

Risë Rafferty – Attitude
Monday – September 9, 2026

2 Corinthians 8:1–5

“We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia (a story of grace and the effect it can have in human lives) ²for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.”

the believers in Macedonia despite their severe affliction have an abundance of joy, in spite their poverty are abundantly generous – willingly gave sacrificially, beyond their means, I imagine Paul saying to them – no no you don’t need to give so much! but they earnestly beg Paul and Timothy to accept their offering for the relief of others.

What makes people like that? the Macedonians’ - to give with such generosity?

1. The effect of grace on the human heart
2. Crazy joy that comes from receiving grace of God
3. They gave themselves first to the Lord
4. Giving themselves to one another

Before we give ourselves to the Lord, the carnal heart thinks that him who’s got the money is king. That having \$ is superior to not having \$.

When we give ourselves to the Lord, something changes: our attitude changes – incl our attitude towards money. Because money has been our god. When Christ becomes our God then:

- Christ becomes our security- not the money in the bank,
- Christ provides for all my needs- not my monthly paycheck,
- Christ is my exceedingly great reward, inheritance – not investments or retirement
- when ... then I freely give because I have freely received.

Macedonians experience this radical shift. The Macedonians had received the most precious commodity on planet – more valuable than gold or Bugatti Divo sports car. You think \$ makes you happy?

Haven’t tried Macedonian joy- deep abiding joy – erupting within them spilling over enabling them to give themselves not only to God but to each other. *And their unselfish liberality intensified– multiplied ... unselfish liberality is a miracle of grace*

Ultimate community, family, so beautiful- true utopia- result of experiencing grace

Ro 12:8 – according to the grace that is given us ... show mercy with cheerfulness

2 Cor 9:7- God loves (a ga peh o) a cheerful giver- **God’s love cheerful giver** –what makes a cheerful giver is God’s love. He loves first and the result is cheerful giving

v. 8-And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you always having all sufficiency... may abound to every good work
Ro 5:3 - we have access to grace... and rejoice

Many people see the Christian experience as a bunch of blah blah blah, theological correctness, standing for the truth, combative and legalistic
But what about joy?

Joy to the world the Lord is come
The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hid in a field and when a man finds it – for joy he goes and sells all and buys the field
Enter into joy of the Lord
Jesus said, These things I have spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full (Jn 15:11)
Ask and you will receive so your joy will be full (Jn 16:24)
Jesus' prayed "that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves" (Jn 17:13)

Better living/support group class –motivation, follow through, will power
Seeking to inspire the participants to do things they don't want to do – don't feel like doing: I want to eat, but I'm not going to, I don't want to exercise but I'm going to do it anyway...
anterior mid cingulate cortex - strengthened by doing hard things – doing things we don't want to do.

Provides physiological explanation of the Biblical truth of how suffering produces endurance (Ro 5:3), trying/testing produces patience (Ja 1:3),
Smaller in obese people – gets bigger when they diet – larger in athletes, esp large in people who overcome some challenge
Here I am using the drill sergeant approach – you don't want to exercise? Do it anyway!

One of the participants asked what about joy? Does joy affect motivation, will power?
Joy activates the anterior mid-cingulate cortex too! Joy has the power to promote motivation and the ability to do hard things.

Look to Jesus Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame –Jesus didn't want to go to the cross- praise God He did it anyway. Jesus gave Himself to us.

The Macedonian Christians gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God they gave themselves to others – this is the secret of their joy and generosity.

God bestows upon us grace. He fills us with His love and we respond by giving ourselves to Him. the power of the enemy over our life is broken. The heart that receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and gives us the capacity to truly love our fellow man.

we have received the priceless gift – yearn for others to drink from that same fountain which revived and strengthened us. When we give ourselves to God we become a blessing to each other- we enter into partnership with heavenly beings COL373

if we are grudging givers – go back to the fountain – drink deeply and freely

if you're struggling with generosity – doesn't matter whether we are rich or poor – to give go back to the fountain

not only activate the brain's reward system but also

Joy acts as a powerful motivator, encouraging individuals to do hard things like giving more than your means.

Experiencing joy can improve concentration and productivity, allowing individuals to perform difficult tasks more effectively.

Joyful states foster creativity and innovation, enabling better problem-solving and idea generation.

Joy contributes to greater resilience, helping individuals cope with challenges and setbacks.

A joyful mindset encourages perseverance, as individuals are more likely to stay committed to their goals when they feel positive

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Better living/support group class – struggle with motivation, follow through –

anterior mid cingulate cortex—where motivation and will power is a primary function

We listened to a couple neuroscientists discuss how this part of the brain is strengthened by doing hard things – doing things we don't want to do, doing hard things

It can get shut down – neutral, sometimes through trauma, painful life experiences I don't feel like getting out of bed so you don't. Yet what can re engage it is doing something you don't want to do.

Seeking to inspire the participants to do things they don't want to do – don't feel like doing: I want to eat, but I'm not going to, you don't want to exercise? Do it anyway!