

Questions

1. Why does Paul spend twelve verses proving his right to receive financial support only to voluntarily give it up (1 Cor. 9:3–12)? What does this teach us about the relationship between Christian liberty and Christian love?
2. Paul concludes in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ." Why does Paul present himself as an example throughout chapter 9? What does this teach us about the relationship between doctrine and example in Christian discipleship?
3. Paul refused to let anything unnecessarily hinder the gospel. Are there attitudes, habits, preferences, or freedoms in your own life that might unintentionally obscure Christ or weaken your gospel witness?
4. The sermon suggested that our rights can quietly become idols. Which diagnostic question challenged you most?
5. Where is God currently inviting you to exchange personal comfort for gospel usefulness? Consider your: family, church, work, neighborhood, friendships?
6. Hospitality is more than entertaining friends; it is making room for people so they can experience the love of Christ. Who could you intentionally welcome into your life this month?

Need prayer? Someone will be up front by the piano to pray with you after the 1st & 2nd services.

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1 Corinthians

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The Gospel Above My Rights

1 Corinthians 9:1-18

Vashon Moore, Elder

June 28, 2026

In 1 Corinthians 9:1–18, Paul provides us two compelling motivations for sacrificing our legitimate rights for the sake of the gospel.

Paul Defends His Rights (vv. 1–12a)

Paul never presents himself as the final example. He sees himself as a window through which the Corinthians can see Christ more clearly. He doesn't want anyone admiring the window; he wants them to be captivated by the One to whom it gives a view.

Those who devote themselves to the ministry of the gospel have a legitimate right to be supported by the people they serve.

Paul has made his case and established beyond reasonable doubt that he possesses the right to receive financial support.

Paul Renounces His Rights (v. 12b)

Paul spends twelve verses proving he possesses the right to be financially supported by the Corinthians, only to refuse it.

Motivation #1: No Gospel Hindrance (v. 12c)

Gospel Motivation #1: To remove every unnecessary hindrance to the saving and sanctifying work of the gospel.

More than Paul's comfort, his rights, or even his financial security, he treasures the unhindered progress of the gospel, which is to say, above all, he treasures Christ.

We are usually concerned with removal of the inconvenience, but Paul is more concerned that the inconvenience does not remove the opportunity.

Motivation #2: Gospel Advancement (vv. 13–18)

Gospel Motivation #2: To maximize every opportunity for the saving and sanctifying work of the gospel.

Love sometimes calls us to surrender even legitimate rights when doing so serves a greater gospel purpose.

Christ is never the reward *plus* ministry. Christ himself IS the reward...and ministry is the place where we get to enjoy Him.