

## 1 CORINTHIANS 9 |

### *Paul's Credentials as an Apostle*

1 Am I not free (ἐλεύθερος)? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship (ἔργον) in the Lord [Jesus]? 2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal (σφραγίς)<sup>1</sup> of my apostleship (ἀποστολή) in the Lord [Jesus].

### *The Rights Paul May Exercise*

3 This is my defense (ἀπολογία) to those who would examine (ἀνακρίνω, pres.) me. 4 Do we not have a right (ἐξουσία) to eat and drink? 5 Do we not have the right (ἐξουσία) to take along a sister-wife (ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα), as do the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord [Jesus], and Cephas [Peter]? 6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right (ἐξουσία) not to work? 7 Who serves in the army (στρατεύω, pres.) at his own expense? Who plants (φύτεύω, pres.) a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who shepherds (ποιμαίνω, pres.) a flock and does not eat from the milk (γάλα) of the flock?

8 Do I say these things on human authority (Μὴ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον)? Does not the Torah (ὁ νόμος) say the same? 9 For it is written in the Torah of Moses (τῷ Μωϋσέως νόμῳ),

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

Is it for oxen that God is concerned (μέλει, pres.)? 10 Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because

The plowman plows (ἀροτριάω, pres.) in hope, and the thresher (ἀλοάω) in hope, of sharing (μετέχω, pres.) in the crop.

11 If we have sown (σπείρω, aor.) spiritual things (τὰ πνευματικὰ) among you, is it too much if we will reap (θερίζω, fut.) fleshly things (τὰ σαρκικὰ) from you? 12 If others share (μετέχω) this rightful claim (ἐξουσία) on you, do not we even more?

### *Paul Foregoes These Rights*

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right (ἐξουσία), but we endure (στέγω, pres.)<sup>2</sup> all things rather in order that we may not cause some hindrance (ἐγκοπὴ)<sup>3</sup> to the gospel of Messiah. 13 Do you not know that those who work (ἐργάζομαι, pres.) the things of the temple (τὰ ἱερὰ) eat from the things of the temple (τὰ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ), and those who serve at the altar

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<sup>1</sup> “[T]hat which confirms or authenticates, attestation, confirmation, certification” (BDAG, 980).

<sup>2</sup> “[T]o bear up against difficulties, bear, stand, endure” (BDAG, 942).

<sup>3</sup> “[T]hat which holds back the progress of someth., hindrance” (BDAG, 274).

(θυσιαστήριον)<sup>4</sup> share in the sacrificial offerings (συμμερίζω, pres.)<sup>5</sup>? 14 In the same way, the Lord [Jesus] commanded (διατάσσω, aor.)<sup>6</sup> those proclaiming (καταγγέλλω)<sup>7</sup> the gospel to live (ζάω, pres.) from the gospel (ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου). 15 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 (ἀποθνήσκω, aor.)—so that no one will deprive me of my boasting (καύχημα).<sup>8</sup>

16 For if I proclaim the gospel (εὐαγγελίζω, pres.)<sup>9</sup> that gives me no ground for boasting (καύχημα). For necessity (ἀνάγκη) is laid upon (ἐπίκειμαι, pres.)<sup>10</sup> me. Woe (οὐαί) to me if I do not proclaim the gospel (εὐαγγελίζω, aor.)! 17 For if I practice this willingly (ἐκόν),<sup>11</sup> I have a reward (μισθός),<sup>12</sup> but if not willingly (ἄκων), I have been entrusted (πιστεύω, perf. pass.) with a commission (οἰκονομία).<sup>13</sup> 18 What then is my reward (μισθός)? That in announcing good news I may proclaim the gospel free of charge (ἄδάπανος), so as not to make full use (καταχράομαι, aor.)<sup>14</sup> of my right (ἐξουσία) in the gospel (ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ).

### *All Things to All People*

19 For though I am free (ἐλεύθερος) from all (ἐκ πάντων), I have made myself a slave (δουλόω, aor.)<sup>15</sup> to all, that I might gain (κερδαίνω, aor.) the more. 20 To the Jews I became (γίνομαι, aor.) as a Jew, in order that I may gain Jews. To those under Torah I became (γίνομαι, aor.) as one under Torah (though not being myself under Torah) that I might gain

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<sup>4</sup> “[A] structure on which cultic observances are carried out, including esp. sacrifices, *altar*...of the altar of burnt offering in the inner forecourt of the temple at Jerusalem” (BDAG, 463).

<sup>5</sup> “[T]o receive a portion in association with, *share with*” (BDAG, 957).

<sup>6</sup> “[T]o give (detailed) instructions as to what must be done, *order*” (BDAG, 237).

<sup>7</sup> “[T]o make known in public, with implication of broad dissemination, *proclaim, announce*” (BDAG, 515).

<sup>8</sup> “[A]ct of taking pride in someth. or that which constitutes a source of pride, *boast*” (BDAG, 537). Paul’s foregoing of his rights is a basis for pride.

<sup>9</sup> “[G]ener. *bring good news, announce good news*...mostly specif. proclaim the divine message of salvation, *proclaim the gospel*” (BDAG, 402).

<sup>10</sup> “[T]o have the force of obligation, *be imposed, be incumbent*” (BDAG, 373).

<sup>11</sup> “[P]ert. to being favorably disposed to do someth. without pressure, *willing(ly), glad(ly)*” (BDAG, 313).

<sup>12</sup> “[R]emuneration for work done, *pay, wages*...recognition (mostly by God) for the moral quality of an action, *recompense*...in affirmation of laudable conduct *reward*” (BDAG, 653).

<sup>13</sup> “[R]esponsibility of management, *management* of a household, *direction, office*...lit., of the work of an οἰκονόμος ‘estate manager’.... Paul applies the idea of administration to the office of an apostle οἰκονομίαν *πεπίστευμαι I have been entrusted with a commission/task*” (BDAG, 697).

<sup>14</sup> “As a rule the prep. gives the simple verb a special coloring (‘make full use of’, ‘misuse’, ‘use up’); in the only two pass. where it occurs in our lit. (both 1 Cor), this word differs little, if at all, fr. the simple verb: *use*” (BDAG, 530).

<sup>15</sup> “[T]o make someone a slave (δούλος)...to make one subservient to one’s interests, *cause to be like a slave*” (BDAG, 260).

those under Torah. 21 To those outside Torah (ἄνομος)<sup>16</sup> as one outside Torah (not being outside the Torah of God but under the Torah of Messiah) that I might gain those outside Torah. 22 To the weak I became (γίνομαι, aor.) weak, that I might gain the weak. I have become (γίνομαι, perf.) all things to all people, that by all means I might save some (τινὰς). 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, in order to become its copartner (συγκοινωνός).<sup>17</sup>

### *Run to Obtain the Prize*

24 Do you not know that in a stadium (στάδιον) all the runners indeed run, but only one receives the prize (βραβεῖον)?<sup>18</sup> So run (τρέχω, pres.) that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control (ἐγκρατεύομαι, pres.)<sup>19</sup> in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath (στέφανος),<sup>20</sup> but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly (ἀδήλως). I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline (ὑπωπιάζω, pres.)<sup>21</sup> my body and subjugate (δουλαγωγέω, pres.) it, lest after preaching (κηρύσσω, aor.) to others I myself should be disqualified (ἀδόκιμος).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> “[P]ert. to being without adherence to a moral code *outside law, without law*...w. ref. to the Mosaic law, used of gentiles as persons who do not know it...., w. no criticism implied.... W. the phrase ὡς ἄνομος...Paul indicates empathy for those outside Mosaic tradition” (BDAG, 85).

<sup>17</sup> “[P]articipant, partner...of business partners” (BDAG, 952).

<sup>18</sup> “[A]n award for exceptional performance, *prize, award*” (BDAG, 183).

<sup>19</sup> “[T]o keep one’s emotions, impulses, or desires under control, *control oneself, abstain*” (BDAG, 274).

<sup>20</sup> “[A] wreath made of foliage or designed to resemble foliage and worn by one of high status or held in high regard, *wreath, crown*...award or prize for exceptional service or conduct, *prize, reward*” (BDAG, 943).

<sup>21</sup> “[T]o put under strict discipline, *punish, treat roughly, torment*, also fig. ...of the apostle’s self-imposed discipline. But the expr. is obviously taken fr. the language of prize-fighting...; on the virtue of self-control cp. X., Mem. 2, 1, 1; 5)” (BDAG, 1043).

<sup>22</sup> “[N]ot standing the test’, then *unqualified, worthless, base*” (BDAG, 21).

## Commentary

### 1. Overview.

- a. In ch. 8, Paul instructs the Corinthians to forego their rights out of love for others. In ch. 9, he shares how he himself has applied this principle.
  - (1) **1 Co 4:16** 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me.
  - (2) **1 Co 11:1** 1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Messiah.
- b. What are we willing to forego for the spread of the gospel and the building up of the local church?
- c. The New Zealand Bill of Rights (1990):
  - (1) 13 Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief, including the right to adopt and to hold opinions without interference.”
  - (2) 14 Freedom of expression: “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and opinions of any kind in any form.”
  - (3) 15 Manifestation of religion and belief: “Every person has the right to manifest that person’s religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, or teaching, either individually or in community with others, and either in public or in private.”
- d. Bethlehem College (June 2022): “In the last week, Bethlehem College (in Tauranga) has been under criticism in the media from LGBTQ+ advocates. Among other things, they object to the clause in the College’s statement of belief that ‘In the beginning God created male and female. Marriage is an institution created by God in which one man and one woman enter into a relationship intended for life, and that marriage is the only form of partnership approved by God for sexual relations.’ They also report that, following a complaint, the Ministry of Education has asked the school to remove that clause, because it was not part of the original integration agreement in 1999.”

### 2. Paul’s Credentials as an Apostle (1 Co 9:1-2).

- a. **1 Co 9:1-2** 1 Am I not free (ἐλεύθερος)? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship (ἔργον) in the Lord [Jesus]? 2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal (σφραγίς)<sup>23</sup> of my apostleship (ἀποστολή) in the Lord [Jesus].
- b. Paul:
  - (1) Is free (v. 1a).
  - (2) Is an apostle (v. 1b).
    - (a) There is considerable question in the minds of many Corinthians whether Paul has proper apostolic authority to instruct them because: (1) he has not accepted support from them; and (2) his own apparently compromising stance on eating food sacrificed to idols (he abstained when eating with Jews, but ate when eating with Gentiles; cf. 1 Co 9:19-23).<sup>24</sup> Clearly Paul’s apostleship was at stake in Corinth.

<sup>23</sup> “[T]hat which confirms or authenticates, attestation, confirmation, certification” (*BDAG*, 980).

<sup>24</sup> Gordon Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 360-61.

- 1) **1 Co 1:1** 1 Paul, called by the desire of God to be an apostle of Messiah Jesus....
- 2) **1 Co 4:1** 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
- 3) **1 Co 4:9** 9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.
- 4) **1 Co 4:14-16** 14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you have countless guides in Messiah, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Messiah Jesus through the gospel. 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me.
  - (b) Paul is definitely an apostle.
    - 1) **Ac 14:14** 14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd....
    - 2) **2 Co 12:12** 12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs, wonders, and mighty works.
    - 3) **1 Th 2:6** 6 Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Messiah.
  - (3) Is one who has seen Jesus (v. 1c).
    - (a) **1 Co 15:8** 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, [Jesus] appeared also to me [Paul].
    - (b) **Ac 9:17** 17 And laying his hands on him [Ananias] said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.
    - (c) **Ac 18:9** 9 And the Lord [Jesus] said to Paul one night in a vision, Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent....
    - (d) **Ac 23:11** 11 The following night the Lord [Jesus] stood by him and said, Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.
  - (4) Has the Corinthians as his:
    - (a) Workmanship in the Lord (v. 1d).
      - 1) **1 Co 3:6** 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.
    - (b) Seal of apostleship in the Lord (v. 2).
      - 1) **2 Co 3:2** 2 You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all.

### 3. The Rights Paul May Exercise (1 Co 9:3-12).

- a. **1 Co 9:3-12** 3 This is my defense (ἀπολογία) to those who are examining (ἀνακρίνω, pres.) me. 4 Do we not have a right (ἐξουσία) to eat and drink? 5 Do we not have the right (ἐξουσία) to take along a sister-wife (ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα), as do the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord [Jesus], and Cephas [Peter]? 6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right (ἐξουσία) not to work? 7 Who serves in the army (στρατεύω, pres.) at his own expense? Who plants (φυτεύω, pres.) a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who shepherds (ποιμαίνω, pres.) a flock and does not eat from the milk (γάλα) of the flock? 8 Do I say these things on human authority (Μὴ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον)? Does not the Torah (ὁ νόμος) say the same? 9 For it is written in the Torah of Moses (τῷ Μωϋσέως νόμῳ), You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain. Is it for oxen that God is concerned (μέλει, pres.)? 10 Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because The plowman plows (ἀροτριάω, pres.) in hope, and the thresher (ἀλοάω) in hope, of sharing (μετέχω, pres.) in the crop. 11 If we have sown (σπείρω, aor.) spiritual things (τὰ πνευματικὰ) among you, is it too much if we will reap (θερίζω, fut.) material things (τὰ σαρκικὰ) from you? 12 If others share (μετέχω) this rightful claim (ἐξουσία) on you, do not we even more?
- b. Paul has a defense (ἀπολογία) to those who are examining (ἀνακρίνω, pres.) him (v. 3).
  - (1) ἀπολογία: “a speech of defense, *defense, reply*...the act of making a defense, *defense*...in court” (BDAG, 117).
  - (2) ἀνακρίνω: “to engage in careful study of a question, *question, examine*, of general questions...to conduct a judicial hearing, *hear a case, question*, administrative term w. acc. of pers. examined...to examine with a view to finding fault, *judge, call to account, discern*” (BDAG, 66).
- c. Paul and his companions have rights to:
  - (1) Eat and drink (v. 4).
    - (a) **1 Th 2:9** 9 For you remember, brothers and sisters, our labor and toil. We worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.
    - (b) **2 Th 3:8-9** 8 ...Nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.
  - (2) Marry a believing sister, as do the other apostles (v. 5).
    - (a) Peter and other apostles are married.
      - 1) **Mt 8:14** 14 And when Jesus entered Peter’s house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever.
      - (b) This counters the Roman Catholic requirement of clerical celibacy.
  - (3) Not to work (v. 6).
    - (a) The Corinthians believed Paul had worked with his hands because he lacked apostolic rights, not because he had chosen to forego them.
    - (b) Note: Paul considers Barnabas an “apostle.”
- d. Of course full-time Christian workers should be compensated for their work. This is how it works for:



- (1) Soldiers (v. 7a).
  - (a) **2 Co 10:4** 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.
  - (b) **1 Ti 1:18** 18 This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare....
  - (c) **2 Ti 2:3-4** 3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Messiah Jesus. 4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.
- (2) Vineyard planters (v. 7b).
  - (a) **1 Co 3:6-8** 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.
  - (b) **Dt 20:6** 6 And is there any man who has planted a vineyard and has not enjoyed its fruit? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man enjoy its fruit.
  - (c) **Pr 27:18** 18 Whoever tends a fig tree will eat its fruit....
- (3) Shepherds (v. 7c).
- (4) Oxen treading out the grain (vv. 8-10a).
  - (a) **Dt 25:4** 4 You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.
  - (b) **1 Ti 5:18** 18 For the Scripture says, You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain, and, The labourer deserves his wages.
- (5) Plowmen and threshers (v. 10b).
  - (a) **2 Ti 2:6** 6 It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.
- e. Those who sow spiritual things are entitled to reap material things (v. 11).
  - (1) **Ro 15:27** 27 For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.
  - (2) **Ga 6:6** 6 Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.
  - (3) “Pay the restaurant where you have just eaten.” Support the place where you get your blessing.
  - (4) Paul and his companions are definitely entitled to compensation from the Corinthians, given their relationship (v. 12).
- f. Application.
  - (1) Compensate those who are actively engaged in gospel ministry.

#### 4. Paul Foregos These Rights (1 Co 9:12-15).

- a. **1 Co 9:12-15** 12 Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right (ἐξουσία), but we endure (στέγω, pres.)<sup>25</sup> all things rather in order that we may not cause some hindrance (ἐγκοπὴ) to the gospel of Messiah. 13 Do you not know that those who work (ἐργάζομαι, pres.) the things of the temple (τὰ ἱερὰ) eat from the things of the temple (τὰ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ), and those who serve at the altar (θυσιαστήριον)<sup>26</sup> share in the sacrificial offerings (συμμερίζω, pres.)<sup>27</sup>? 14 In the same way, the Lord [Jesus] commanded (διατάσσω, aor.)<sup>28</sup> those proclaiming (καταγγέλλω)<sup>29</sup> the gospel to live (ζάω, pres.) from the gospel (ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου). 15 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 (ἀποθνήσκω, aor.)—so that no one will deprive me of my boasting (καύχημα).<sup>30</sup>
- b. Again Paul reinforces the principle of just compensation for Christian workers (vv. 13-14).
  - (1) In the Old Testament:
    - (a) Those who work the things of the temple eat from the things of the temple (v. 13a).
    - (b) Those who serve at the altar share in the offerings sacrificed on the altar (v. 13b).
    - (c) **Le 6:16** 16 And the rest of it Aaron and his sons shall eat. It shall be eaten unleavened in a holy place. In the court of the tent of meeting they shall eat it.
    - (d) **Le 6:26** 26 The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tent of meeting.
    - (e) **Le 7:6** 6 Every male among the priests may eat of it. It shall be eaten in a holy place. It is most holy.
    - (f) **Nu 5:9** 9 And every contribution, all the holy donations of the people of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his.
    - (g) **Nu 5:10** 10 Each one shall keep his holy donations: whatever anyone gives to the priest shall be his.
    - (h) Nu 18:8-20
    - (i) **Dt 18:1** 1 The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the Lord's food offerings as their inheritance.
  - (2) Jesus himself commanded gospel workers to live from the gospel (v. 14).
    - (a) **Mt 10:10** 10 ...The labourer deserves his food.

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<sup>25</sup> “[T]o bear up against difficulties, *bear, stand, endure*” (BDAG, 942).

<sup>26</sup> “[A] structure on which cultic observances are carried out, including esp. sacrifices, *altar*...of the altar of burnt offering in the inner forecourt of the temple at Jerusalem” (BDAG, 463).

<sup>27</sup> “[T]o receive a portion in association with, *share with*” (BDAG, 957).

<sup>28</sup> “[T]o give (detailed) instructions as to what must be done, *order*” (BDAG, 237).

<sup>29</sup> “[T]o make known in public, with implication of broad dissemination, *proclaim, announce*” (BDAG, 515).

<sup>30</sup> “[A]ct of taking pride in someth. or that which constitutes a source of pride, *boast*” (BDAG, 537). Paul’s foregoing of his rights is a basis for pride.



- (b) **Lk 10:7** 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the labourer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.
- c. Paul and his companions have waived their right to compensation (v. 12a). This is for two reasons:
  - (1) They don't want to cause a hindrance (ἐγκοπή) to the gospel (v. 12b).
    - (a) ἐγκοπή: “[T]hat which holds back the progress of someth., *hindrance*” (BDAG, 274).
    - (b) **Ac 20:33** 33 I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.
    - (c) **2 Co 6:3** 3 We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry....
    - (d) **2 Co 11:12** 12 And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do.
  - (2) Paul takes pride in ministering free of charge (v. 15b). It is his personal policy.
    - (a) **Ac 18:3** 3 ...And because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.
    - (b) **2 Co 11:10** 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia.
- d. Application.
  - (1) Just because we have rights doesn't mean we have to use them.

## 5. The Necessity of Proclaiming the Gospel (1 Co 9:16-18).

- a. **1 Co 9:16-18** 16 For if I proclaim the gospel (εὐαγγελίζω, pres.),<sup>31</sup> that gives me no ground for boasting (καύχημα). For necessity (ἀνάγκη) is laid upon (ἐπίκειμαι, pres.)<sup>32</sup> me. Woe (οὐαί) to me if I do not proclaim the gospel (εὐαγγελίζω, aor.)! 17 For if I practice this willingly (ἐκὼν),<sup>33</sup> I have a reward (μισθός),<sup>34</sup> but if not willingly (ἄκων), I have been entrusted (πιστεύω, perf. pass.) with a commission (οἰκονομία).<sup>35</sup> 18 What then is my reward (μισθός)? That in announcing good news I may proclaim the gospel free of charge (ἀδάπανος), so as not to make full use (καταχράομαι, aor.)<sup>36</sup> of my right (ἐξουσία) in the gospel (ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ).
- b. Paul does not boast in his gospel ministry (v. 16a) because:
  - (1) He must proclaim the gospel out of necessity (v. 16b)
    - (a) **Ac 4:20** 20 ... We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.
    - (b) **Ro 1:14** 14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.
  - (2) He has been entrusted with a commission (v. 17b).
    - (a) **1 Co 4:1** 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Messiah and stewards of the mysteries of God.
    - (b) **Lk 17:10** 10 So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, We are unworthy servants. We have only done what was our duty.
    - (c) **Ga 2:7** 7 ... When they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised....
  - (3) If he proclaims the gospel willingly (v. 17a), he has a reward, but this is secondary.
- c. His “reward” is waiving compensation and proclaiming the gospel free of charge (v. 18).
  - (1) **2 Co 11:7** 7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God’s gospel to you free of charge?
  - (2) **2 Co 12:13** 13 For in what were you less favoured than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!
  - (3) Paul’s relinquishing his right to financial support corresponds to giving up his right to eat in a pagan temple (1 Co 8:13). In both cases it was the welfare of others that led him to forego his right.

<sup>31</sup> “[G]ener. *bring good news, announce good news*...mostly specif. proclaim the divine message of salvation, *proclaim the gospel*” (BDAG, 402).

<sup>32</sup> “[T]o have the force of obligation, *be imposed, be incumbent*” (BDAG, 373).

<sup>33</sup> “[P]ert. to being favorably disposed to do someth. without pressure, *willing(ly), glad(ly)*” (BDAG, 313).

<sup>34</sup> “[R]emuneration for work done, *pay, wages*...recognition (mostly by God) for the moral quality of an action, *recompense*...in affirmation of laudable conduct *reward*” (BDAG, 653).

<sup>35</sup> “[R]esponsibility of management, *management* of a household, *direction, office*...lit., of the work of an οἰκονόμος ‘estate manager’.... Paul applies the idea of administration to the office of an apostle οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι *I have been entrusted with a commission/task*” (BDAG, 697).

<sup>36</sup> “As a rule the prep. gives the simple verb a special coloring (‘make full use of’, ‘misuse’, ‘use up’); in the only two pass. where it occurs in our lit. (both 1 Cor), this word differs little, if at all, fr. the simple verb: *use*” (BDAG, 530).

## 6. All Things to All People (1 Co 9:19-23).

- a. **1 Co 9:19-23** 19 For though I am free (ἐλεύθερος) from all (ἐκ πάντων), I have made myself a slave (δουλόω, aor.) to all, that I might gain (κερδαίνω, aor.) the more. 20 To the Jews I became (γίνομαι, aor.) as a Jew, in order that I may gain Jews. To those under Torah I became (γίνομαι, aor.) as one under Torah (though not being myself under Torah) that I might gain those under Torah. 21 To those outside Torah (ἄνομος) as one outside Torah (not being outside the Torah of God but under the Torah of Messiah) that I might gain those outside Torah. 22 To the weak I became (γίνομαι, aor.) weak, that I might gain the weak. I have become (γίνομαι, perf.) all things to all people, that by all means I might save some (τινὰς). 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, in order to become its copartner (συγκοινωνός).
- b. Paul is free from all (v. 19a).
- c. But he has enslaved himself (δουλόω) to all, in order to gain more to Jesus (v. 19b).
  - (1) δουλόω: “[T]o make someone a slave (δοῦλος)...to make one subservient to one’s interests, *cause to be like a slave*” (BDAG, 260).
  - (2) **Mk 10:43-45** 43 But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
  - (3) **Ga 5:13** 13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
  - (4) Serving people is the way to win them to Jesus.
- d. Paul became:
  - (1) As a Jew to Jews (v. 20a).
    - (a) **Ac 16:3** 3 Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.
    - (b) **Ac 21:26** 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.
  - (2) As one under Torah to those under Torah (v. 20b).
    - (a) Paul followed Jewish ways when he was with Jews. He did so in order to make them receptive to him and his message rather than antagonistic. He did not do this because he felt obligated to keep the Mosaic law. The salvation of Jews was his objective in observing Jewish laws and customs, many of which dealt with abstaining from certain foods.
  - (3) As one outside Torah to those outside Torah (v. 21).
    - (a) When Paul was with Gentiles, he behaved like a Gentile. This would have involved eating what they did, among other things.
    - (b) **1 Co 7:22** 22 For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Messiah.
    - (c) **Ro 2:14** 14 For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law.

- (d) **Ga 2:3** 3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.
- (e) **Ga 6:2** 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Messiah.
  - 1) The law of Messiah is the code of responsibilities taught by Jesus and his apostles, which is contained in the New Testament.
  - 2) "Love" is not a container we are free to fill in with whatever we want. The New Testament defines what love looks like.
- (4) As weak to the weak (v. 22a).
  - (a) **2 Co 11:29** 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?
- (5) As all things to all people (v. 22b).
  - (a) **1 Co 10:33** 33 ...I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.
  - (b) Paul is not approving the maxim, "When in Rome do as the Romans do." He is referring to matters of non-moral matters.
  - (c) It is not easy to be all things to all people. "Flexibility is the key to airpower."
  - (d) Paul is not willing to give up any aspect of Christian doctrine or any spiritual or moral precept relating to the Christian life.
  - (e) Paul is very flexible on the non-essentials and totally inflexible on the essentials.
  - (f) Exs.: Mary Slessor of Nigeria and Hudson Taylor of China.
  - (g) As missionaries in New Zealand, are we endeavouring to become all things to all people in order to win some to Jesus?
- e. Paul's objective is to by all means to save some (v. 22c; cf. 19b).
  - (1) Paul seems to be introducing a new slogan for the Corinthians to adopt.
  - (2) **1 Co 10:24** 24 Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour.
- f. His motivation is to become a copartner (συγκοινωνός) of the gospel (v. 23).
  - (1) συγκοινωνός: "[P]articipant, partner...of business partners" (BDAG, 952).
  - (2) "The work of the gospel was the great axis around which everything in Paul's life revolved."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> [], quoted in Thomas Constable, *Notes on 1 Corinthians*, [].

## 7. Run to Win (1 Co 9:24-27).

- a. **1 Co 9:24-27** 24 Do you not know that in a stadium (στάδιον) all the runners indeed run, but only one receives the prize (βραβεῖον)? So keep running (τρέχω, pres.) that you (pl.) may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control (ἐγκρατεύομαι, pres.) in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath (στέφανος), but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly (ἀδήλως). I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline (ὑποπιάζω, pres.) my body and subjugate (δουλαγωγέω, pres.) it, lest after preaching (κηρύσσω, aor.) to others I myself should be disqualified (ἀδόκιμος).
- b. In a stadium, all the runners run, but only one receives the prize (βραβεῖον) (v. 24a)
- (1) Among the four athletic games of the ancient Greeks, the Olympic and the Isthmian were the most celebrated. Paul often alludes to these games.<sup>38</sup> The Isthmian Games took place near Corinth every two or three years. The Greek word translated race is στάδιον, the word used to describe the standard 200 metre footrace.
- (a) **He 12:1-2** 1 Therefore, because we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
- (2) βραβεῖον: “[A]n award for exceptional performance, *prize, award*” (BDAG, 183).
- c. As believers, we are keep running so as to obtain (καταλαμβάνω, aor.) the prize (v. 24b).
- (1) καταλαμβάνω: “to make someth. one’s own, *win, attain, ...* come into possession of an inheritance...; ...of the winning of a prize” (BDAG, 519).
- (2) The race metaphor.
- (a) **Ga 2:2** 2 I went up because of a revelation and set before them...the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.
- (b) **Ga 5:7** 7 You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?
- (c) **Php 2:16** 16 holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.
- (d) **Php 3:14** 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Messiah Jesus.
- (e) **2 Ti 4:7** 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
- (3) In the Christian race, we do not compete with one another for the prize. We compete against ourselves. The emphasis is on self-discipline, not competition. In a footrace only one person is the winner, but in the Christian race all who keep the rules and run hard will receive a reward.
- (4) Each of us has to run the race that is individual to us, but within the context of the local church. It’s like a track meet, with various competitors in various events. Our team will win if we rack up the medals in the individual events.

<sup>38</sup> James M. Freeman and Harold J. Chadwick, *Manners & Customs of the Bible* (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1998), 539-540.

- (5) If we are going to get a reward, we will have to work for it. If we are going to get a reward, then we had better get out on the racetrack and start moving.
- (6) See Joe L. Wall, *Going for the Gold* (2005); and Bruce Wilkinson, *Secrets of the Vine*.
- (7) See *Rewards and Judgment Seat of Messiah*.
- d. To run our best, we must keep:
- (1) Exercising self control (ἐγκρατεύομαι) in all things, like an athlete (v. 25a).
- (a) ἐγκρατεύομαι: “[T]o keep one’s emotions, impulses, or desires under control, *control oneself, abstain*” (BDAG, 274).
- (b) Every competitor had to undergo intensive training, sometimes lasting almost a year. The athlete would carefully avoid excesses of any kind.<sup>39</sup>
- (c) “Would you be a victor in the Olympic games? so in good truth would I, for it is a glorious thing; but pray consider what must go before, and what may follow, and so proceed to the attempt. You must then live by rule, eat what will be disagreeable, refrain from delicacies; you must oblige yourself to constant exercises at the appointed hour, in heat and cold; you must abstain from wine and cold liquors; in a word, you must be as submissive to all direction of your master as to those of a physician”<sup>40</sup>
- (2) Living purposefully, not aimlessly or halfheartedly (v. 26).
- (a) We are not to throw wild punches but ones that land.
- (b) Christian ministry is not just activity, but activity focused on a target.
- (c) In context, Paul is talking about *agape* love and the doing all for the gospel.
- (3) Pummelling (ὕπωπιάζω) and enslaving (δουλαγωγέω) our body, that is, our fleshly desires (v. 27a).
- (a) ὕπωπιάζω: “[T]o put under strict discipline, *punish, treat roughly, torment, also fig. ...of the apostle’s self-imposed discipline. But the expr. is obviously taken fr. the language of prize-fighting...; on the virtue of self-control cp. X., Mem. 2, 1, 1; 5*” (BDAG, 1043).
- (b) δουλαγωγέω: “[E]nslave, subjugate fig. ...the body...Paul makes a slave out of his body, i.e. he directs it for useful service: *I make it obey me*” (BDAG, 259).
- (c) **Ro 6:19** 19 For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.
- e. The goal is not a perishable wreath (στέφανος), but an imperishable one (v. 25b).
- (1) Terminology.
- (a) στέφανος: “[A] wreath made of foliage or designed to resemble foliage and worn by one of high status or held in high regard, *wreath, crown...award or prize for exceptional service or conduct, prize, reward*” (BDAG, 943).
- (b) στεφανόω: “to encircle someone’s head with ornamental foliage, *wreath, crown...to recognize distinguished service or performance with an award, honor, reward, crown*” (BDAG, 944).

<sup>39</sup> James M. Freeman and Harold J. Chadwick, *Manners & Customs of the Bible* (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1998), 539-540.

<sup>40</sup> Epictetus, Greek Stoic philosopher.



- (2) Verses.
- (a) **2 Ti 4:8** 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me [Paul] the crown (στέφανος) of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
  - (b) **Ja 1:12** 12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown (στέφανος) of life, which God has promised to those who love him.
  - (c) **1 Pe 5:4** 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown (στέφανος) of glory.
  - (d) **Re 2:10** 10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown (στέφανος) of life.
  - (e) **Re 3:11** 11 I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown (στέφανος).
- f. The danger for Paul (and us) is that we will be disqualified (ἀδόκιμος) (v. 27b).
- (1) ἀδόκιμος: “[N]ot standing the test’, then *unqualified, worthless, base*” (BDAG, 21).
  - (2) This does not refer to disqualification from from eternal life, but from service to Jesus and its accompanying rewards. Paul had no fear that he would lose his salvation, but he could lose his reward. How pathetic it would be for Paul to forfeit a crown through his own lack of self-discipline or by breaking the rules, because he had for so long instructed others concerning how to win one.
  - (3) **Col 2:18** 18 Let no one disqualify you....
  - (4) **2 Ti 2:5** 5 An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.
  - (5) Ex.: Ravi Zacharias.

## 8. Reflection.

- a. If we want to be a mature believer, we have to understand and follow the apostle Paul, especially his mindset. Paul is a model for all of us, not just some of us.