

INTRO: John D. Rockefeller supposedly was once asked “How many banks in all do you intend to own?” Apocryphal reply: “One more.” A questionable story; he was a philanthropical man; illustrates attitude of many re: money.(more) Text tells true story about money.

## I. A STORY THAT I FIND INTERESTING

### A. A Christian congregation at Corinth

1. isthmus and Peloponnesian Peninsula; two seaports; our cruise on Mediterranean; Paul’s shipwreck experience; port, transfer costs
2. founded by Paul on missionary journey; made tents there with Aquila and Priscilla; Roman colony
3. mixture of peoples; prosperous city (statues; marble pavement)
4. also a sinful city; prostitution, extortion, graft (follow the money)
5. yet, believers in sacrifice of Christ for redemption!

### B. A congregation with lots of problems (why I taught it in Ghana)

1. doctrinal: abuse of tongues; women’s role; Communion
2. moral: drunk at Communion; man with father’s wife (tolerant)

### C. Participating in an inter-congregational offering

1. famine among Jerusalem Christians; mother church
2. previously advised to follow 1 Cor.16:2 “on the first day of the week
3. many European, Asia Minor churches participated
4. apparently neglected at Corinth for six months

### D. Hearing about Macedonians’ sacrificial giving

1. Paul talks about another congregation!
2. their extreme poverty, yet wealth of liberality
3. v.3 – gave beyond their means (How is this done! Widow’s mite?)
4. v.4 – begging for favor of taking part!
5. v.5 – first gave selves to the Lord
6. IMO, most congregations don’t have a money problem... heart...

### E. Corinthians exhorted by Paul to complete the venture

1. v.10 – complete what you started
2. Acts 20:4 tells of group from Corinth traveling to Jerusalem
3. Rom.15:26 also says they did so; Macedonia and Achaia provinces

## II. AN EXCELLENT INSTRUCTION, THEN AND NOW

### A. using Christians as examples for other Christians (bible is examples)

1. Macedonians could have said, "somebody should be helping us; we need it more here"
2. who says, "My offerings are nobody else's business?"
3. let your light so shine... glorify your Father... (Matt.5:16)
4. one way or another, you are an example: selfishness, liberality; light under bushel, on lamp stand

### B. Prompting one to look at himself realistically (v.7)

1. excelling in faith, speech, knowledge, diligence
2. I personally know here "In your love for us"
3. see that you excel in this gracious work, also
4. offering is part of worship; has been so since Abel, Moses; worship hasn't seemed right without passing the offering plate!

### C. Teaching only the proper motive of love (v.9)

1. as was motive of Father (John 3:16) and Son (greater love hath....)
2. grace moved Jesus to offer supreme sacrifice; all starts with Christ
3. He who was rich, became poor; we love because He first loved us
4. love begs to give, first giving self to the Lord
5. an act of putting God first; 1<sup>st</sup> commandment
6. give tithe before rent or groceries

### D. Offerings as evidence of love's genuineness

1. v.8 not as a command, law; it's evidence
2. 'put your money where your mouth is' 'follow the money'
3. a visible and tangible thank you note to God
4. as is every gift sincerely given to one whom you love

### E. Always producing results (vv.12, 14)

1. especially as the readiness is there
2. v.12 – according to what a man has (love, money)
3. supplying another's wants/needs
4. gladdening the heart of the giver (as Grandparents know when they give gifts to children/grandchildren; like to watch expressions)

CONCLUSION: (v.7) Now as you abound in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us - see that you abound in this grace also. Amen.