

1 Corinthians, Chapter 9

Enemies in Corinth may have said, “Paul is preaching the Gospel because it gives him an income.” To dispose of this suggestion, the apostle personalizes the previously discussed principles of Christian freedom and Christian love. He demonstrates how in his own life he set aside his rights (to eat and drink, to marry, to draw a salary) that he might carry out his grand design to gain people for the Gospel. His closing remarks encourage the



Corinthians to follow his example in practicing self-discipline, lest preoccupation with individual rights and conveniences interfere with faith and its glorious goal. **Read: 1 Corinthians 9: 1-27.**

1. St. Paul now gives an example of knowing one's rights but voluntarily laying them down. Read Acts 22:4-16. How did this experience qualify him to be an apostle?
2. St. Paul points to the Corinthian congregation itself as a “seal” of his apostleship. What do you think he means by that? (A seal is an official imprinted mark that certifies a document as genuine.)
3. In **2 Corinthians 12:12**, St. Paul refers to other identifying marks of the apostolic office. How would these link the ministry of the apostles with the ministry of Jesus Himself? (We may see also: Mark 16:20; John 4:48, 54; Acts 2:22, 43.)
4. St. Paul refers to two rights he might claim as an apostle in 1 Corinthians 9:4-6. What are they?
5. What application do you think 1 Corinthians 9:4-6 have to church workers today?
6. **Read 1 Corinthians 9:12-19.** Despite the fact that St. Paul maintains as a scriptural principle that those who labor in the ministry of the church do to receive their livelihood from their work, he himself did not usually accept this support. Why do you think he did not use his right of

support?

7. Why do you think St. Paul felt compelled to preach the Gospel? (Read: **1 Corinthians 9:16-17 and Acts 26:15-18**).
8. Under what circumstances today might a pastor, teacher, or other professional church worker earn his or her livelihood in another way so as to do his or her duties without cost (or a minimal cost) to the congregation?
9. In what ways, both monetarily and otherwise, is the Lord Jesus leading you to support those who minister His Gospel to you?
10. What do you think St. Paul is referring to when he insists that he is “free”? (**1 Corinthians 9:1, 19**)
11. St. Paul is free, but he makes himself a slave. What do you think he means when he says that he makes himself a slave to everyone?
12. St. Paul willingly makes himself a slave in order to share in the blessings of the Gospel (**1 Cor. 9:23**). What blessings are you receiving from the Gospel?
13. Take notice of the specific groups of people St. Paul mentions as mission targets (**1 Cor. 9:20-22**). List those people who you might try to bring to Christ, or closer to Christ.
14. St. Paul’s goal was to win as many people as possible. To accomplish this, he was willing to do anything he could. What specific things do you think that you might do to win people for Christ?
15. St. Paul urges his fellow Christians to join him in living as spiritual athletes (**1 Cor. 9:24-27**). Corinth hosted the Isthmian Games, which was similar to the Olympic Games, a figure of speech that would strike home with the Corinthians. What parallels between the Christian life and the life of an athlete do you find?

Closing Prayer: (from LSB 688 – “Come, Follow Me,” the Savior Spake)

- 1 “Come, follow Me,” the Savior spake, “All in My way abiding; Deny yourselves, the world forsake, Obey My call and guiding. O bear the cross, whate’er betide, Take My example for your guide. Amen.

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Sources: God's Word for Today: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 1997), LifeLight: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2007), Luther's Works (CPH, Fortress), Concordia Commentary: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2000)