

## 1 Corinthians 9 New American Standard Bible

### Paul's Use of Freedom

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? <sup>2</sup>If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

<sup>3</sup>My defense to those who examine me is this: <sup>4</sup>Do we not have a right to eat and drink?

<sup>5</sup>Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

<sup>6</sup>Or do only Barnabas and I have no right to refrain from working?

<sup>7</sup>Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not consume some of the milk of the flock?

<sup>8</sup>I am not *just* asserting these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does the Law not say these things as well? <sup>9</sup>For it is written in the Law of Moses: "You shall not muzzle the ox while it is threshing." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? <sup>10</sup>Or is He speaking entirely for our sake? Yes, it was written for our sake, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *in the crops*.

If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? <sup>12</sup>If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. <sup>13</sup>Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat *the food* of the temple, *and* those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? <sup>14</sup>So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

<sup>15</sup>But I have used none of these things. And I have not written these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than *that*. No one shall make my boast an empty one!

<sup>16</sup>For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast *about*, for I am under compulsion; for woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. <sup>17</sup>For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a commission *nonetheless*. <sup>18</sup>What, then, is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

<sup>19</sup>For though I am free from all people, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may gain more. <sup>20</sup>To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might gain Jews; to those who are under the Law, *I became as one* under the Law, though not being under the Law myself, so that I might gain those who are under the Law; <sup>21</sup>to those who are without the Law, *I became as one* without the Law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might gain those who are without the Law. <sup>22</sup>To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak; I have become all things to all people, so that I may by all means save some. <sup>23</sup>I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

<sup>24</sup>Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only one* receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. <sup>25</sup>Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. So they *do it* to obtain a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. <sup>26</sup>Therefore I run in such a way as not *to run* aimlessly; I box in such a way, as to avoid hitting air; <sup>27</sup>but I strictly discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

### We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

### Pauls Observations and insights

1. Paul is responding to the challenge of him having the right to invest in this body of Christ at Corinth.
2. He has an attitude in his question and in his tone.
3. Is there a time to stand up for what we believe is right?

4. He answers their challenge with questions, letting your enemy answer questions is a way of getting your enemy to confess truth to themselves.
5. When someone hurts you by what they say, what is the best way to respond to them? Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 says we are to take no record of wrongs suffered.
6. What Paul is saying through his questions is - can I not receive a blessing from all of the investment I have made to the body of Christ at Corinth?
7. Paul goes to the law of Israel to authenticate and reiterate the points he is making to his accusers.
8. Biblical truth is the only thing that is right to build anything on. If we build on the ideas of men we will soon lose sight of what God has said.
9. The example of the ploughman ploughing in hope, is an important spiritual law – we will reap what we sow.
10. Paul is saying – we sowed spiritual truth into you to equip and benefit you, is it not wrong to receive payment for our investment?
11. ‘The others’ that Paul is talking about are those who are also investing into this church. Paul contests their right by declaring himself as a founder of the church who declared the truth to them in his apostleship.
12. So, he is saying - although we had the right to receive payment, we declined that right, so as not to be a burden to you, unlike the others who sought to take advantage of him.
13. The Levitical Priest had the privilege of eating from the temple provision, and Paul is saying – so did we.
14. The fact that we took no advantage of you does not make us any less apostles to you.
15. He says - I am not bringing these things up so you will start making payment, just don't be deceived about my authority.
16. As a man of honour Paul values his decision not to be a burden to them, any thought of them thinking he was mentioning it in order to receive payment would be to miss the point.
17. The preaching of the gospel for Paul was like daily giving birth to truth. To not do it, or to do it for payment, would not reflect his motives.
18. To be under compulsion to preach the gospel is to not have any resistance, there was no fear to speak out even if it would get him in trouble.
19. His reward is the release of joy that filled him every time he declared the gospel truth.
20. Paul's desire to be obedient to his call was his reward.
21. He only desired to be pleasing to the Lord God Almighty.
22. I preach says Paul, the gospel without charge. How different from what we see on our TV's today amongst some church leaders.
23. So Paul is saying – I have every right to make a living from the preaching of the gospel, but I choose to not be a burden to any of you, but that does not nullify my authority.
24. This position Paul took, released him from the control of others.
25. Many a church leader has gone astray because the tail wagged the dog through the control of money.
26. Paul says – I have positioned myself to be free to preach to both Jews and Greeks.
27. To become all things to all men, is not to abandon who he was, but that this position freed him from the control and gave him access to everyone, whoever they were.
28. Being under the law of Christ is to be in surrender to the teachings of Jesus. Losing sight of this revelation would be a big mistake.

29. Learning to work alongside all types of people is to understand everyone is precious to God and this gospel is for all, everyone has been given the opportunity to repent and turn back to God.
30. So whatever you do, do it as to win. Hold nothing back, take every opportunity every day brings you.
31. Self-control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit of God living in your spirit, overcoming your soul and its lustful ways.
32. We need to have purpose in all we do, knowing why we do something will strengthen us when we lose sight during trials. Losing sight of why is to become weak.
33. Paul had learnt not to be driven by the lust of the soul, he took charge of his soul by applying the truth revelation the Holy Spirit taught his spirit.