

1 Cor 9:1-27 Bible Study

1. Read 9:1-11. What is the main point of Paul's argument here?

He is their apostle he planted their church and they came to faith through his work. Since they have spiritually benefited from his work, they are obliged to materially benefit him ie "food and drink" v.4.

2. What has this argument to do with what Paul has just been saying in chapter 8?

That was about the Corinthians having the 'freedom' and 'right' to food and drink in the pagan temples. But for Paul his 'right' to food and drink is stronger.

3. What principle(s) do you see in 9:1-11 & 13-14 regarding gospel workers and those they serve?

*It is God's intention that they be materially supported by those they serve. This is both the 'right' of the worker, but (and perhaps more importantly) it is the **responsibility** of those who benefit from the work.*

4. Read 9:12-18. Having made such a strong case for his rights, it seems surprising that Paul now says he won't use them. What is his reasoning? Does this mean that gospel workers who **do** receive material support are some how lesser or even sinning?

For Paul this is tied up with his unique role and commission as apostle to the Gentiles. It is also within his 'freedom' to not accept material support (v.15b), but this does not cancel the command of v.14, ie it does not stop those who benefit from the work from having the responsibility to support it. Paul is also building his case against the Corinthians for demanding their right to eat at pagan temples, though their responsibility to love the weaker brothers should hold them back.

5. Read 9:19-27. What might be some examples of what Paul means in vv19-23? Why does he add "though I myself am not under the law" and "though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law"?

Having Timothy circumcised so as not to offend Jews (Acts 16:3), observing food laws when living with Jews, not refusing 'ceremonially unclean' food if eating with Gentiles.

But Paul always lives in the light of his submission to Christ – there are something things he will not do in being "all things to all people"

6. Can you think of examples where you can be "all things to all people so that some might be saved"? What practical 'limitations' might you need to observe because you are "not free from God's law but under Christ's law"?

7. Are there times when you are more likely to demand you 'rights' than exercise your responsibility to serve others for their (eternal) good? What can you do to change this?

8. Paul's 'mentor' was Jesus, who is the example for us all to follow; read Phil 2:6-11. Think of at least one realistic way you can 'train' to have the attitude Jesus (and Paul) had ie pursuing your responsibilities and not your rights?

NB This means not merely a one off example, but a way of bringing your body & will into submission (v27) to be like this