

**Romans 15:25-33 and 2 Corinthians 9:8-14**

The purpose of going to Jerusalem was **to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem** (v. 26). This occupied Paul greatly during the latter years of his third missionary journey. He made frequent reference to it in his letters to churches in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia (1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8:1ff.; 9:2, 12; also Acts 19:21; 20:22). Whatever the causes, Paul shows no interest in rehearsing them. His response was ministry, not analysis, endeavoring to unite the church in charity (lit., *koinōnia*), **for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem** (v. 26) (James Edwards, 1991).

*First, one of the reasons why the church in Judea was poor seems to be that in their first flush of enthusiasm for the gospel they had done what some other renewal movements of their day had done. They pooled their property, selling farms and fields and putting the money into common possession. But now, following a famine, and no doubt facing hostility from their own fellow Judaeans who rejected the gospel and resented their allegiance to it, they were in dire need. Meanwhile Paul, as part of his regular Christian teaching, had been instructing Gentile communities, not to sell out and have a common purse, but to look after one another's physical and financial needs from within communities where, it was assumed, some would continue to own houses and businesses and be in a position to help others. The same theology underlay both patterns—self-giving of God in Jesus as the pattern and model—but the practice was different. Paul was in a position to help the churches in Judaea, whose early experiment in generosity appears to have failed, although no real fault of their own (N.T. Wright, 2004).*

**Next week: Family Relationships, Romans 16:1-16**

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**October 29, 2017**

## Generosity of Heart

*At the core of the Gospel is God's generous love for those who were not only undeserving but also in active opposition (Romans 5:10) Even if we think we are correct in seeing certain others as in the wrong (we should always be aware of our own biases), they might just be the very people we are called to help. (N.T. Wright, 2004).*

- Is my love for Jesus passionate?

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- Am I growing closer to Him?

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- In prayer, do I linger—to enjoy His presence—and listen?

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- Does Jesus' love for all people impact my relationships?

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- What is my financial obligation to God?

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- What is my financial obligation to fellow believers?

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- How is generosity demonstrated in Romans?

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- How does my gratitude to God impact my church?

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