

The Collection

2 Corinthians 8—9

The Situation	
<i>You started one year ago</i>	¹⁰ And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. ¹¹ So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. (8:10-11)
<i>We are sending Titus and others</i>	[Titus] is going to you of his own accord. ¹⁸ With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel ... ²² And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters ²⁴ So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men. (8:17-18, 22, 24)
<i>Be ready</i>	² for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year ... ³ But I am sending the brothers ... so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. ⁴ Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. ⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction. (9:2-5)

Paul's Arguments		
#1	<i>Macedonia gave generously</i>	¹ We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means ... ⁴ begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints (8:1-4)
#2	<i>Excel in this gift also</i>	we urged Titus that ... he should complete among you this act of grace. ⁷ But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also. (8:6-7)
#3	<i>Jesus became poor that you may be rich</i>	⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. (8:9)
#4	<i>Prove your love is genuine</i>	⁸ I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine ... ²⁴ So give proof before the churches of your love (8:8, 24)
#5	<i>Abundance ought to serve need</i>	¹³ For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴ your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. (8:13-14)

#6	<i>Prove our boasting</i>	²⁴ So give proof ... of our boasting about you to these men ... ² for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia ... ³ But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter ... ⁴ Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. (8:24; 9:2-4)
#7	<i>Give willingly, not reluctantly</i>	arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction ... ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (9:5, 7)
#8	<i>Sow bountifully, reap bountifully</i>	⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully ... ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that ... you may abound in every good work ... ¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way (9:6, 8, 10-11a)
#9	<i>Result in thanksgiving and glory to God</i>	which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹² For the ministry of this service ... is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. ¹³ By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ (9:11b-13)

“For Paul, this wasn’t only about the money. It was another sign that the Corinthians had not been transformed by the Gospel, which is, at its heart, a story of generosity. “For you know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, that even though he was rich, for your sake, he became poor so that through his poverty, you might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

In other words, Paul is telling the story of the Gospel through financial metaphors. Jesus gave up his glorious honor, or wealth, and lowered himself to die like a poor slave. He did this so that other people, impoverished through sin and death, could be exalted and become wealthy through the riches of God’s grace. To be a Christian is to let this story sink deep into your heart and mind, allowing it to transform you into someone who is more generous and more willing to share your life and resources to help others.” (Bible Project)