



## 1 Corinthians 9

### INTRODUCTION:

- People among the Corinthian congregation did not think that Paul was a genuine apostle possessing apostolic authority. Why might some have been doubting Paul in this serious way?
- What are the “marks of an Apostle”?
  - Did Paul fit the bill?
- We don’t have (or need) the prophetic or apostolic roles (the highest authority one could have) anymore - why?
  - What authoritative roles in the church do we have?

### Paul defends his calling:

#### 1 Corinthians 9:1-12

**1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus, our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 If I am not an apostle to others, yet at least I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.**

**3 This is my defense to those who examine me. 4 Do we not have a right to eat and to drink? 5 Do we not have a right to take along a wife who is a believer, as the rest of the apostles do, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? 6 Or are Barnabas and I the only ones who have no right to be spared from manual labor? 7 What soldier ever serves at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat some of its fruit? Or who takes care of a flock and does not drink milk from the flock? 8 Am I saying this just from a human point of view? Doesn’t the law also say this? 9 Yes, it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out grain.” Is God really concerned about oxen, 10 or does he say this entirely for our sake? Yes, it was written for our sake, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher ought to thresh in hope of getting a share. 11 If we sowed spiritual seed for your good, is it too much if we reap material benefits from you? 12 If others have some right to make this claim on you, don’t we even more? But we did not use this right. Instead, we endure everything so as not to cause any hindrance for the gospel of Christ.**

- In verses 1-2 how does Paul prove that he is a genuine apostle, and not a liar or false teacher?
- In verse 3 the NIV reads, “those who sit in judgment on me” verses the EHV’s “those who examine me” - which do you prefer and why?
- What rights, according to Paul here, did the apostles have?
- Apparently some denied his apostleship because of what?

- How did Paul support himself?
- Agree / Disagree: *Paul should have taken a salary, he could have got more church work done that way.*
- What did Paul say in these verses that poses a real problem for Catholics?
- He uses both worldly arguments and a Scriptural argument, what were they?
- When Jesus sent out His disciples for some practical ministry training (Luke 10) He said, *“The worker deserves his \_\_\_\_\_”*
- What was Paul’s chief concern here (v.12)?
- Can you think of a modern situation that might be similar to what Paul was dealing with here?

## Paul’s Choice :

### 1 Corinthians 9:13-18

**13 Do you not know that those who do the work in the temple eat food from the temple, and those who attend to the altar receive a portion from what is on the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel are to receive their living from the gospel. 15 But I have used none of these things.**

**I am not writing this to have it done this way in my case, because it is better for me to die than to let anyone deprive me of my boast. 16 You**

**see, if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast about, because an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 If I do this as a volunteer, I receive compensation. But if not, I have been entrusted with a responsibility as a steward. 18 What then is my compensation? To present the gospel of Christ free of charge when I preach it, instead of making use of the right I have when I preach the gospel.**

- What final “nail in the coffin” twin arguments did Paul make in verses 13-14?
- What was the “obligation” laid on Paul that made him want to serve without pay?
- Agree / Disagree: *Paul’s compensation was that he received no compensation. That’s nonsense.*
- Agree / Disagree: *The other apostles could have said the same thing. They weren’t volunteers; they were sent out too.*
- Was this a good and right decision on Paul’s part, or, was this showing pride and silliness on his part?
- What do members of a congregation “owe their pastor” and why?
- What are some rights ministers (or people in general) willingly set aside because they desire heavenly treasure instead?

- Agree / Disagree: *We can help pastor gain treasure in heaven by cutting his pay, and we also save a lot of money - win, win!*

## Paul's Evangelism:

### 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

**19** In fact, although I am free from all, I enslaved myself to all so that I might gain many more. **20** To the Jews, I became like a Jew so that I might gain Jews. To those who are under the law, I became like a person under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might gain those who are under the law. **21** To those who are without the law, I became like a person without the law (though I am not without God's law but am within the law of Christ) so that I might gain those who are without the law. **22** To the weak, I became weak so that I might gain the weak. I have become all things to all people so that I may save at least some. **23** And I do everything for the sake of the gospel so that I may share in it along with others.

- Paul had been talking about how he sacrificed his salary for the sake of the Gospel, what other sacrifices did he point to here in his quest to save souls?
- Agree / Disagree: *The "Jews" and those "under the law" are the same thing.*

- If you agree, then why did he mention both groups?

- Who would Paul be speaking of in the following groups:
  - Those without the law:
  - The weak: (consider chapter 8)

- Can you think of a time, where Paul brilliantly did this - reaching a group right where they were at to share the Gospel with them?
- How, practically speaking, can we put what Paul describes here, into action in our outreach / evangelism efforts?
  - as individuals:
  - as a congregation:
- Can a person go too far in "being all things to all people" (and if so, then how?)
- Explain what Paul says in verse 23, isn't the Gospel FREE salvation with no strings attached?
- Agree / Disagree: *For Paul it was sinful not to preach the Gospel. It's not sinful for me not to preach the Gospel.*

## Christian Effort & Self Discipline

### 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

**24** Do you not know that when runners compete in the stadium, they all run, but only one receives the prize? Run like that—to win. **25** Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable victor's wreath, but we do it for an imperishable one. **26** That is why there is nothing aimless about the way I run. There is no pummeling of the air in the way I box. **27** Instead I hit my body hard and make it my slave so that, after preaching to others, I myself will not be rejected.

- Evaluate the following statements:

- *“Being a Christian is really easy - you don’t have to do a thing, in Jesus it’s all done FOR you!”*

- *“Being a Christian is really tough - everything is demanded from you and God expects you to give 100%!”*

- Which statement is true?

- Which statement fits what Paul is talking about in these verses?

- How do you know which statement a person in a particular situation needs to hear?

- Good ministers, like Paul will \_\_\_\_\_ the afflicted, and \_\_\_\_\_ the comfortable.
- Agree / Disagree: *Paul was really intense. I’m a laid back Christian and that’s okay too.*
- Agree / Disagree: *Far too many churches and Christians are merely “beating the air” in their faith.*
  - What would that look like?
- How do we know if our evangelism efforts are just “beating the air” or if they are actually making a difference?

## CONCLUSION:

- Let’s say a pastor today is having his call / his authority brought into question (by members of his church and maybe even in his own head) - how would you comfort him that he is a genuine minister of the Gospel in God’s church?
- What are the key lessons for us in this chapter of Scripture?

## CLOSING PRAYER: