

I CORINTHIANS 9

LIBERATED YET CAPTIVATED

STUDENT GUIDE

DAILY BIBLE READING

DAY 1	I CORINTHIANS 9: 1-14
DAY 2	I CORINTHIANS 9: 15-27
DAY 3	I CORINTHIANS 9: 1-27
DAY 4	I CORINTHIANS 9: 1-14
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Paul remains clear concerning the liberty Christians possess in Jesus Christ. Through His death, we have been set free from the law of sin and death. Nothing binds us. We are perfectly free in the Lord Jesus.

Nonetheless, our liberty in Christ does not imply a lack of love for others. To the contrary, our liberty is always tempered by love for other people. In fact, Paul makes it clear that we may judge our spiritual maturity by the way we use our freedom.

OUTLINE

- 1. Paul's Defense to Receive Support for Ministry (vv. 1-14)** - Critics were charging Paul with pillaging the church of God by taking support for ministry. Like a defense attorney before a court, Paul argues the case for supporting those who live only to preach the Gospel.

A.) *Explanation (vv. 1-6)* - Four questions are asked in these verses. Initially, Paul queries concerning his apostolic call. Christ Himself had commissioned him into Gospel service. While having no intention of preaching what he believed to be heresy, a vision from the Lord Jesus changed Paul forever (Acts 9). The Corinthians experienced his apostolic gifts first-hand, "for the seal of mine apostleship are yours in the Lord" (v.3).

Evidently, some Corinthians had leveled criticism against both Paul and Barnabas thinking they were milking the churches dry for support. Paul's point is simple: he had a right to be devoted full time to Kingdom work in God's church and be fully supported by the church. Christ Himself clearly affirmed ministerial support, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (v.14; cp. also Luke 10:7). If God's servants are faithful to serve in His vineyard, they may expect to drink from His vineyard.

B.) *Illustration (vv. 7-14)* - In fact, he uses many illustrations to defend the right to receive support.

- First, he uses an illustration from *life* (v.7).
- Second, Paul uses an illustration from *law* (vv. 8-10)

2. Paul's Decision to Renounce Support for Ministry (vv. 15-27) — The case Paul makes is airtight. Ministers of the Gospel live of the Gospel. Had Paul been before a court of law, no judge would have dismissed his defense. Nevertheless, Paul does a startling thing. As vigorously as he made his case point by point, he now completely renounces it!

A.) *Paul was renouncing all rights to support for the sake of his Savior (v.12).* Recall Paul's concern about "hindering" the Gospel. Paul wanted nothing to hold the Gospel up from being delivered to all peoples. Hence, Paul was literally saying he had no desire to preach for money (v.18).

B.) *Paul renounced all right to support for the sake of sinners (v.19).* Though no one had bondage over his soul, Paul was still in chains to the Gospel. Why? He viewed saved souls as "gain."

Question: Examining V.22 - Take some time to reflect upon becoming what Paul calls "all things to all people" for the specific purpose of "saving some". Ask yourself, "What would I do to share the Gospel with another person? What would I not do?"

C.) *Paul renounced all right to support for the sake of self (vv. 24-27).* The point Paul is making concerns discipline and self-denial. After all, trained athletes were disciplined in strict diet, rigorous conditioning, and uncommon mental self-control. What better image to reflect the role of a follower of Jesus Christ who gave his or her life daily in pursuit of Him?

Wrap Up: *Gospel ministers are called to oversee God's churches. Consequently, those who live to minister the Gospel need make no apology for living from the Gospel. Paul made this very clear. On the other hand, Paul challenges everyone to develop a heart that never insists on claiming rights, but always lives on loving others. Every Christian should consider the flame that kept Paul's heart burning: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel!"*