

1 Corinthians Chapter 9

1. Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

A. Am I not an apostle

1. **apostle-** Gr. **apostolos-** *a sent one with authority*

a. Jesus told the disciples to go to the upper room and wait for the Holy Spirit. He did not tell them to go there and hold a lottery for Judas' replacement. I believe Paul was the Lord's replacement for Judas, not Matthias. He was one as born out of due time. [1 Cor. 15:8](#)

B. Am I not free

1. **free-** Gr. **eleutheros**

a. Am I not a free man; have I not the liberty which all Christians possess, and especially which all the apostles possess? The "liberty" referred to here is doubtless the privilege or right of abstaining from labor; of enjoying as others did the domestic relations of life; and of a support as a public minister and apostle. Probably some had objected to his claims of apostleship that he had not used this right, and that he was conscious that he had no claim to it. By this mode of interrogation, he strongly implies that he was a freeman, and that he had this right. - Barnes

b. Paul also was a free man in relation to his social standing. This means that he was not a slave of the Roman empire. He was born free so he was not enslaved to any man or country. [Acts 22:28](#)

C. Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord

1. **seen-** Gr. **horao**

a. Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus. [Acts 9:3-5](#)

b. Jesus also appeared to Paul in the temple in Jerusalem early in his ministry. [Acts 22:18](#)

c. Jesus also appeared to Paul in Jerusalem before his first imprisonment in Rome. [Acts 23:11](#)

2. **Jesus Christ our Lord**

a. The term “Lord” is a term of deity.

D. Are you not my work in the Lord

1. work- Gr. **ergon**

a. The work of the kingdom is people. When people are not the forefront of our work then we are working in vain.

2. If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

A. If I am not an apostle to others,

1. apostle- Gr. **apostolos**

a. An apostle goes where Christ has not been preached and starts a new work. [2 Cor. 10:13-15](#) They will raise up leadership and then do it again in a new place.

2. to others

a. Ones that Paul did not personally reach with the gospel.

B. yet doubtless I am to you,

1. to you

a. Corinthians

C. For you are my seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

1. seal- Gr. **sphragis-** *a seal, a distinctive mark, a token, proof*

a. The Corinthians were living proof of Paul's apostleship. [2Co 3:1-3](#)

2. apostleship- Gr. **apostole-** *commission*

a. The signs of an apostle accompanied Paul's ministry. A business card or a self-appointed title does not make you something. You will have attesting signs if you are what you say you are. [2Co 12:12](#)

3. My defense to those who examine me is this:

A. defense- Gr. **apologia-** *to give a legal account or plea, a verbal defense or argument*

1. Some in Corinth debated if Paul was an apostle for a number of reasons. Some of them were: He was not one of the twelve apostles of Jesus, he did not utilize his authority to require support while he

was with them, and he was not married.

2. Paul had to lay out his defense a number of times before magistrates and Roman officials. It is sad he had to do it in front of the church as well.

B. examine- Gr. **anakrino-** *to investigate, examine, enquire into, scrutinize, sift, question, to interrogate, determine (the excellence or defects of any person or thing)*

1. There will always be those who set themselves up as judge and jury over you. Paul did not owe them a defense of his ministry but as a teaching occasion he does so.

2. In these two letters you have a feeling of Paul's irritation. He was human guys! The words he wrote are scripture but they also convey his human emotions and feelings. God created our emotions and feelings. It is ok to have them and express them, just don't be ruled by them and allow them to lead you into sin.

4. Do we have no right to eat and drink?

A. right- Gr. **exousia**

1. As one who had been sent by the Lord Jesus, Paul was entitled to financial remuneration from the believers. However, he had not always insisted on this right. He had often worked with his hands, making tents, in order that he might be able to preach the gospel freely to men and women. No doubt his critics took advantage of this, suggesting that the reason that he did not take support was that he knew he was not a real apostle. - BBC

2. God has ordained that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. [1 Cor. 9:14](#)

B. eat- Gr. **phago**

C. drink- Gr. **pino**

1. A workman is worthy of his wages. Paul labored among the Corinthians and should have been given food, drink, and lodging for his work. It is a shame for this church they did not offer it.

[Mat 10:10](#); [Luk 10:7](#)

2. This brings out an important lesson about ministry. We should not put expectations on people to do certain things for us. If they don't

we can tend to get bitter about it. We should serve people with no expectations of receiving anything back. All our expectation and trust needs to be on the Lord.

5. Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

A. Do we have no right to take along a believing wife,

1. right- Gr. **exousia**

a. The objection here seems to have been, that Paul and Barnabas were unmarried, or at least that they traveled without wives. The objectors urged that others had wives, and that they took them with them, and expected provision to be made for them as well as for themselves. They therefore showed that they felt that they had a claim to support for their families, and that they were conscious that they were sent of God. But Paul and Barnabas had no families. And the objectors inferred that they were conscious that they had no claim to the apostleship, and no right to support. To this Paul replies as before, that they had a right to do as others did, but they chose not to do it for other reasons than that they were conscious that they had no such right. - Barnes

2. take along- Gr. **periago-** *to lead around*

a. The husband is to be the leader.
b. It is scriptural for a traveling minister to ask his wife attend with him and her expenses be covered as well as the minister. The early church apostles traveled with their wives in the ministry.

3. believing- Gr. **adelphe-** *a sister*

a. The Greek word for sister here means she is a believer.
b. God only sanctions a Christian to marry another Christian. As a Christian man your spouse ought also to be your sister. [Song. 4:9-12; 5:1-2](#)
c. It was normal in the early church that Christian leaders were married. Later on in the Catholic church teaching arose forbidding to marry for the clergy. According to Paul this is a

doctrine of devils. [1 Tim. 4:1-3](#)

4. **wife-** Gr. **gune**

B. as do also the other apostles,

1. **other apostles**

a. There were a number of other apostles than just the twelve disciples of Jesus. Barnabas will be mentioned in the next verse as being an apostle.

C. the brothers of the Lord,

1. **brothers of the Lord**

a. Jude and James were both apostles and the half-brothers of Jesus. Mary and Joseph were their parents.

D. and Cephas

1. **Cephas-** means *rock or stone*

6. Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working?

A. Barnabas- means *son of encouragement or consolation; son of prophecy*

1. Barnabas was a constant source of encouragement to all around him. He encouraged Paul when he had been sent to Tarsus because he was causing strife in Jerusalem after his conversion. He went and found him in Tarsus and used him in the ministry at Antioch. In this way he helped fulfill the prophecy spoken over Paul by Jesus. We need to not only fulfill the prophecies spoken over us, but also help others see the prophecies spoken over them fulfilled. Barnabas did this.

2. Barnabas encouraged young Mark when he deserted them during their first missionary journey. He wanted to take Mark again on the next trip, even though Paul adamantly was against the idea.

3. Barnabas was single. You don't have to be married to impact the Kingdom of God greatly.

B. right- Gr. **exousia-** *authority*

1. Paul had the authority to exercise over others but he refrained many times out of love and for an example. A good leader knows when to exercise their authority and when to hold onto it.

C. refrain from working- Gr. **ergazomai me**

1. This is not to refrain for any work, but secular work. Ministry is work! Ministry is spelled W-O-R-K!
2. We know that Paul's secular trade was tent-making. We do not know what Barnabas' was. Paul may have taught him the trade so they could work together.

7. Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

A. Who ever goes to war at his own expense?

1. **goes to war-** Gr. **strateuomai-** *to make a military expedition, to lead soldiers to war or to battle, (spoken of a commander), to do military duty, be on active service, be a soldier, to fight*

- a. There is an aspect of warfare in the ministry. The enemy will always oppose spirit empowered ministry.

2. **expense-** Gr. **opsonion-** *a soldier's pay, allowance*

- a. As a soldier does not go to war for free but is paid by the army, so a minister should be paid by the church.

B. Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit?

1. **plants-** Gr. **phuteuo**

- a. There is an aspect of planting in ministry. [1Co 3:6-8](#) The minister is the plant the Word of God into people's lives. [Mark 4:14](#)

2. **vineyard-** Gr. **ampelon**

- a. The church is the Lord's vineyard. [1 Cor. 3:9](#)

3. **eats-** Gr. **esthio**

4. **fruit-** Gr. **karpos**

- a. A farmer gets to partake of the fruit of the harvest, so a minister is to partake of the fruit of finances collected in the church.

C. Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

1. **tends-** Gr. **poimaino-** *to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep, pastor*

- a. There is an aspect of feeding sheep in the ministry. We are to feed the sheep with the Word of God. We are to look after

them and their spiritual shape.

2. **flock-** Gr. **poimne**

a. The church is the Lord's flock. [John 10:16](#)

3. **drink-** Gr. **esthio**

4. **milk-** Gr. **gala**

a. As a Shepherd partakes of the milk [fatness-prosperity] of the flock, so a minister should get to get some of the prosperity that comes to the church.

b. As the soldier, farmer, and shepherd gets to partake of the natural provisions of their endeavors so should a minister.

8. **Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also?**

A. **Do I say these things as a mere man?**

1. **say-** Gr. **laleo**

2. **man-** Gr. **anthropos**

a. This concept of being paid for ministry was not just Paul's thinking or something that came from man. It came from God.

b. To disregard this is to disregard God not man. [1Th 4:8](#)

B. **Or does no the law say the same also?**

1. **law-** Gr. **nomos**

2. **same**

a. The Law came from God Himself and in the Law he makes provision for those who work.

9. **For it is written in the law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE AN OX WHILE IT TREADS OUT THE GRAIN." Is it oxen God is concerned about?**

A. **For it is written in the law of Moses,**

1. **written-**Gr. **grapho**

1. [Deut. 25:4](#)

2. This is mentioned three times in Scripture. The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit all agree- take care of your minister financially!

3. Paul did not receive offerings from the Corinthians when he

ministered to them. He chose to do that for personal reasons. However, the Corinthians didn't offer any finances to Paul either!

2. **Moses-** *drawn out*

a. It is called the law of Moses not because the law originated with Moses, but that he was the mediator the law was given through to Israel.

B. You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.

1. **muzzle-** Gr. **phimoo-** *to close the mouth with a muzzle*

a. A smart owner would unmuzzle his ox when it treaded out the grain. This would allow the animal to eat and keep up its strength and motivation to keep working.

b. There are some dumb congregations that do not provide well for their pastor. This demotivates and saps their pastor of strength and ability to serve. It is smart to take care of your pastor financially. It is to your benefit!

2. **ox-** Gr. **bous**

3. **treads out the grain-** Gr. **aloao-** *to thresh grain*

C. Is it oxen God is concerned about?

1. **concerned-** Gr. **melo-** *to care about, it concerns*

a. God cares about animals but this verse is written because God cares about and is concerned about the financial and provisional well-being of his people including His ministers.

10. Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

A. Or does He say it altogether for our sakes?

1. **say-** Gr. **lego**

2. **our sakes-** Gr. **dia hemas-** *on account of us*

B. For our sakes,

C. no doubt,

1. **doubt-** Gr. **gar-** *for*

D. this is written,

1. **written**- Gr. **grapho**

E. that he who plows should plow in hope,

1. **plows**- Gr. **arotrioo**- *to till the ground*

2. **hope**- Gr. **elpis**- *confident expectation of good*

a. No farmer does the hard work of plowing the ground and planting seed without the confident expectation of a harvest from his work.

F. and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

1. **threshes**- Gr. **aloao**

2. **partaker**- Gr. **metecho**- *to have with, share, partake with*

a. In the ancient days there were farmers who plowed, planted, and harvested the crops. However, often the job of threshing out the wheat was done by another person. All parties involved did their part with the expectation of partaking of the harvest and benefits of it.

b. In church work one plants, another waters, another harvests, another threshes but all receive benefit from the fruit of the harvest. [1 Cor. 3:9](#)

11. If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things?

A. If we have sown spiritual things for you,

1. **sown**- Gr. **speiro**- *to sow seed*

2. **spiritual things**- Gr. **pneumatikos**

a. The spiritual things found in the seed of God's Word. The sower sows the Word. [Mark 4:14](#)

b. There are also spiritual things ministered by the Holy Spirit- these are the spiritual gifts. [1 Corinthians 14:1](#) We can sow the spiritual gifts into people's lives. When a minister sows the Word and spiritual gifts into the people then a great harvest will come forth.

B. is it a great thing we reap your material things?

1. **great thing**- Gr. **mezas**

a. Paying your pastor or minister well is not a mega thing. God

can swing it! He will honor a people that takes care of their pastor well. [1 Tim. 5:17](#)

2. reap- Gr. *therido*

a. Reaping is just as much God's will as sowing. We should not shrink back or be shy to reap what has been sown. In each harvest is the seed to sown again for future harvests. It is not humble to reject what is reaped. Don't reject your harvest! It is stupid and does not honor God.

b. Paul talked to the Philippians about giving and receiving. [Phil. 4:15](#) A humble person can equally give and receive. If you have a problem receiving you have a pride problem. Am I being too subtle?

c. The spiritual and natural realms are more connected than many suppose. Spiritual things are sown and natural things are reaped. [Rom 15:27](#)

3. material things- Gr. *sarkikos*

a. All natural things have sprung forth from the spiritual.

b. Our natural finances come from God's riches in *heavenly [spiritual] places in Christ*. [Phil. 4:19](#)

c. We should give back to those who teach us the Word of God with all good things. [Gal. 6:6](#)

12. If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

A. If others are partakers of this right over you,

1. **partakers-** Gr. *metecho-* *to hold together with, share*

2. **right-** Gr. *exousia-* *exercise authority*

a. Other ministers had required financial assistance to minister at Corinth. Paul had never asked for this and for it they treated him like a second-rated minister. People sometimes are messed up in their thinking and actions!

b. Others had come and taken advantage of the Corinthians and they treated them with great honor. [2Co 11:20](#) Paul came requesting and taking nothing from them and he was treated

with dishonor. Go figure!

c. It was common for Paul not to take finances from the people he ministered to but he worked for his upkeep. [Act 20:31-34](#), [1Th 2:6-9](#); [2Th 3:8-9](#)

B. are we not even more?

C. Nevertheless we have not used this right,

1. **used-** Gr. **chraomai-** *to take for one's use, to use*

2. **right-** Gr. **exousia**

a. It takes wisdom [godly skill] in knowing when to exercise freedom and when to curtail it for the good of others. The immature and prideful only think of themselves.

b. The law of love always trumps the law of liberty.

D. but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

1. **endure-** Gr. **stego-** *to cover; to hold off, to hold in; hence, to hold out against, to endure patiently*

2. **hinder-** Gr. **didomi egkope-** *to give a cutting (made in a road to impede any in pursuit), hindrance, to cut off free passage, to give a roadblock*

a. This is setting up an occasion for offense or a stumbling block to others.

3. **gospel-** Gr. **euaggelion-** *good message, glad tidings*

a. We should never want to hinder the good message of God's love and grace from someone's life.

13. Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings* of the altar?

A. Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple,

1. **know-** Gr. **eido-** *to perceive or see with the mind*

2. **minister-** Gr. **ergazomai-** *work*

a. Ministry is work. A workman is worthy of his wages and to partake of fruit of their labor.

3. **holy things-** Gr. **hieros-** *sacred, consecrated to the deity, pertaining*

to God

4. **eat**- Gr. **esthio**

5. **temple**- Gr. **hieron**- *a sacred place, temple*

a. The principle that those who work in the ministry should be compensated and taken care of naturally is well founded in the OT and NT.

B. and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?

1. **serve**- Gr. **prosedreuo**- *to sit near; to attend, serve*

2. **altar**- Gr. **thusiasterion**- *a place of sacrifice*

3. **partake**- Gr. **summerizomai**- *to divide with another so as to receive a part to one's self, share with, partake with*

a. The priests of the OT were partakers of the sacrificial meat and grain. [1Co 10:18](#); [Lev 6:16-18](#), [Lev 6:26](#), [Lev 7:6-8](#); [Num 5:9-10](#), [Num 18:8-20](#)

14. Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

A. the Lord

1. The Lord Jesus

B. commanded

1. Jesus established this principle during His earthly ministry.

[Mat 10:10](#); [Luk 10:7](#)

2. When Paul says Jesus has commanded something he is referring to something stated during His earthly ministry and not something he heard from Jesus personally. Paul always pointed back to scripture in these cases.

C. preach- Gr. **kataggello**- *to announce, declare, promulgate, make known*

1. This is true also of those who teach the Word of God. [1 Tim. 5:17](#)
Paul both preached and taught the Word.

D. live- Gr. **zao**

E. gospel- Gr. **euaggelion**- *good message, glad tidings*

1. The support of God in this dispensation of the church is for those who **preach the gospel- good news**. There is no provision made for those who preach the Law of Moses or any other "gospel" that was

not revealed to the NT writers.

15. But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.

A. But I have used none of these things,

1. used- Gr. *chraomai*

a. His authority as an apostle to receive compensation for ministry, lodging, and provisional care.

b. There is a time to use things and other times to refrain from it. The deciding factor is what is best for people.

B. nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me,

1. written- Gr. *grapho*

2. done- Gr. *ginomai*- *to begin or start*

C. for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.

1. better- Gr. *kalos*- *good*

2. die- Gr. *apothenesko*- *to die off*

3. boasting- Gr. *kauchema*

a. His boast was that he ministered the Word of God freely. This is not something God required of him, but what he chose to do.

b. It is amazing that such a powerful minister of God received so little support from the churches he ministered to. Paul said only the Philippians had partnered with him in the gospel. [Phil. 4:15](#) If those you are ministering to are not giving much back to you then take heart from Paul. He knows how you feel. God took care of Paul, and he will take care of you minister of God!

c. While ministering to those at Corinth, God supplied his need from the Philippian church. [2Co 11:9-12](#)

4. void- Gr. *kenoo*- *to be made empty or futile*

16. For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!

A. For if I preach the gospel,

1. **preach the gospel-** Gr. **euaggelizo-** *to proclaim the good message, glad tidings*

B. I have nothing to boast of,

1. **boast-** Gr. **kauchema**

a. Boasting is not always a bad thing. We can rightly boast in the Lord and the things of God. [Rom 15:17](#)

b. We never have grounds to boast in front of God, but we do before people about God and the things of God. [Rom 4:2](#)

C. for necessity is laid upon me,

1. **necessity-** Gr. **anagke**

2. **laid upon-** Gr. **epikeimai**

D. yes,

E. woe to me if I do not preach the gospel

1. **woe-** Gr. **ouai-** *alas, woe*

a. Paul would have been a miserable man if he did not answer God's call to preach. The call to minister the Word gives intense pressure on the inside if not heeded and released. It will make one miserable to fail to do so. [Jer 20:9](#), [Amo 3:8](#), [Act 4:20](#)

b. If we are in God's will, grace, and fulfilling our call we are indestructible. It is when we get out of God's will and calling that we are on dangerous ground for the enemy to harm us and take us out early.

b. There is an initial "woe is me" response when God calls us and we sense our inadequacies for it. [Isa 6:5](#) Then there is a "woe is me" if we don't answer that call. God will equip us for our call with a grace and anointing. Moses experienced these two woes.

17. For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

A. For if I do this willingly,

1. **willingly-** Gr. **hekon-** *unforced, voluntary, willing*

a. It pleases the Lord when His people are willing of themselves. [1Ch 28:9](#), [1Ch 29:5](#), [1Ch 29:9](#), [1Ch 29:14](#); [Neh 11:2](#); [Isa 6:8](#); [2Co 8:12](#); [Phm 1:14](#); [1Pe 5:2-4](#)

B. I have a reward,

1. reward- Gr. **misthos**

a. Often there is confusion between what God gives in grace and His giving out reward. [Please note it is always stated as "reward" in the singular in the NT and never "rewards" in the plural]. Reward has an aspect of it being based upon what we do and grace does not.

b. God rewards us when we utilize [put into practice] what He gives us in grace. When we use His grace and faith in this world to further the kingdom this will receive a reward from the Lord. [Matt. 25:14-29](#) Also, according to this verse what we do in faith and in love without being asked to by the Lord this will be rewarded as well.

C. but if against my will,

1. will- Gr. **akon-** *not of one's own will*

a. This does not mean Paul did not want to preach the gospel. Paul is saying that he did not come up with the idea of doing it himself. He was commissioned by the Lord to do it. Paul went beyond the call to preach and did it freely without receiving money from it. This the Lord did not ask him to do. He freely did it of his own accord. He will be rewarded for this.

D. I have been entrusted with a stewardship

1. entrusted- Gr. **pisteuo-** *place confidence in*

a. Paul was entrusted with apostleship after some years of testing first. God does not automatically place his confidence in every person. God does not ask us to do that with people. Paul was called to the ministry the day he was saved, but it was years later that he was separated unto the apostolic ministry after God had confidence in him to do it. [Acts 9](#), [Acts 13](#)

b. It is amazing that God places confidence in us to do His work and ministry. That takes faith! If I was God I would probably do

it all myself to make sure no mistakes were made. God has greater vision and wisdom that we do.

2. stewardship- Gr. **oikonomia-** *rule of the house*

a. Some teach that Jesus has freed us from all responsibility in our Christian life by His work on the cross. This is not so. It is true that Jesus bore the full responsibility of satisfying our holy God and brings us in a right relationship with Him by grace. Vertically it is true we are free from responsibility of satisfying God and making ourselves accepted in His sight. However, horizontally in the world we have been given a Great commission and unique individual ministry calls to fulfill. We all have been given a stewardship to fulfill. A stewardship speaks of responsibility. We all are called to be **good stewards** of the manifold grace of God in administering it to others. **1 Peter 4:10**

18. What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

A. What is my reward then?

1. reward- Gr. **misthos**

a. We are rewarded for our work done in faith, in grace, and willingly.

B. That when I preach the gospel,

1. preach the gospel- Gr. **euaggelizo**

a. Paul is speaking of preaching the gospel, not teaching the New Covenant truths to Christians. It is appropriate to receive offerings in church. When preaching to the lost it is best not to take up offerings from them.

C. I may present the gospel of Christ without charge,

1. present- Gr. **tithemi-** *to place or set forth*

a. The gospel needs to be presented well. Just like a meal it can be set out with haste and in a haphazard manner that leaves the guest wanting more or it can be prepared carefully and in the balance of taste which satisfies the eater.
b. A minister should present a good spiritual meal from fresh

ingredients of the Word of God prepared by and delivered in the power of the Holy Spirit. Some ministers serve up cold tv dinners from what they heard others preach on tv.

2. **without charge**-Gr. **adapanos**- *without expense, requiring no outlay, costing nothing*

a. It is best for an evangelist not to receive offerings from those he preaches the gospel to lest unbelievers be offended at the grab for money.

b. Billy Graham always raised finances from Christians and churches for his crusades. He did not receive offerings at his crusades. He preached and presented the gospel free of charge.

D. that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel

1. **abuse**-Gr. **katachraomai**- *to use much or excessively or ill*

a. Spiritual abuse can be just as hurtful to people as physical abuse. A minister should not demand things from those he is ministering to. It is a good policy to never expect things from people, but always be thankful for what people do for you. Expect big things from God!

2. **authority**- Gr. **exousia**

a. Authority is given to us to be a blessing to people. Authority is given to build people up, not take from them or tear them down. [2 Cor. 13:10](#)

19. For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;

A. For though I am free from all men,

1. **free**- Gr. **eleutheros**

a. Paul was a Roman citizen. He was not in slavery to anyone. He had no obligations to anyone.

2. **men**- Gr. **anthropos**

B. I have made myself a servant of all,

1. **made a servant**- Gr. **douloo**

a. Paul took on the same spirit of Jesus. Jesus became a

servant of all although He was above all and free of all. [Phil 2:7](#)

b. Jesus taught that those who would be great in the kingdom of God would be servant of all. [Mat 20:26-28](#)

c. Paul taught we are to work to please our neighbor and not ourselves. [Rom 15:2](#)

d. Many ministers love to be served and even demand it. This is not in line with the spirit and nature of Jesus. These ministers do not understand the gospel of grace.

C. that I might win the more

1. win- Gr. *kerdaino*- to gain

a. We can fight to win or maintain our personal liberties but lose those around us. We should fight to win people to the Lord. This has eternal reward.

b. Paul did not seek his personal profit but the profit of others. [1 Cor. 10:33](#)

c. We are to win people. [Pro 11:30](#), [Mat 18:15](#), [1Pe 3:1](#)

20. and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I might win those *who are* under the law;

A. and to the Jews I became as a Jew,

1. Jews- Gr. *loudaios*- *an inhabitant of Judah; in general descending from Jacob*

2. as a Jew

a. Paul was a Jew, but he had cast off the Jewish religion with its code of commands to be right with God. However, to win the Jews he observed the Jewish festivals and traditions when he was among them.

b. To be a witness for Christ in a different culture than our own, it is wise to adapt to that culture where it is possible without it leading to a violation of the Word of God.

B. that I might win Jews,

1. win- Gr. *kerdaino*- to gain

a. This was not God's primary or major call on Paul's life. He was first to go to the Gentiles, then Kings, and then witness to

Jews [the children of Israel]. [Acts 9:15](#)

b. However, Paul would always try to go to the Jews first. The letter of Corinthians was written before the book of Romans. In the book of Romans we see Paul get a burden on him for the Jews. He said he would rather be cut off from Christ that the Jews would be saved. That is off folks! Nothing should come before your relationship with Jesus. He let his natural burden for the Jews side-track him from His spiritual calling to the Gentiles.

c. Paul for a long time was not content with his call to the Gentiles. He thought if anyone could reach the Jews he could with all his knowledge and training in the Law under Gamaliel. However, God did not call Paul to the Jews. He called Peter to the Jews. Paul was called to the Gentiles who knew nothing of the Law. Peter was called to the Jews and he had no formal training in the Law at all. He was a fisherman. Why would God do that? It was so that neither of these men could trust in their own ability and knowledge. They had to trust God and preach the simple gospel message that Jesus died for our sins, was raised from the dead, and by His Spirit He was present to heal and do miracles. They could not lean on their own understanding.

d. Paul would go to the synagogue wherever he went first and tried to convince the Jews about Jesus. All he ended up doing was arguing with them and then he was either beaten or run out of town. However, when he turned to the Gentiles there would be revival! They loved the message of grace. The Jews hated it!

e. In Romans, Paul said the gospel was the power of God to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. [Rom. 1:16](#) This means that the Jews were the first to have the gospel presented to them. Jesus was sent to the lost house of Israel during His earthly ministry. [Matt 15:24](#) After He rose up from the dead and the church began the gospel was still localized around Israel and to the Jews. Peter introduced the gospel to the Gentiles later. [Acts 10](#) Paul tried to take this model wherever he went and he tried to preach to the Jews first. That was not God's call. He

was to go to the Gentiles first, then kings, and then the children of Israel last. [Acts 9:15](#)

C. to those who are under the Law,

1. under the Law

a. Only the Jews were under the Law. [Rom 3:19](#)

b. The Jews were the only ones under the Law. The gentiles were not, however, by the Law being given to Israel the whole world was held guilty before God. As a scientist who wants to test a well of water only takes a sample out of the well to test it, so God did with the well of humanity. If a scientist can prove the sample of water is bad he can condemn the whole well it came from. Likewise, the sample case for humanity, the Jews, were proven corrupt and guilty under the Law, so God could rightly condemn all of humanity from which they were taken.

D. as under the Law,

1. Paul took this too far when he went to Jerusalem. To prove to James that he still kept the Law [which he did not fully], he took men who had taken a Jewish nazirite vow and paid for their temple sacrifice expenses for them and himself. [Acts 21:23-24](#) He was about to sacrifice animals that represented Jesus but he was caught in the temple for this happened. Paul went under legalism to preach grace! He actually never got to preach the gospel at all before he was caught and cast into prison. He ended up with a paid one way ticket of where he was supposed to have gone in the first place which was Rome.

2. It is ok to try to relate to those around us in order to try to win them but we should not enter into their sin. Paul was about to sin by sacrificing animals that represented Jesus death for us.

E. that I might win those who are under the Law

1. Paul was not very effective in doing this because his ministry call from God was to the Gentiles. He had great grace to win the Gentiles however. Peter had great grace to win the Jews. [Gal. 2:8](#)

21. to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law;

A. to those who are without law,

1. without law

a. These are the Gentiles to whom Paul was called first and primarily. [Rom 2:14](#)

B. as without law

1. When Paul was among the Gentiles he ate what they ate. He enjoyed bacon in the morning, ham sandwiches for lunch, and pork chops for dinner! He wore what they wore and lived as they did without sinning however.

C. not being without law toward God,

1. We are free from the Law of Moses, but we are not to be lawless.

D. but under law toward Christ,

1. law towards Christ

a. We are to be under the laws of grace. This is being governed by the law of faith, law of love, and the law of life in Christ Jesus. [Rom. 3:27](#), [James 2:8](#), [Rom. 8:2](#)

b. We are not under the law, but we are under grace. Grace is the new law we are under towards God and Christ. The principle of grace governs us. **Grace is not just the unmerited favor of God, but also God's power, ability, and strength to do what we could not do in the natural.**

c. We are under the Law of Christ. [Gal 6:2](#)

E. that I might win those who are without law

1. Paul's call was to go to the Gentiles first, kings next, and then lastly when possible the Jews. However, Paul reversed this and always tried to win the Jews first. We must accept, embrace, and stay within the bounds of our ministry call. That is where God's grace and blessing is for us and our ministry.

22. to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.

A. to the weak I became as weak,

1. weak- Gr. *asthenes*- *without strength, powerless; weak, without physical ability*

a. In how Paul uses this word in Romans it means that he did not eat meat in some instances when someone might be offended by it. [Rom. 14:2](#)

B. that I might win the weak,

1. Vegetarians need Jesus too. I am glad I am not called to be an apostle to the vegetarians. My call lies more to the carnivores!

C. I have become all things to all men,

1. This means that Paul adapted himself to those to whom he ministered to. This does not mean that Paul joined in the sin of those he was trying to meet. This just muddies your testimony and disqualifies you.

D. that I might by all means save some.

1. all means

a. Paul was not married to a certain method in evangelism and ministry. The message stays the same but the methods need to change to fit the people, culture, and time.

2. **save-** Gr. **sozo-** *to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction*

a. Not all people will be saved. Some will be saved. The teaching of universal salvation of all men is error.

23. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.

A. Now this I do for the gospel's sake,

1. gospel's sake

a. Paul did not live for his own's sake but for Christ's and the gospel's sake.

B. that I may be a partaker of it with you.

1. **partaker-** Gr. **sugkoinonos-** *to share together, partner together with*

a. You must limit your freedom in order to bring people into your freedom. This is investing in others which will enrich them and then they turn around and do the same to others. Jesus gave himself for us to bring us to share His sonship with the Father. To do this he became a servant and served us although

He was free. [2Ti 2:10](#)

b. Jesus severely limited Himself becoming a man in order to lift us into His glorious liberty. [Rom 8:21](#)

24. Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

A. Do you not know that those who run in a race all run,

1. **know-** Gr. **eido-** *to see or perceive with the mind*

a. Paul says "don't you know" to these saints in this letter nine times. Two of the problems with them were pride and ignorance. This is a terrible duo.

2. **run-** Gr. **trecho-** *to run, to progress freely, to advance rapidly*

3. **race-** Gr. **stadion-** *a space or distance of about 600 feet; place in which contests in running were held, the one who outstripped the rest and reached the goal first, receiving the prize. Courses of this description were found in most of the larger Greek cities, and were like that at Olympia, 600 Greek feet in length*

a. Doubtless as the apostle wrote the words found in verse 24, he was reminded of the Isthmian games that were held not far from Corinth. The Corinthian believers would be well-acquainted with those athletic contests. -Believer's Bible Commentary

B. but one receives the prize?

1. **receives-** Gr. **lambano**

2. **prize-** Gr. **brabeion-** *a prize bestowed on victors in the public games, such as a crown, wreath, chaplet, garland*

C. Run in such a way that you may obtain it

1. **obtain-** Gr. **katalambano-** *to lay hold of so as to make one's own, to obtain, attain to, to make one's own, to take into one's self, appropriate*

a. Paul uses this metaphor to illustrate what he had been talking about in the previous verses. Paul purposely removed all hindrances from those receiving his ministry.

b. This chapter is in the context of his teaching on eating meat sacrificed to idols. [Chapter 8](#) Paul moves in this chapter to

discuss how he had limited his personal freedom to receive finances so no one will be offended. He had told the Corinthians not to eat meat sacrificed to idols if those around them would be offended. They needed to limit their freedom to not cause others to be offended.

c. To run a race you must remove any obstacles in your path. To win in the ministry you need to not only remove hindrances that would impede your path but to remove obstacles from other people as well. Christian ministry is about others and not yourself.

d. Paul will move on in the next chapter and talk about something that will hinder them in the spiritual race which is carnality.

25. And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*.

A. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things.

1. **competes for the prize-** Gr. **agonizomai-** *to be a combatant in the public games; to contend, fight, strive earnestly*

a. Here Paul has wrestling in view. In the Greek games wrestling was more violent than today's wrestling. There were few rules and the matches often ended in severe injury or even death. We get our English word agony from this Greek word!

2. **temperate-** Gr. **egkrateuomai-** *to exhibit self-government, conduct one's self temperately*

a. To our knowledge we are to add temperance. [2Pe 1:6](#) The Corinthians boasted in the superior knowledge but they had not added temperance to it.

B. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown,

1. **obtain-** Gr. **lambano-** *to receive*

2. **perishable-** Gr. **phthartos-** *corruptible, perishing*

3. **crown-** Gr. **stephanos-** *primarily, "that which surrounds, as a wall or crowd" (from [stepho](#), "to encircle"), denotes (a) "the victor's crown," the symbol of triumph in the games or some such contest; hence, by metonymy, a reward or prize; (b) "a token of public honor"*

for distinguished service, military prowess, etc., or of nuptial joy, or festal gladness, especially at the parousia of kings. It was woven as a garland of oak, ivy, parsley, myrtle, or olive, or in imitation of these in gold.

a. Just as a wreath of leaves would soon fade away, so does the honor given by man.

b. Just as when a baseball player hits a home run and the stadium rises with a standing ovation, it is soon over, and the crowds moves on and the home run is soon forgotten into oblivion. It is the same with the praise of man.

C. but we for an imperishable crown

1. imperishable- Gr. **aphthartos-** *to corruptible or perishing*

a. The praise of God towards you will have eternal reward. [1 Cor. 4:5](#)

b. In resurrection we will have a incorruptible body and will enjoy an incorruptible reward from God. [1Co 15:54](#)

26. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air.

A. Therefore I run thus

1. run- Gr. **trecho**

B. not with uncertainty

1. uncertainty- Gr. **adelos-** *Uncertainly, irresolutely, without attending to the prescribed marks or lines, without exposure to the spectators who are there to judge the race or the performance*

a. Paul lived with purpose and discipline. Many people seem to have no purpose in life and so live very undisciplined and lax lives. The greater your purpose in life is the greater you limit yourself and have boundaries to accomplish that purpose.

C. Thus I fight

1. fight- Gr. **pukteo-** *the root word pugme is fist. to box*

a. Paul has used the metaphor of running, wrestling, and now boxing. All three were part of the Greek games. The Corinthians would be familiar with each of these.

D. not as one who beats the air

1. **beats**- Gr. **dero**- *to flay, skin, to beat, thrash, smite*

2. **air**- Gr. **aer**

a. Paul had a fixed specific target that he aimed at which is not the case with a boxer that is merely shadow boxing.

27. But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

A. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection,

1. **discipline**- Gr. **hupopiazo**- *to strike under the eyes, beat the face black and blue, give a black eye.*

a. This was done by faith through the Spirit, not natural beatings [scourgings] that the religious did routinely to their own bodies, which did nothing to curb the flesh. [Rom. 8:13](#), [Col. 2:23](#)

b. You will either be brought under subjection by the flesh or you will put it under subjection. [1Co 6:12](#) One or the other will happen.

c. It takes knowledge and faith to possess your body with honor. [1Th 4:4](#)

2. **body**- Gr. **soma**

a. There is something working in the human body that needs to be brought under subjection. This is the principle of sin in the flesh. [Rom. 8:3](#) This has been positionally dealt with at the cross and is experientially mortified by our faith in our identification with Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. [Gal. 5:24](#), [Rom. 6:11](#), [Rom. 8:13](#)

3. **bring into subjection**- Gr. **doulalogo**- *to make a slave and to treat as a slave, i.e. with severity, subject to stern and rigid discipline*

B. lest

C. when I have preached to others,

1. **preached**- Gr. **kerusso**- *to herald a message*

D. I myself should become disqualified

1. **become disqualified**- Gr. **adokimos**- *not standing the test, not*

approved, rejected, refused, not worthy of use

- a. Paul is not talking here of losing his salvation, but losing his ministry.
- b. The Greek word here was used of refining gold to see if it was genuine. Once it was proven and purified it could be utilized for honorable purposes. If Paul discredited himself he would not be useable by the Lord for honorable purposes such as preaching the glorious gospel of Christ.
- c. The picture here is of an athlete that did not compete by the rules and was disqualified from winning the prize. The athlete was not killed for this, but lost out on the prize. This is the same when it comes to the ministry. We can be disqualified from being used in the ministry and the reward that comes with it, but we don't lose our salvation which was a gift from God.