

# GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

**STUDENT LESSON** by Tim Rose | Youth Pastor, First Baptist Odessa

Today I would like you to join me in 2 Corinthians 8. I encourage you to read 8:1-7 and ask the Holy Spirit to bring you greater understanding of this passage and to show you how you can give above and beyond.

In this passage, Paul encourages the church in Corinth by telling them about the miracles of God through the church in Macedonia. Paul tells the Corinthians that the Macedonians have given to him and the other apostles. Even though the Macedonians were poor and persecuted, they gave above what they could. This meant that the Macedonians not only gave enough for their church, but they also gave to Paul and the saints.

Paul says that the Macedonians gave extra because they first gave themselves to God and then by His will to Paul. The Macedonians' example shows how anyone can give above and beyond; they must first give themselves to God and then follow God in giving themselves to others.

So how do we give above and beyond in generosity? It begins with us giving ourselves first to God. Before we can tithe and give generously, we must first give ourselves to God and trust Him that He will take care of us as we give up some of our resources. When we fully trust God to supply our needs, even though it will hurt our comfort to give our resources to Him, we know that He will take care of us.

Additionally, we then must give even more than what simply hurts. The Macedonians would have surely given up meals, comforts, and other things to help Paul and the saints. For us to be giving above and beyond, we must find the point that it does not make sense to give and then give past that. This might mean we don't know exactly where money for each meal may come from or that we might not give amazing gifts to one another but instead support kingdom work in the world.

Ultimately, the Macedonians' decision to give above and beyond was them valuing the growth of the kingdom over the growth of their own personal kingdoms and comforts. If we want to give above and beyond, we likewise must make the decision that growing God's kingdom is more important than our comforts.



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For you students, one of the blessings of God is that there are multiple ways you can give above and beyond with both your money and time. With your time, you can find numerous opportunities through your church and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention to travel around the state of Texas and even outside of Texas to share your faith and grow the kingdom of God. Short-term mission trips allow you to help other churches grow and people to be saved. These trips are a great use of your time when they are available. For money above your tithe, there are excellent opportunities to give above and beyond through local entities and special offerings. Baptist churches in Texas have yearly offerings that go to missionaries in North America (Annie Armstrong Easter Offering), international missionaries (Lottie Moon Easter Offering), and missions across the state of Texas (Reach Texas Offering). All these offerings go directly to help grow God's kingdom in those specific places.

All of these examples are opportunities for you to go above and beyond in giving, but above all, you must decide that God's kingdom is the most important thing in your life. Based on his description of the Macedonians, Paul is impressed that the Macedonians in their poverty gave extraordinarily. Therefore, even if you don't make a ton of money and live in a mansion, you too can give greatly and make an extraordinary kingdom impact because God can do far more with a faithful giver than we can even understand.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. How do you regularly give to your church through your money and time?

**Follow-up Question:** If you don't give in both of those ways, what is preventing you from doing so?

2. How much do you trust God to take care of your finances and time?

**Follow-up Question:** What are some examples of ways that you have trusted God with your finances and time?

3. How would you respond if God asked you to give up one meal a week to do ministry somewhere else in the world?

4. Before reading this passage, would your life show that God's kingdom was most important or your own?

**Follow-up Question:** Would you give up your comforts (television, phone, movies, fun events, etc.) so that ministry could be done in another part of Texas?

5. Look up each of the three offerings mentioned and tell the differences between where the ministries each take place.

6. Upon reading this passage, how will you make God's kingdom most important in your life?