

## I Corinthians Lesson 09

I Cor. Chapter 9

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Memory verses for this week: *1 Pet 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

**Introduction:** Last week in Chapter 8, Paul went over how we should use our Christian Liberty wisely, lest we defeat the young Christian in his mind. Paul said that he would do all that he could do to not discourage the young Christian.

### I. Paul's True Apostleship

*1 Cor 9:1 Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?*

*1 Cor 9:2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.*

It appears that in some of the localities, opponents questioned Paul's apostleship. This was done to destroy the confidence of his authority to the people in the church. This would render his teaching ineffective.

Some of the Corinthians were examining Paul and his ministry. This chapter gives his answer. One of the qualifications for being an apostle was that he must have seen the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul did so on the road to Damascus, when he was saved.

*1 Cor. 15:8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

*Acts 1:21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

The apostles were used by God to lay the foundation of Church doctrine.

*Eph. 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an*

*habitation of God through the Spirit.*

*1 Cor 9:3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this,*

*1 Cor 9:4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?*

In Corinth, false teachers had accused Paul of not being a true apostle. It appears they had accused him of refusing money from the church because he was an imposter. Of course this was not true. Paul was a true apostle, chosen of God, and the people there in Corinth were his seal. (Verse 2) Regardless of what some might say, Paul was a true apostle, one directly sent by Jesus Christ.

*Acts 9:10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.*

*Acts 9:11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,*

*Acts 9:12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.*

*Acts 9:13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:*

*Acts 9:14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.*

*Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

*Acts 9:16 For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

*1 Cor 9:5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?*

*1 Cor 9:6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?*

As an apostle, Paul was free to claim all the privileges of such an office. Paul said he had the right to be supported financially by the church. They also had the right to be married, and they had the right to forbear working if they so chose.

Paul was not married, but other apostles were. Cephas (Peter) had a wife that must have traveled with him, at least part of the time, according to v. 5.

## **II. Preach the Gospel, Live the Gospel**

*1 Cor 9:7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?*

*1 Cor 9:8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?*

Paul compares the minister with a soldier, a vine dresser, and a shepherd. Each of these had a right to be supported by their chosen occupation, and would not be expected to go out and get some other job to support themselves. If someone thought him to be speaking as a man, Paul explains that the law of God teaches the same principle.

*Deu 25:4 Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.*

*1 Cor 9:9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?*

*1 Cor 9:10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.*

This implies that if God cares for oxen, how much more does He care for you and I? We know that even the hairs of our heads are numbered, and God knows more about us than we know ourselves. And if he takes care of the sparrow (and all animals), how much more does he care for us? Verse 10 teaches that one who labors should receive his just reward. In other words, the true Christian minister should be supported by the church to whom he ministers.

*1 Cor 9:11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*

*1 Cor 9:12 If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.*

Paul teaches that if we sow to the material realm and reap our labors, how much more should those who sow “spiritual things” reap for their efforts. Paul tells the church there in Corinth that he had not used his power to force this issue, and did not require of them to support him financially. Paul said they suffered all things that the gospel might be preached. Our mindset should be the same... whatever we can do, we should do it to reach others for Jesus Christ.

Should a preacher be supported by the Church where he is ministering. Paul says that he has, and he ardently defends it. He first defends it by custom. A soldier is furnished a uniform and equipment, and he is paid a wage. The farmer that plants and tends to the vine, has a right to eat of the fruit. The shepherd that cares for the flock, has the right to eat of the flock. Paul then defends it by the law.

There have been preachers who have abused this power. Among Godly Scriptural preachers, there have been for more cases of churches abusing the pastor in financial matters. Those who preach the Word have a right to be

supported.

*Gal. 6:6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.*

The word "communicate" means to give finances to the preacher.

*1 Tim. 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.*

J. Vernon McGee says this in his commentary on I Corinthians.

If folk have given you spiritual blessings, spiritual riches, then you should share your carnal blessings with them. I heard Torrey Johnson down in Bibletown in Florida say several times—and I think it is a good principle—that you ought to support the place where you get your blessing. Suppose you go down to eat at a certain restaurant. You don't walk down the street and around the corner into another restaurant to pay your bill; you pay the place that fed you. Yet many people do that sort of thing with their spiritual food. They get their spiritual blessings in one place, and they give their offerings in another place.

*1 Cor 9:13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?*

*1 Cor 9:14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*

Another point Paul makes in supporting the minister is that the Levitical priests of the Old Testament. As they ministered about "hold things", they received their living of these very things. The Lord Jesus has ordained that this principle should prevail in the present age.

*Mat 10:10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.*

Paul defends it by precedent. Other churches did support Paul in mission work.

*Phil. 4:15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.*

*2 Cor. 11:8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.*

Apparently, according to verse 12, other ministers had received financial support from the Church at Corinth. He defends it by the priesthood. The priest in the Tabernacle and Temple did have their support supplied. (See Num. 18:8-32; Lev. 6:14-7:36; 27:6-33)

He defends it by the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Luke 10:7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. 8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:*

### **III. Paul Cuts Short his Liberty for the Gospel's Sake**

*1 Cor 9:15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.*

*1 Cor 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*

Paul makes it clear that he had not taken money from the Corinthians, neither does he now write to call it to their attention so that they might provide for him. Paul would rather be dead than to have any man make his "glorying" void. He knew his responsibility was to preach the gospel. Money was very much inconsequential to him. Jeremiah was a man who knew he needed to preach the word of God.

*Jer 20:9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*

*1 Cor 9:17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.*

*1 Cor 9:18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.*

Paul teaches that as long as he performed his ministry willingly, and without compulsion, he would receive a reward. But even if compulsion forced him to preach the gospel, he would do it with all his ability because he did not want to abuse his power in the gospel. God had committed the gospel to Paul, and his desire was to fulfill the Lord's Will in his life.

It is sad that the unsaved world sometimes believe that preachers and churches are only out for the money. Unfortunately, some religious hucksters are in it for the money.

*1 Cor 9:19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*

*1 Cor 9:20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;*

*1 Cor 9:21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.*

*1 Cor 9:22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

*1 Cor 9:23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*

Paul was a man who would do his very best to relate to others. If he was witnessing to the Jews, he came as a Jew. Whatever it took, Paul did his best to get on common ground with people that they might believe him and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Effectively, Paul made himself a servant unto all that he by some means could gain the more for Christ. Every thing was done for the “gospel’s sake” so that he might be partaker with other Christians of the joy of bringing souls to the Lord.

Paul was willing to adapt to different classes of men in order to win them to Christ. He did not compromise to do this. He is not talking about adapting to the immorality of others. Nor is he talking about changing the doctrine of God to suit others. Paul was no chameleon-- changing his doctrine to fit the crowd he was with. He was willing to adapt to the manners and customs of the people, as long as it did not conflict with God's word.

Jesus constantly adapted his conversation to the different people He was dealing with. He talked to the woman at the well about water, leading on in the conversation to the water of life. He talked to the fisherman about fishing for men. He talked to the farmers about sowing the seed. In each instance he used the topic under discussion to set forth spiritual truths. This is a great example for every Christian.

#### **IV. Running the Race**

*1 Cor 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

*1 Cor 9:25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

*1 Cor 9:26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:*

*1 Cor 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

Paul likens the Christian race to that of an athlete. If a person is to win a race, he must discipline himself. He works out and does his best to train to win. When he wins the race here on earth, he wins a crown, but it is a corruptible crown. We as Christians strive not for a corruptible crown, but an incorruptible crown. Paul warns us to keep our bodies under subjection, lest after we preach to others, we become a castaway.

*Phil. 2:16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*

*Phil. 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

A good athlete is "temperate in all things." He is temperate in diet, in activities, etc. So must the Christian be, if he expects to prevail.

*James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

The goal is to receive the incorruptible crown. In the Grecian games, the winner was usually awarded a garland of flowers for a crown. Of course they would soon fade. The Christian who is faithful will receive an incorruptible crown that will never fade. Every Christian should take the contest seriously.

The Christian that fails to keep his body under control, will become a castaway. The Greek word for "castaway" was used in the Greek games to notify that a certain man was disqualified. It did not mean that he had lost his citizenship, or that he was going to jail. It meant that he was not qualified to compete for the prize. He lost his reward. A Christian "castaway" does not lose his salvation, but he or she is no longer useful to God, and will likely be put on the shelf.

*1 Cor. 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

There are many Christians today who are castaways. Some of them are pastors and missionaries. Others are Sunday School teachers, trustees, and deacons. How tragic that so many are losing the prize.

\* Comments from E.L. Bynum added in June 2013

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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