

## 1 Corinthians Chapter 9

**1 Corinthians 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?"**

In chapter 8, Paul set out the limits of Christian liberty. In this chapter, he sets forth how he followed them in his own life. (In verses 1-18), he discusses his right to be financially supported by those to whom he ministers. (In verses 19-27), he explains how he would give up all rights to win people to Christ. These questions are rhetorical, the “yes” answer to each being assumed.

In the very beginning, we must remember that Paul is answering letters that had been written to him from this church at Corinth. He is reminding them that his authority had come from him being an apostle of Jesus Christ. He also, reminds them that his calling was a dramatic call when he actually came in contact with the Light of the world. Jesus Christ Himself, who had sent Paul to minister to these people. It is with no small authority then that he is doing this. Paul even reminds them, that he was the one who founded the church in Corinth. He goes on to remind them that they were Christians through his ministry. He says, you are my children in the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 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."**

Paul is saying to them that in some other places, he might not be accepted as the voice to the Gentiles, but here at Corinth the church established was through his preaching. He is saying, you cannot deny me without denying your own salvation. The Jews in nearly every city had rejected Paul, but he had been accepted here at Corinth by these believers. The existence of the church in Corinth was evidence of Paul's apostolic authenticity.

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

It seems that even here at the church that Paul had started, some had begun to question Paul's authority.

Using the word “examine” is a Greek legal term for preliminary investigation” required before a decision was reached in a case. Paul sets out to defend his rights.

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

Paul is explaining to them that the apostle's living should come from the people he ministers to. They ministered to the people with no strings attached, but the people must from a free will support those who minister to them.

1 Tim. 5:17-18 "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer [is] worthy of his reward."

**1 Corinthians 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?"**

There were many women, as well as men, that traveled with Paul and ministered with him. Paul is explaining to them, that they are not traveling with him as girlfriends, but ministers. Many of the wives traveled with their husbands who were ministering, as well. Sometimes these journeys lasted for months and sometimes for years. I will give just one Scripture here, which shows why the women traveled with Paul.

Philippians 4:3 "And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with] other my fellow laborers, whose names [are] in the book of life."

We should also read in (Luke chapter 8), the first few verses and we will find that Jesus, also, had women traveling with Him and the 12 apostles to minister. Why do not the expositors just accept this for what it says? The women ministered with Paul and the apostles.

Cephas was Peter who was married (Mark 1:29-31).

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

With sarcasm, Paul, a tentmaker (Acts 18:3), let the Corinthians know that he and Barnabas had as much right as others to receive full financial support from their work. Except for help from a few churches, they paid their own expenses not because of obligation or necessity, but voluntarily.

Besides a few churches, history teaches that Dorcas gave to the ministry of Paul.

Dorcas (or Tabitha), in Aramaic. Both names mean "gazelle", and is mentioned (in Acts 9:36-42). She was a member of the early Christian community in Joppa, a seacoast town of Israel, and noted for her acts of charity. In particular, for making garments and giving them to needy widows. When she fell ill and died, Peter came to see her, and raised her to life. His words to her, "Tabitha, kumi," (Tabitha, arise), are reminiscent of the words of Jesus to the daughter of Jairus.

**1 Corinthians 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?"**

Paul is showing how ridiculous it is for the minister of God to have to furnish his own living. In the Law of Moses, it was taught that those who ministered were to live of the things of the temple. The worker is worthy of his hire. Even in the world, the people are paid for the work they do, whether they are working for the government or on a job.

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

Paul was speaking of the Law of Moses, which had taught that the priest, and high priest, and their family were to live of the gifts brought to the temple.

**1 Corinthians 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?"**

Paul is saying, can't you see that this is not speaking of oxen, but of men who labor for the Lord?

The law as stated (in Deut. 25:4), "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out [the corn]."

**1 Corinthians 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."**

There would be no reason for a person to plough, if he could not reap of the harvest. Work brings a reward. Our labor is not in vain. Man works to feed and clothe his family. Paul is saying to these people, just because this work is for the kingdom of God, does that mean that the workers will not be able to live of the offerings? Of course, the answer is obvious. Those who work in the ministry should take their living of the ministry. Those who minister should not minister for great wealth or even for the pay, but they must be paid so they can continue another day.

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

God's law is if you sow, you shall reap. Paul is saying here, that they sowed spiritual things, which are much better than the carnal things they shall reap. What shall a man gain, if he win the whole world and lose his own soul? The spiritual is much to be desired.

These people are hesitant to pay the living needed by Paul and Barnabas, because the labor they had done was beneficial to the spirit and could not be seen with the eye. Paul is reminding them how much more valuable the spiritual is than the carnal. If they had all the carnal wealth in the world and had no spiritual awakening, they would be poor indeed.

**1 Corinthians 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 says to them, even though it was his right to have a living from those he had ministered to here, he did not require it, because he did not want them thinking that that is why he ministered to them. Paul is not asking for himself, but teaching them a principal. He does say, if anyone had a right to be supported of you in the ministry, it was me.

Apparently, the church had financially supported other ministers. "Suffer": False teachers sought money. Paul wanted to be certain he was not classed with them, so he endured not accepting support, so as not to offend.

We will continue with this in the next lesson. It is enough to say that Paul gave them a truth here that has helped many a preacher. Ministers must eat and sleep just like everyone else. They need clothes for their backs and a car to get to church in. If they spend all their time working for God, they have no time left to make the money needed for these things. Preachers, or ministers, are supposed to spend their time in prayer, and study of God's Word, and in ministering to God's people. They are not to do earthly jobs. They belong to God 24 hours a day. They have no spare time.

## **1 Corinthians Chapter 9 Questions**

1. What does Paul call himself in verse 1?
2. Who did Paul say he had seen?
3. What was the purpose of this chapter written by Paul?
4. Who had sent Paul to minister to these people?
5. In verse one, what are some of the things Paul reminds them of?
6. Why should these people, of all he had ministered to, accept him as an apostle?
7. Verse 3 shows what about Paul's ministry?
8. Where should the apostle's living come from?
9. What was Paul talking about in verse 5?
10. What were the women with Paul doing with him?
11. Where do we find one Scripture that answers this question?
12. Where do we find in the Scriptures that women traveled with Jesus as well?
13. What other minister of the gospel does Paul speak of in verse 6?
14. How had Paul made his living?
15. Was this where his living should have come from?
16. What woman does history tell us gave heavily to Paul's ministry?
17. What ridiculous things was Paul comparing ministering with no pay to in verse 7?
18. What law was Paul speaking of in verse 8?

19. Give the statement that had been made in the law of Moses?
20. He that ploweth should plow in \_\_\_\_\_.
21. Those who work in the ministry should take their living from the \_\_\_\_\_.
22. Paul said they had sown unto them spiritual things, and should reap \_\_\_\_\_ things.
23. Why were the people reluctant to pay Paul and Barnabas for their labors?
24. Why did Paul make his own living by making tents?