

# 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 ισότητος, 'out of equality/fairness'), a revolutionary economic principle. The phrase *to hymōn perisseuma* (τὸ ὑμῶν περίσσευμα, 'your surplus/abundance') should address *to ekeinōn hysterēma* (τὸ ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα, 'their deficiency/lack'). But Paul adds reciprocity: *to ekeinōn perisseuma* ('their surplus') might someday supply *to hymōn hysterēma* ('your lack'), creating *isotēs* (ισότης, '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 γένων  
But by an equality at G3588 that now this time G3588 your  
G235 G1537 G2471 G1722 G3568 G2540 G5216

περίσσευμα εἰς τό ἐκείνων ὑστέρημα ἵνα καὶ τὸ<sup>3</sup>  
abundance a supply for G3588 their want that also G3588  
G4051 G1519 G1565 G5303 G2443 G2532

ἐκείνων περίσσευμα γένηται εἰς τὸ γένων ὑστέρημα  
their abundance may be a supply for G3588 your want  
G1565 G4051 G1096 G1519 G5216 G5303

ὅπως γένηται ισότης  
that may be an equality  
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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