shepherd he does want to lead them to examine their spiritual life in the matter of giving. The goal of this examination is to help them grow so that they might also overflow in giving along with the many other aspects of their spiritual life which are mentioned in the previous verse.

It was the genuineness of their love (τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον) which was to be the focus of this test (δοκιμάζων). Love is the wellspring of everything which the New Man leads a redeemed child of God to do. Love, then, is also the wellspring of all Christian giving. If it is weak or impure, it will stifle true God-pleasing giving. But if it is a self-sacrificing love, a love that needs no reason to love (τῆς ἀγάπης), the giving will be of the same quality. Paul's description of the Macedonian giving combined with a strong appeal was intended to be a test by which the Corinthians could examine the kind of love that they had (ὑμετέρας), the kind of love which lived in their hearts.

Paul wants the Corinthians to ask themselves a number of questions. Was their love one which showed the same eagerness as that of the Macedonians (τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς)? Were the hearts of the Corinthians abounding in determination to thank God by using their material gifts to serve him? Were the hearts of the Corinthians so eager on their own to have a part in the gracious gift to those in need, as well as a part in the fellowship of rendering service to others, that they would insist on taking part even if someone gave them an excuse not to participate? Were the hearts of the Corinthians ready to give freely because first of all they had given themselves totally into the service of the Lord?

As the Corinthians examined themselves by the eagerness which they knew God had worked in others, Paul was sure that they would pass the test and their love would be found to be genuine (τὸ γνήσιον δοκιμάζων). The participle δοκιμάζων is circumstantial manner. Paul is not speaking in the manner of a command but of a test. As was mentioned in verse two, the word δοκιμή or δοκιμάζω implies not only that a test is administered but also that it is passed. Paul's first letter had put their faith and love to many tests. They had passed those tests with flying colors. Where they had been weak and unspiritual, they had repented and amended their lives. Paul was sure it would be the same with this test of their love in the realm of giving. Paul immediately adds the reason why (γάρ) he is so sure of this outcome.

Verse 9

γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ πλουτήσητε..

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: for your sakes, he who lived continually in unbounded wealth impoverished himself in order that you by that impoverishing of himself might have unbounded wealth.

Paul was so sure of the outcome of the test he put to them because the Corinthians knew the incomparable free gift freely given them (τὴν χάριν) by Christ. Theirs was not only an intellectual knowledge but one which they had taken to heart and treasured by faith (γινώσκω vs. οἶδα). As in verse two, the clause is the object of the verb along with a noun. There the clause was an appositive which identified the gracious gift God had bestowed on the Macedonians. Here it is an appositive which identifies the gracious gift God had bestowed on the Corinthians. All that Christ did was not for his own sake, but it was a marvelous demonstration of love and concern which sought only the welfare of the Corinthians (cf. δι' ὑμᾶς and its emphatic position at the beginning of the clause).

As King of kings and Lord of lords, Christ had lived from eternity in a continual state (cf. ὢν, present tense) of unbounded wealth (πλούσιος). But he chose to humble himself and live as man who was poorer than the birds of the air who had nests and the foxes who had holes. He was willing to subject himself to being despised and rejected by men, and he was willing to be acquainted with grief. He allowed himself to be mocked, beaten, whipped and nailed to a cross. He suffered the punishment of God-forsakenness which they deserved. What a sacrifice the Lord made for the Corinthians, giving up a wealth that knew no bounds for total impoverishment (ἐπτώχευσεν)!

And, in turn, what a gracious gift he gave the Corinthians (ὑμεῖς and its emphatic position) by his impoverishing himself (τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ)! He gave them wealth that knew no bounds (πλουτήσητε). They had forgiveness for all their sins. They had peace with God and could come boldly before his throne of grace to seek help in any time of need (He 4:16). They had a living hope and an inheritance that could never perish, spoil

or fade (1 Pe 1:3,4). Heaven was their home, where after their earthly pilgrimage they would live forever with God as his people (Re 21:3).

What a great exchange! What self-sacrificing love! All this the Corinthians knew and treasured by faith. Christ was the Vine and they were his branches. His love was the love they had in their hearts. Therefore Paul was sure that the test he put to them would be one they would surely pass and so also prove their love to be genuine. For this reason, too, he was sure they would also overflow in their response to the appeal he made to them.

Note that Paul's appeal was the first thing he said to the Corinthians after telling them about the Macedonians. This is both interesting and instructive. Although the Corinthians had demonstrated a weakness in the matter of giving by failing to follow through on the collection, Paul did not dwell on their failure. Instead, since he knew that they had repented and had been renewed in many ways in their spiritual life (v7), he decided that what they needed now was encouragement. He was sure that as children of God they would be ready to put the New Man on again also in this area of their spiritual life.

As their spiritual shepherd, Paul did not deal with them as spiritual delinquents who most likely would reject his appeal. Instead, he treated them as Christians who knew by faith the gracious gift Christ had given them. Paul was confident that their love for Christ would awaken a desire in their hearts to express their love for their Savior with the same eagerness as that of the Macedonians. Titus would help them put that love into action by implementing the systematic giving Paul had instructed them to use in storing up their gracious gift.

When we consider what lessons verses six to nine have for us today, several are immediately apparent.

As Paul always did in addressing Christians about sanctification, so also here in speaking to the Corinthians about the matter of giving, he does not use law or gospel exclusively. He gives an example of God-pleasing giving and asks the Corinthians to test the genuineness of their love by it. He urges them to overflow in their response to the gift being gathered for others. And he reminds them of Christ's great love for them.

In sanctification Christians need help in doing two things. They need help in putting off the Old Man and putting on the New Man (Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:5–11) because these two constantly oppose one another (Ga 5:17) in their hearts. We in our day, as Paul did in his, need to use both law and gospel whenever we teach stewardship of money. The law is needed to reveal greed, selfishness and lack of trust in God's ability to provide all our needs; and the law is needed to guide the Christian so that he knows what truly pleases God in the matter of giving. The gospel is needed because it alone provides the proper motivation for God-pleasing giving.

In our day, too, the spiritual leader may be serving as pastor of a congregation more like the Corinthians (needing to be encouraged to more activity in their giving) than the Macedonians (acting on their own and generous in their giving). He may need to remind his congregation that giving is a part of their spiritual life. As he encourages his people to overflow in faith, in knowledge, in encouraging and witnessing, in eagerness to serve, and in love, so also he will encourage them to overflow in gracious gifts of money to support the work of the church and to help the needy, especially those needy who belong to the family of believers (Ga 6:10).

But when he speaks of giving, a spiritual leader does not try to whip people into line by issuing commands. Nor does he begin by dwelling on their former weaknesses or failures in this area. Instead, he may put a test to them which leads them to reexamine the love which lives in their hearts. And where is there a better test to use for this purpose than the God-given eagerness of the Macedonians, the Spirit-inspired test that Paul first put to the Corinthians? The spiritual leader will not present this test to his people as though he were dealing with unbelievers who will react negatively to his words. Instead, he will act in the confidence that his people know and treasure the great exchange Christ made for them.

Therefore, the spiritual leader is also able to act in the confidence that the result of this test in his people will be a renewed determination and commitment similar to that of the Macedonians. When this test reveals sins such as inertia or a materialistic attitude, it will make the Christian determined to put off these works of his sinful nature. As this test opens his eyes to what is truly God-pleasing giving, it will serve as a guide showing how he can put on the New Man in using his income. And then, motivated by God's grace, the Christian will want to give in the way his New Man urges him to give.

Finally, the spiritual leader will not let this renewed eagerness to give go undirected. Rather, in the same way as Paul who sent Titus to help the Corinthians, he will also give that eagerness in his people a practical way to express itself. Once his people have recommitted themselves and all they have to the Lord, they will also want to serve the Lord by taking part in the work which he sets before them to do. This will be true whether they are prospering or living in poverty. They will want to share in any and all joint efforts with their fellow Christians by supporting the work of the Lord at home or in all the world. They will want to join in all the free gifts freely given for spiritual upbuilding (Christian education), spiritual outreach (missions) and charity.

The spiritual leader will not hide these opportunities from his people, but will, like Paul, hold them before his people constantly. He will also help and encourage his people to be systematic in their giving. In doing these things he will help his people bring to completion their desire to honor the Lord with the material possessions he has given them, whether those possessions are many or few.

Endnotes

ⁱ J.H. Moulton, *A Grammar of NT Greek* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963), Vol. 3 [*Syntax*, by N. Turner], p74ff.

ⁱⁱ Heinrich Meyer, *Meyer's Commentary on the NT* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson; reprint, 1983) Vol. 6, p395.

ⁱⁱⁱ G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the NT*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, tr.. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), Vol. 5, pp109-114.

^{iv} J.H. Moulton, *op. cit.* p 318.

^v H.W. Smyth, *A Greek Grammar for Colleges* (Boston: American Book Co., 1920) p946.

^{vi} The translation follows a variant reading (ὅμων ἐν ἡμῖν) which has stronger support since it is represented in Egypt by Aleph and C; in Gaul-Italy by D, Old Latin d and the Vulgate; in Byzantium by the majority of the minuscules, the lectionaries, and the gothic translation; and in Syria by the syriac h. The reading in the text is supported only in Egypt by p46, B and the coptic sahidic and bohairic; and in Syria by the syriac Peshitto.

^{vii} Some prefer to understand λόγῳ as referring to the daily conversation of the Corinthians. The use of λόγῳ in combination with γνώσει in 1 Cor 1:4–6 seems to imply, however, speaking about God together with the knowledge of him. That is also the way it is interpreted here.

^{viii} C.F. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1971) p144.