

**“FIRST A WILLING MIND”**  
**2COR.8:11,12**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The importance of having “a willing mind” or “readiness to will” is the object of this study. That’s the emphasis in 2Cor.8:11,12.
2. No matter how large or small the contribution, a willing mind determines its acceptability with God.
3. The “Widow’s Mite” (Mk.12:38-44) is a case in point illustrating and embodying the force of Paul’s statement in v.12. As small as it was, it was readily accepted on the basis of two important scriptural principles:
  - (1) It was of “a willing mind”
  - (2) It was “liberal, and or sacrificial giving”
4. The following truths stand out in our text of 2Cor.8:11,12.

**II. DISCUSSION**

**A. FIRST, ACCEPTABILITY OF ANY GIFT OR OFFERING TO GOD DEPENDS ON THE “READINESS TO WILL” OR THE “WILLING MIND,” VV.11,12.**

1. This is what we might call **THE RULE OF ACCEPTANCE**. Cf. 2Cor. 9:5-7.
2. The doctrine is this: That of the disposition of the heart, not the doing of the hand alone. The motive is the soul of the deed. Cf. 1Cor.13:1-3; Psa.51:17; 34:18; Mt.5:3,4.
3. Both the Macedonians and the Corinthians met this criteria – that of a “willing mind” and “a readiness of will”. Cf. 2Cor.8:3,4,11; 2Cor.9:1,2.
4. If there is first a willingness on man’s side, then, and only then, there is an acceptance on God’s side, “according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not,” v.12.
  - a. V.12 is simply stating in a different manner what is taught in 1Cor.16:2: give “as God hath prospered” you.
    - (1) Give “out of that which you have”
    - (2) “And not according to that he hath not” , or,
    - (3) “And not according as he hath not”
  - b. V.13 follows with further explanation of the latter part of v.12: “For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened”
    - (1) Again, he simply reiterates it in still a different way.
    - (2) While, on the one hand, I have taught you and urged you to give liberally as you have been prospered;

- (3) On the other hand, I do not wish that you, or teach that you, distress or overly burden or impoverish yourselves to set others at ease, or have their wants supplied!
- (4) Certainly, God is just in his requirement; so am I: “I do not wish...” (which is to be expected since he is guided by the Holy Spirit, 1Cor.14:37; 7:40; 2:12,13).
- 5. The thing which gives any value to the gift in God’s sight is *the willing mind* .
  - a. Men estimate gifts by their money value.
  - b. God estimates gifts by their “will” value.
- 6. Unless “the willing mind” go before and be evident before God’s eye, the rest counts for nothing. Cf. The Widow’s Mite story, Mk.12:38-44.
  - a. It must infuse gift and service with its own quality.
  - b. If this spirit of the deed be absent, all else is a dead thing to offer to the living God.
  - c. All the silver and gold are his; he neither needs nor cares for our money, nor is benefited by it.
  - d. He wants us and our willing mind to readily give of ourselves and our means in performing whatever service he requires in our serving him and our fellowman.
- 7. Let there be the willing mind and the liberal gift out of what we have; out of what God has prospered us!
- 8. Then and only then are both we and our gift acceptable to God.

**B. SECONDLY, FOR EMPHASIS, THE WILLING MIND IS NOT ALL THAT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY, THERE MUST “BE A PERFORMANCE ALSO OUT OF THAT WHICH YE HAVE,” V.11.**

- 1. We must follow through on that willing mind. Cf. vv.6-12; See 2Cor.9:1-5.
  - a. See also Jas.1:22-25; Mt.7:21-23; 23-1-3; Ac.1:1.
- 2. Is Paul suggesting the possibility, or warning against the possibility, of the danger of a failure between will and deed, between intention and performance, or, more exactly, between the beginning and the completion of their task?
  - a. Have you ever heard the old adage: “The road to hell is paved with good intentions”?
  - b. Partly will and partly deed can only be accepted when no more is possible; the will for the deed, when no more is possible!

3. Our initial enthusiasm to perform must not be allowed to become a mere memory unaccompanied by the performance of it due to neglect. See Heb.2:1-3.
4. We must not only have “first a willing mind,” or a heart that purposes to do; there must be the cheerful performance of it – never grudgingly (of sorrow) or of necessity (under compulsion); “for God loveth a cheerful giver,” one that cheerfully performs what first comes from his “willing mind”.

### III. CONCLUSION

1. In 2Cor.8:9 Jesus is cited as the greatest example of a “readiness to will” and or a “willing mind” who followed through with a genuine beneficence (a sacrificial giving) to help motivate us imitate his example in both the desire and the performance of the desire in doing God’s will.
  - a. Think about what Jesus did; how rich he was; what he gave up; what he became as a result of his sacrifice; that he did it willingly; and why he did it!
2. Purposing to do something such as giving as prospered which God requires us to do is as binding a taking a vow.
3. Vows are to be kept or suffer the consequences, Eccl.5:4,5; Num.30:2; Psa.50:14; Isa.19:20-22.
4. Questions which must always be uppermost in our minds:
  - (1) Do we really give readily, or do we, in fact, have to push ourselves just a little before we are willing to make our contribution?
  - (2) Do we too often spend a little generously on ourselves and what we consider our necessities, and then give a little out what is left over to the Lord and the work of the church?
  - (3) If the answer to either of these two questions is the least bit in doubt, how can we say we have “first a willing mind” and are sowing bountifully or giving as God has prospered us?