

A Study of I Corinthians 9

GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Introductory Thoughts

Paul is attempting to defend his apostleship and his status in the church. I think it is evident that this is not for his own boasting, but to establish his authority. His right to teach, minister, and command the flock of God was a matter of some debate among the Corinthians. Paul hopes to put their minds at ease.

The apostle Paul was willing to surrender his own rights to minister to others. He was also willing to listen, even to his critics. What does that tell us about his character? What does that tell us about the love he had for this congregation?

I. Paul Was Willing to Minister for Gospel (9:1-14)

What two things helped to verify Paul's apostleship?

What were two things that the apostles had the right to do?

What arguments does Paul make to justify preachers receiving support?

What arguments were they making toward Paul about receiving support?

If he helped to found the Corinthian church, why would they reject him?

Why would they refuse to support him financially if he needed it?

How would you feel if this happened to you? Explain.

II. Paul Was Willing to Ignore His Own Rights & Liberties (9:15-18)

Why did Paul choose not to accept support from the church?

Why was Paul willing to make himself a servant to all men?

What did Paul see as his reward?

How is it possible to do ministry Paul's way in this current culture?

III. Paul Was Willing to Reach Anyone By Any Means (9:19-23)

What must we be prepared to do if we want to do ministry this way?

What must we be prepared for, specifically from brethren, if we choose this path?

How could taking support hinder his ministry efforts (**Philippians 4:10-16**)?

In his evangelism of the Jews, what might he do to win them?

In his evangelism of the Gentiles, what might he do to win them?

In his evangelism of the Romans, what might he do to win them?

Is this a sign of weakness or strength? Explain.

VI. Paul Was Willing to Sacrifice & Discipline Himself (9:24-27)

What two athletic events did Paul compare with the Christian life?

What characteristics do Christians have with these athletes?

Paul was familiar with the Roman and Greek athletic events, what does that also tell us about his willingness to use culture and relevant things to minister to others?

Why was Paul so concerned about exercising self-control and discipline?

What do you think happened to Paul's body that caused him such pain?

How can we learn from his great example?

Concluding Thoughts

Paul had great admiration for the law. He worked for the Sanhedrin (**Acts 8-9**), was circumcised (**Acts 16:3**), took a Nazarite vow (**Acts 18:18**), practice the rituals of purification (**Acts 21:24-26**), and taught the law with strictness like his mentor Gamaliel (**Acts 22:3**). In fact, much of Paul's teaching reflects Gamaliel's views (Hillel, not Shammai), while his actions reflect the latter school of thought. He found balance.

Paul found ways to minister to all men, meeting them at the cross. He is cautious not to condemn, judge, or criticize without cause. What else can we learn from his ministry?