



1 Corinthians

MESSY CHURCH
MIGHTY CHRIST

MAIN IDEA

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 (v. 1-12a)

1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you, because you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

— **1 Corinthians 9:1-2**

3 My defense to those who examine me is this:

— **1 Corinthians 9:3**

4 Don't we have the right to eat and drink?

— **1 Corinthians 9:4**

5 Don't we have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, like the other apostles, the Lord's brothers, and Cephas?

— **1 Corinthians 9:5**

6 Or do only Barnabas and I have no right to refrain from working?

— **1 Corinthians 9:6**

7 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit? Or who shepherds a flock and does not drink the milk from the flock?

— **1 Corinthians 9:7**

8a Am I saying these things from a human perspective?

— **1 Corinthians 9:8a**

8b Doesn't the law also say the same thing? 9a For it is written in the law of Moses, Do not muzzle an ox while it treads out grain.

— **1 Corinthians 9:8b-9a**

9b Is God really concerned about oxen? 10 Isn't he really saying it for our sake? Yes, this is written for our sake, because he who plows ought to plow in hope, and he who threshes should thresh in hope of sharing the crop.

— **1 Corinthians 9:9b-10**

11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it too much if we reap material benefits from you?

— 1 Corinthians 9:11

12a If others have this right to receive benefits from you, don't we even more?

— **1 Corinthians 9:12a**

Paul Renounces His Rights (vv. 12b)

12b Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right;

— **1 Corinthians 9:12b**

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

12c Instead, we endure everything so that we will not hinder the gospel of Christ.

— **1 Corinthians 9:12c**

Gospel Motivation #1

To remove every unnecessary hindrance to the saving and sanctifying work of the gospel.

By presenting the gospel free of charge, Paul remains free from all people; no one but Christ has a claim on him.

– Gordon Fee

The cross is already a stumbling block. Don't make your personality another one.

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

Gospel Motivation #2

To maximize every opportunity for the saving and sanctifying work of the gospel.

13 Don't you know that those who perform the temple services eat the food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the offerings of the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should earn their living by the gospel.

15 For my part I have used none of these rights, nor
Have I written these things that they may be
applied in my case. For it would be better for me to
die than for anyone to deprive me of my boast!

— 1 Corinthians 9:13-15

16 For if I preach the gospel, I have no reason to boast, because I am compelled to preach—and woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

— 1 Corinthians 9:16

17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward, but if unwillingly, I am entrusted with a commission.

— **1 Corinthians 9:17**

In this verse, Paul continues the imagery of slavery. He is not a hired contractor negotiating terms with God. He is Christ's servant, entrusted with his Master's business. And a steward seeks the interests of his master, not his own.

– David Garland

18 What then is my reward? To preach the gospel and offer it free of charge and not make full use of my rights in the gospel.

— 1 Corinthians 9:18

Paul's free proclamation of the gospel becomes a living picture of the gospel itself.

– Gordan Fee

You don't beat sinful loves with stronger commands. You beat them with stronger affections.

– Thomas Chalmers

True hospitality is often 'dangerous' precisely because it disrupts our comfort and requires us to make room for people who may not naturally fit into our schedules or routines.

– Rev. Tim Blackmon

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