

2 Corinthians 8:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

Analysis

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God—Paul expected financial contribution; the Macedonians gave something more foundational: *heautous edōkan prōton tō kyriō* ('themselves they gave first to the Lord'). The adverb *prōton* (πρῶτον, 'first') indicates priority: self-consecration precedes fiscal contribution. Only those who have offered themselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1) can give money without idolatry.

The phrase *dia thelēmatos theou* (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, 'through the will of God') attributes even their submission to Paul's apostolic ministry to divine initiative. This verse establishes crucial sequence:

1. surrender to Christ
2. submission to godly leadership
3. sacrificial financial giving.

Attempts to give money while withholding the self produce either legalism or manipulation. The Macedonians avoided this trap by recognizing that all Christian action flows from prior divine grace and self-giving.

Historical Context

Paul's surprise ('not as we hoped') suggests he initially sought only financial contributions. The Macedonian churches' total consecration—lives, loyalty, and

livelihood—exceeded his expectations and modeled the holistic devotion Paul preached. This contrasts sharply with the Corinthian church's tendency toward factionalism, where members gave loyalty to human leaders (1 Corinthians 1:10-13) rather than first to Christ, then to Christ's appointed servants.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Have you given yourself fully to the Lord before attempting to give your resources?
2. How does the sequence—self, then money—prevent both stinginess and manipulation?
3. What areas of your life remain unoffered to God, limiting your generosity?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	οὐ	καθὼς	ἐλπίζαμεν	ἀλλ'	ἐαυτοὺς		
And	this they did not	as	we hoped	but	their own selves		
G2532	G3756	G2531	G1679	G235	G1438		
ἔδωκαν	πρῶτον	τῷ	κυρίῳ	καὶ	ἡμῖν	διὰ	θελήματος
gave	first	G3588	to the Lord	And	unto us	by	the will
G1325	G4412		G2962	G2532	G2254	G1223	G2307
θεοῦ							
of God							
G2316							

Additional Cross-References

Romans 12:1 (References God): I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 6:13 (References God): Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

2 Corinthians 8:1 (References God): Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

2 Chronicles 30:12 (References God): Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD.

1 Chronicles 12:18 (References God): Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.

1 Samuel 1:28 (References Lord): Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.