

A Origin of stewardship:

❖ The example of Jesus

- What is the relationship between God's grace and generosity? (2 Cor. 8:1-2)
- God gave his grace to the churches of Macedonia, and they “welled up in rich generosity” (2 Corinthians 8:2 NIV). And this is the grace of Jesus for them, and for us: Though he was rich, he became poor (2 Corinthians 8:9); he left Heaven to live on Earth; he ceased to rule the universe to become a carpenter; he left a safe place to live in enemy territory; he exchanged his royal crown for a crown of thorns.
- And He did it all out of love for us! (John 15:13; Ephesians 5:2; Galatians 2:20; 1 John 3:16).

❖ The response to the grace received

- Observe the Macedonians' response to grace:
 - (1) They received the grace of Jesus (2 Cor. 8:9)
 - (2) They gave themselves to Jesus (2 Cor. 8:5)
 - (3) They begged for the privilege of helping others (2 Cor. 8:4)
 - (4) In their poverty, they gave beyond their ability (2 Cor. 8:2-3)
- What does this teach us?
 - (1) Gratitude for God's grace (2 Corinthians 9:15). Jesus gave everything for us. Our gratitude is shown in the desire to give ourselves completely to Him.
 - (2) Desire to share God's blessings (2 Cor. 9:11a). We give to others because we first received from God.
 - (3) Sincere love (2 Corinthians 8:24). Generosity is evidence that love dwells in our hearts.

B How to practice stewardship:

❖ Proper planning

- Paul's proposed plan was to collect a special offering from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia (the province where Corinth was located) to help the church in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:26).
- When the apostle proposed the plan in Corinth a year earlier, it was received enthusiastically, although no specific goals were set at that time (2 Cor. 9:1-2). However, each member resolved in his heart to donate a specific amount (2 Cor. 9:7a).
- When planning the offering, each family should evaluate itself and set realistic goals, in accordance with its financial condition.
- Another point Paul includes in his plan is that they shouldn't wait to hand everything over at once, but rather set aside a little each week until they reach the proposed amount (1 Cor. 16:2). This way, when Paul arrives, the entire collection can be joyfully gathered (2 Cor. 9:3-5).

❖ A correct attitude

- To encourage the Colossians' generosity, Paul gives them the example of Macedonia. In those churches, the brothers had shown a proper and exemplary attitude in giving their offerings, for they gave...
 - (1) with joy (2 Cor. 8:2a). They felt happy to be able to give
 - (2) with generosity (2 Cor. 8:2b). Their poverty was not an obstacle
 - (3) with pleasure (2 Cor. 8:3). They did it willingly and spontaneously.
 - (4) as a privilege (2 Cor. 8:4). This act allowed them to show their love for God and the church
 - (5) as an act of consecration (2 Cor. 8:5). His surrender to God resulted in his surrender to others

C Stewardship results:

❖ The unity of the church

- The offering that was taken to Jerusalem had other positive effects (2 Cor. 9:12).
- Jews and Gentiles were bound together by ties of help and gratitude (Rom. 15:26-27). In this way, the apostle's ultimate goal was achieved: unity in the church.
- Another positive effect is that the way the offering was handled has a special lesson for us today: everything must be done in an orderly fashion, and following the correct procedures.
- Paul appointed Titus to oversee the collection, and the churches appointed brothers to assist him in this task (2 Cor. 8:16-24). There was no other proper way to collect and send the offering to Jerusalem.