

# 2 Corinthians 8:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

## Analysis

**But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality**—Paul introduces *ex isotētos* (ἐξ ἰσότητος, 'out of equality/fairness'), a revolutionary economic principle. The phrase *to hymōn perisseuma* (τὸ ὑμῶν περίσσευμα, 'your surplus/abundance') should address *to ekeinōn hystērēma* (τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα, 'their deficiency/lack'). But Paul adds reciprocity: *to ekeinōn perisseuma* ('their surplus') might someday supply *to hymōn hystērēma* ('your lack'), creating *isotēs* (ἰσότης, 'equality').

This isn't communism (forced redistribution) but *koinōnia* (voluntary sharing). Paul envisions mutual aid: today Corinth has material abundance and Jerusalem has lack; tomorrow circumstances might reverse. Jerusalem possessed spiritual riches—the apostles, earliest gospel witness, Hebrew scriptures—already shared with Gentiles (Romans 15:27). The double use of *isotēs* (beginning and ending the verse) emphasizes God's design: not identical outcomes, but reciprocal care where abundance and lack balance through voluntary exchange. This transforms charity into partnership and recipients into future givers.

## Historical Context

The principle of *isotēs* had precedent in Jewish Jubilee laws (Leviticus 25) where periodic redistribution prevented permanent poverty. Paul adapts this to Christian

community: not through land redistribution but through voluntary, Spirit-led generosity. The early Jerusalem church practiced radical sharing (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-35), though that experiment had limits (evidenced by later need). Paul seeks sustainable mutual aid, not unsustainable communalism.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does the principle of reciprocal aid ('equality') differ from charity that creates dependency?
2. What spiritual riches have you received that obligate material generosity in return?
3. How might your current 'abundance' supply others' 'lack,' anticipating future reversal?

## Interlinear Text

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ἀλλ'	ἐξ	ισότης	ἐν	τῷ	νῦν	καιρῷ	τό	ὑμῶν
<b>But</b>	<b>by</b>	<b>an equality</b>	<b>at</b>	G3588	<b>that now</b>	<b>this time</b>	G3588	<b>your</b>
G235	G1537	G2471	G1722		G3568	G2540		G5216
περίσσευμα	εἰς	τό	ἐκείνων	ὑστέρημα	ἵνα	καὶ	τὸ	
<b>abundance</b>	<b>a supply for</b>	G3588	<b>their</b>	<b>want</b>	<b>that</b>	<b>also</b>	G3588	
G4051	G1519		G1565	G5303	G2443	G2532		
ἐκείνων	περίσσευμα	γένηται	εἰς	τὸ	ὑμῶν	ὑστέρημα		
<b>their</b>	<b>abundance</b>	<b>may be</b>	<b>a supply for</b>	G3588	<b>your</b>	<b>want</b>		
G1565	G4051	G1096	G1519		G5216	G5303		
ὅπως	γένηται	ισότης						
<b>that</b>	<b>may be</b>	<b>an equality</b>						
G3704	G1096	G2471						

## Additional Cross-References

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**Acts 4:34** (Parallel theme): Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

**2 Corinthians 9:12** (Parallel theme): For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

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