

# 1 CORINTHIANS

SEEING EVERY PART OF LIFE THROUGH THE GOSPEL

25 Apr 2021

Chapter 9

### Verse of the Day:

*<sup>19</sup> For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, ...<sup>23</sup> I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings. 1 Corinthians 9:19 & 23*

**Review:** Who, What, When, Where, Why?

### What's Going On Here?

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 all 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.<sup>1</sup>

#### Paul Surrenders His Rights

**9** Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? <sup>2</sup> If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

<sup>3</sup> This is my defense to those who would examine me. <sup>4</sup> Do we not have the right to eat and drink? <sup>5</sup> Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? <sup>6</sup> Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? <sup>7</sup> Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?

<sup>8</sup> Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? <sup>9</sup> For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? <sup>10</sup> Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. <sup>11</sup> If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if

v1: 4 x ? → "Yes"

v2: "seal of my apostleship" What do you think Paul means by this?

v4, 5, 6 – questions asked with sarcastic irony in the Greek.

v5: James, Joses (Joseph), Judas, Simon, & Cephas (Peter) most likely took their wives with them with the support of the church along their missionary journeys.

v10: c.f. Luke 10:7-8

<sup>1</sup> Engfehr, Lois M. (1997). *God's Word for Today: 1 Corinthians* (p. 46). St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House. Reproducible by purchaser only. © 2009 Concordia Publishing House.

we reap material things from you? <sup>12</sup> If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. <sup>13</sup> Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? <sup>14</sup> In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

<sup>15</sup> But **I** have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. <sup>16</sup> For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! <sup>17</sup> For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. <sup>18</sup> What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

<sup>19</sup> For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. <sup>20</sup> To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. <sup>21</sup> To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. <sup>23</sup> I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. <sup>25</sup> Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. <sup>26</sup> So **I** do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. <sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

v16: Jeremiah 20:9

v19: “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.”<sup>2</sup>

v22: Is Paul practicing syncretism (the mixing of diverse or contradictory elements of different religions into one hybrid religion)? Why?

v27: Literally, “I [myself] give my body a black eye.”<sup>3</sup>

“As a resident of Corinth in A.D. 50–52, [Paul] had probably witnessed the Isthmian Games in the spring of A.D. 51. This prestigious event, second only to the Olympic Games, was celebrated every two years about ten miles from Corinth. The basic athletic events included racing, wrestling, jumping, boxing, hurling the javelin, and throwing the discus.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Luther, M. (1999). *Luther's works, vol. 31: Career of the Reformer I*. (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.) (Vol. 31, p. 344). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

<sup>3</sup> Lockwood, G. J. (2000). *1 Corinthians* (p. 317). Saint Louis: Concordia Pub. House.

<sup>4</sup> Lockwood, G. J. (2000). *1 Corinthians* (p. 318). Saint Louis: Concordia Pub. House.