

December 3 Answers

- 1) Paul now addressed the issue of raising **funds** for the impoverished churches in Judea. Paul's comments here contain many principles on giving and good works. *First, the way Paul spoke to the Corinthians about completing their collection teaches us:* (1) Good works are acts of **grace**, and the desire to do them comes from the working of the **Spirit** in our lives. (2) God's will is for us to **complete** the good works which the Spirit has put in our hearts to do. Initial enthusiasm is not a substitute for **persistence** and determination. (3) An unfinished good work can call our love and sincerity into question, and it can also be an **embarrassment** to the cause of Christ. We must never allow **laziness** or **busyness** to keep us from completing these acts of grace. *Second, the reasons Paul gave for having a generous spirit teach us:* (1) The basis for giving is the **example** of Jesus Christ. (2) Being able to contribute to the needs of the saints is a **privilege**, for when we give to them, we're really giving to Jesus. (3) Our willingness to give **cheerfully** and enthusiastically is more important than the **amount** we're able to give. (4) We're free to give whatever we decide in our heart, but we should remember that "whoever sows bountifully will also **reap** bountifully" (2 Cor 9:6). *Finally, the comments Paul made on material blessings teach us:* (1) God gives financial resources to us, not so we can focus on pleasing ourselves, but so that we're able to give to **others**. (2) There will be times when we have an abundance and times when we're in **need**. When we have an abundance, we should rejoice in the opportunity to **give** to those in need, and when we're in need, we should **welcome** the gifts of others who are blessed by giving to us. (3) The more we're generous toward others, the more God's **grace** will abound in our lives!