

**RIGHTS CAN BE DECEIVING
PERSONAL PRIORITIES – PART A
1 CORINTHIANS 9:1-14**

THE MATURE USE OF LIBERTY

1. Paul was free to receive **financial** support from the church at Corinth, yet he chose to **defer** that blessing for a kingdom cause.
2. As a point of reference, Greeks **despised** manual labor, while the Jews **magnified** the virtues of honest labor.
3. Even the most learned Rabbis practiced a **trade**. Paul was a trained worker in leather and made **tents**.

KEY THOUGHT: Paul subordinated his personal rights for financial support as an **example** of how a Christian could live without being “**me**” centered (Rom. 12:10-13).

I. PAUL PRESENTED HIS RIGHT TO PERSONAL SUPPORT (1 COR. 9:1-14).

A. Paul was an **apostle** of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 9:1-6).

an apostle = “one **sent out** under a commission”

1. The 12 disciples and Paul, along with the New Testament prophets, had a special **commission** to lay the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20).
2. The apostles were given the ability to perform signs and wonders to **validate** the message they preached (Heb. 2:4; 2 Cor. 12:12).

B. Human experiences taught us that workmen deserved some **reward** for their labor (1 Cor. 9:7).

C. Old Testament Law stated that the one who **labors** should be rewarded from the fruits (1 Cor. 9:8-12; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).

1. The benefits of the divine principle of “**sowing** and **reaping**” were cited more than once by Paul (1 Cor. 9:11; 2 Cor. 9:6; Gal. 6:7-8).
2. Those who **teach** us the Word have the right to expect us to **support** them (1 Tim. 5:17-18).
3. Apparently other ministers had accepted financial **support** in Corinth (1 Cor. 9:12).

KEY THOUGHT: Paul preferred to remain **independent** of that support for a higher reason (2 Thes. 3:6-9).

- D. Priests were supported by the **sacrifices** of the people under the Law; likewise, God's **servants** who minister under grace should be supported as well (1 Cor. 9:13; Num. 18:8-32; Lev. 6, 7, 27).
- E. Jesus taught that "a worker is **worthy** of his hire" (1 Cor. 9:14; Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7-8).

KEY THOUGHT: Paul proved his point that he had the right to **expect** the Corinthian believers to support him in his ministry when he was with them, yet he graciously **refused** their support (1 Cor. 9:15).

THE MATURE USE OF MY LIBERTY

1. Choosing to place myself **third** in my priorities in life (Deut. 6:5; Phil. 2:3-4)
2. Choosing to make the Christian life about **investing** in others (John 13:34-35; 15:12-13)
3. Choosing to bring glory to God through my **marriage** (Eph. 5:21-22, 25)
4. Choosing to discipline my children for **godliness** without provoking them to **rebellion** (Heb. 12:6-9; Eph. 6:4)
5. Choosing to **value** and be a part of the **family** of God (Heb. 10:24-25)

FOR FURTHER STUDY AND PERSONAL GROWTH

July 4, 2010

SUNDAY: *Living with an affectionate heart for your brothers (Rom. 12:10-13)!* Paul was free to expect and request financial support from the Corinthian Christians when he was ministering to them in Corinth. The first half of 1 Corinthians 9 explains the reasons for which Paul can make that claim. It was Paul's personal choice to forego such support for the reasons he will reiterate in the latter portion of chapter 9. The key point Paul wanted to make was that it is often better for the kingdom of God for Christians not to assert their rights. To live an unassuming life that does not make demands upon the people of God brings glory and honor to the Lord! Rather, it is the affectionate heart of a Christian that expresses His love through serving others in a family-orientated way and demonstrates hospitality (Rom. 12:10-13). *May the liberty that the Lord gives you become a source of joy to love your brothers in Christ and those that have not yet accepted the Lord!*

MONDAY: *Apostles were unique for many reasons, but especially because they had seen the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:21-22)!* Paul saw the Lord when he was traveling to Damascus to arrest Christians and persecute the church (Acts 9:1-9). The apostles were to proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ and call men to repentance and salvation. The authority of their preaching was a personal relationship with Jesus and their eyewitness account of the Lord's resurrected body (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39-43). These men were to lay the foundation for the church (Eph. 2:20). Additionally, the apostles were given the ability to perform signs and miracles to support their claims of Jesus' power (Heb. 2:4; 2 Cor. 12:12). The apostles were representatives of the Lord Jesus and deserved to be welcomed and cared for by God's people. *May the example of these dedicated ambassadors for Jesus become heroes and inspirations for your life!*

TUESDAY: *It is known that the laborer is entitled to a portion of the fruit of his labor (1 Cor. 9:7)!* The examples cited are of a soldier, a farmer, and a herdsman. The soldier fights for his country, and the government pays for his equipment, training, and even a wage to support his family. There is no expectation that the soldier would go to war and bear all these costs himself. Likewise, the laborer in a vineyard is allowed to eat the grapes that are grown on the vine that he tends. The shepherd is specifically allowed to drink of the milk of the flock to refresh himself. Perhaps Paul was even comparing the church to an army, a vineyard, and a flock. Logically, the man of God that ministers to a congregation is to have his needs cared for by those to whom he ministers. The Lord is glorified by the worker and the church family that meets his needs. *May this become a serious conviction of all that live and thrive within a local body of believers!*

WEDNESDAY: *The biblical principle of "sowing and reaping" will be observed in the kingdom of God (2 Cor. 9:6)!* Paul cited the divine principles of "sowing and reaping" several times in his epistles (Gal. 6:7-8). The principle was applied to the physical world of farming and the spiritual realm of godliness and sin. Additionally, Paul makes the application that those who study to teach the Word of God are to be supported in a manner that would honor the Lord (1 Tim. 5:17-18). Though Paul had made it a manner of personal principle not to accept

financial support from the Corinthian church, other ministers had need of that provision (1 Cor. 9:12). Paul had chosen to be self-supporting for the reasons we will study next week. Primarily, he wanted to set an example in ministry that others could follow which was not dependent on churches to compensate ministers for working in the church ministry (2 Thes. 3:6-9). ***May your heart be challenged to see specific areas where you can apply the principle of “sowing and reaping” in your life today!***

THURSDAY: ***Paul reminded the people that the Lord has always supported His servants (1 Cor. 9:13; Num. 18:8-32)!*** The Old Testament Law provided for the priests to receive a portion of the grain and animal sacrifices to meet their personal needs (Lev. 6, 7, 27). In like manner, the ministers in the New Testament who served under God’s grace were to be similarly provided for (1 Cor. 9:13). Years later, Paul spoke to the Corinthians about their opportunity to support the Christians in Jerusalem during a great time of famine (2 Cor. 8:13-15). James addressed the same issue of being God’s resource for fellow believers and their needs for food or clothing (James 2:15-16). Paul wanted to the Christians at Corinth to understand that the Lord always provides for His servants and that they may very well be that instrument of provision. ***May this segment of biblical truth encourage you to live on a smaller percentage of your income to insure you have funds available to be a blessing to others as God directs!***

FRIDAY: ***When a man is employed to labor, he deserves a fair wage (Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7-8)!*** Paul was reiterating the scriptural principle that a workman is worthy of his hire (1 Cor. 9:14). Though Paul had every right as he has outlined to expect financial support from the church at Corinth, he was choosing to set aside that right to accomplish something much greater in his mind in the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 9:15). This is often the case with each of us as Christians. We will have the opportunity to make a significant investment in the kingdom of God by deferring a blessing or right of a blessing and granting it to others. Paul was seeking to establish a different example for men to follow if they so chose, not being dependent for support from a local church. Praise God for the faithfulness of church families to support their pastors and for God in making provision through His people. ***May each one of us seek to be fair with everyone whom we employ or contract for a service to be rendered! May we seek to be sacrificial in our giving so that the work of the Lord is carried on as the Lord would desire!***

SATURDAY: ***There are many liberties that we enjoy in Christ!*** Exercising these liberties in a manner that pleases and glorifies the Lord builds the kingdom of God. The liberties of the world can cause Christians to lose sight of how we are to use our God-given liberties properly. Seeing my liberty as a gift from Christ is truly a help in all situations. Here are a few reminders of how we can properly use our liberties in Christ to build the kingdom of God.

- **I am free in Christ!** Choose each day to place myself in third position of priority behind God first, others second and me last (Deut. 6:5; Phil. 2:3-4).
- **God gave me wonderful spiritual gifts!** Choose to make the Christian life about investing in the lives of others (John 13:34-35; 15:12-13).
- **God brought me a spouse to complete my life!** Choose to bring the greatest glory possible to God through a marriage that is contrary to the world and exemplifies everything outlined in scripture (Eph. 5:21-22, 25).

May these and other liberties in Christ be considered to glorify the Lord first rather than seeking to fulfill primarily selfish desires!