

1 Corinthians Chapter 9 Continued

1 Corinthians 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?"

Paul knew the Mosaic law. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. The high priest and his family lived of the offerings in the temple. The Levitical tribe had no land allotment. They were to share with the altar the offerings made thereon.

Old Testament priests were supported by the tithes of crops and animals, as well as of financial gifts.

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

If a person is a full-time minister of the gospel, there is no time left to make a living at another job. Some of the offerings made by the people to the church should be used for a salary for the minister of the church. Usually a board is set up, and they determine what the church can afford to pay the minister.

1 Corinthians 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."

Strangely enough, this instruction that Paul had given the church on taking care of their minister was not to receive for himself, but that they might take care of those after him who came to minister. Paul was very independent, and did not want it said that he had gone into this as an avocation. He was not in the ministry for the benefits that he might gain. He was called by the Lord Jesus Christ as a minister.

He was compelled to do this. His desire was to do the will of the Lord. Paul learned to be abased and to abound. In other words, he had learned to be content during the bad times as well as the good times.

He did not let anything keep him from carrying the message God had given him. Paul was proud that he did not have to depend on sustenance from those he had converted to Christianity.

Paul was genuinely overjoyed for the privilege of serving the Lord and did not want material support to rob him of it in any way.

1 Corinthians 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 tells them here that he has nothing to brag about. As we said Paul was compelled to preach to everyone who would listen. The moment he encountered the great Light (Jesus Christ), Paul's

entire life was changed. He had been zealous to capture the Christians and imprison them, because he thought he was doing God's will. Now he knows that he is doing God's will, and he is even more zealous to tell of Jesus. Paul wanted to please God all the time; he was just not fully informed. That is the way with many people today that are off in error. They are just not fully informed. They want to do the will of God but they just do not know what His will is for their lives.

After Paul became fully informed, he used the rest of his life to preach the good news of Jesus Christ. Paul was not caught up in boasting, but in thanksgiving that he had learned the truth.

“Woe”: This means that God’s severest chastening is reserved for unfaithful ministers (Heb. 13:17; James 3:1).

1 Corinthians 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."

Paul was called of God to carry this message. He had a choice to do it or not. He willingly chose to carry this message of Christ.

“Against my will”: This does not indicate that Paul was unwilling to obey but that his will had no part in the call itself. Since it was God’s sovereign choice and call, he received not a “reward,” but a “stewardship” (a valuable responsibility or duty to be carefully managed).

Since he followed the will of God, there will be a great reward awaiting him in heaven. "Dispensation", in the verse above, means administration. The gospel then, was given to him to administer.

1 Corinthians 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."

As we said in a previous lesson, Paul decided to work as a tentmaker to make his own way, so he could give freely to all who would receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul explains that great power had been given unto him pertaining to the gospel. He refused to use that power to further himself.

“My reward” meaning not money, but the privilege of preaching the gospel without support, was Paul’s reward, so that he set aside his liberty.

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

By choice, he set aside his right to be supported, and thus “enslaved” himself to self-support, in order to remove a potential offense and win more people to Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 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;"

This, and the verses following, explains a lot of the things that most do not understand about Paul. Paul brought the gospel message to each group in a different way. He did not alter their customs, but brought the gospel message to each within their customs.

When Paul was ministering to Jews, he was quick to remind them that he was a Jew. He would tell them that he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

Within the limits of God's Word and his Christian conscience, he would be as culturally and socially Jewish as necessary when witnessing to Jews. He was not bound to ceremonies and traditions of Judaism. All legal restraints had been removed, but there was the constraint of love.

He kept the law, to impress those who were under the law that he was not trying to do away with the law. He wanted, at any cost, to be allowed to tell them of Jesus (their Messiah).

1 Corinthians 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."

He proclaimed grace through the sacrifice of Jesus, when he was speaking to Gentiles. To these people, he was a Christian and nothing more. He tried to reach each group where they were.

Paul was not suggesting the violating of God's moral law, but, as he explained, not being lawless toward God, but abiding by the law of Jesus Christ (James 1:25; 2:8 and 2:12).

1 Corinthians 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."

"Weak": Meaning he stooped to make the gospel clear at the lower level of comprehension, which Paul no doubt had done often while dealing with the Corinthians themselves. "All things ... all means": Within the bounds of God's Word, he would not offend the Jew, Gentile or those weak in understanding. Not changing Scripture or compromising the truth, he would condescend in ways that could lead to salvation.

1 Corinthians 9:23 "And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with [you]."

Paul explains that his goal is to further the gospel. Whatever it takes for Paul to be allowed to bring the gospel message, is what he is doing. Paul's aim is to take the gospel message to everyone.

In verses 24-27 we find that liberty cannot be limited without self-control, since the flesh resists limits on its freedom. Here, Paul speaks of his personal self-control.

1 Corinthians 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."

The Greeks enjoyed two great athletic events, the Olympic games and the Isthmian games and because the Isthmian events were held in Corinth, believers there were quite familiar with this analogy of running to win.

Racing was very prominent in Corinth in those days. The races were very similar to what is done in the Olympics today. Again, Paul is giving an example that they will understand. Life is very much like a race. We are all trying to make it to the finish line. Christianity is a race that is run on a narrow path. We are to look straight ahead to the Lord. Our path is lit by the Light of Jesus.

We must never stop, until the end is reached. We must not wander off the track and lose our way. We must never turn back. This race is for everlasting life. The prize that the Christian wins is everlasting life with the Lord Jesus. We must run and not be weary.

1 Corinthians 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."

These young men that ran in the physical race took good care of their bodies. They did not indulge in strong drink, or in anything else that might cause them not to be strong. They disciplined their lives, so their body would be in good condition to run.

The very worst thing a Christian can do is to eat or drink anything that will alter their ability to think. Christians must be totally free of drugs and alcohol, so they will be able to think clearly enough to make correct decisions. Christians must live disciplined lives as well. We must not allow ourselves to get involved in worldly things.

"Temperate" meaning self-control, which is crucial to victory. Corruptible crown here is referring to those who race in the Olympic or Isthmian games and winning a wreath of greenery which was given to the winner of the race. But the incorruptible crown is for those who Christ will reward at his return who have been faithful to His Testimony"

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

Paul is saying, you don't run just to be running, but to finish the race. He is saying, he is not preaching just to hear himself speak, but to get results. There must be a goal in ministering, just as there is a finish line in a race. "Beating the air" just means action in futility, a metaphor to boxing to illustrate the point that he was no shadow boxer, just waving his arms without effect.

1 Corinthians 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 is saying here, that he practices what he preaches. He disciplines himself to the teachings of the Bible. He not only preaches the gospel, but lives the gospel, as well. He does not allow his body to rule his spirit. He disciplines himself, so that he will not be a hypocrite when he is teaching others. Paul lives the Christian life before all that he ministers to.

1 Corinthians Chapter 9 Continued Questions

1. What do the ministers live of?
2. Why did Paul know the Mosaic law so well?
3. What tribe had no land allotment?
4. They which preach the gospel should live of the _____.
5. Why had Paul instructed them about giving?
6. Paul said, he would rather die than do what?
7. Paul's ministry was not an avocation, but a _____.
8. What is Paul saying in this?
9. Why are many in error today in their belief?
10. Paul was not caught up in boasting, but in _____.
11. Was it within Paul's power to refuse his call to preach?
12. What type salary did Paul receive for his work?
13. What is Paul's reward?
14. Verse 19 says that Paul has made himself what?
15. What was Paul to the Jews?
16. Why had he done this?
17. What did Paul become, when he was speaking to non-Jews?
18. Why must every little thing that Paul did and said not be taken for general doctrine?
19. Why did Paul do this?
20. Paul's goal was to further the _____.

21. What is Paul really speaking of, when he speaks of running a race?
22. Describe the race of the Christian.
23. What one thing was needed to be able to run a good race?
24. What is about the worst thing a Christian can do?
25. What is meant by "beating the air"?
26. Paul not only preaches the gospel, but _____ the gospel, as well.