

**REFUSING A RECOGNIZED RIGHT  
PERSONAL PRIORITIES – PART B  
1 CORINTHIANS 9:15-27**

**THE MATURE USE OF LIBERTY**

1. Paul used his **liberty** to give up his **right** to pastoral support.
2. Paul gave the Corinthian believers a living **example** of the exact principles he was writing about.
3. Should not the **stronger** believers set aside their rights for the sake of the **weaker** saints?
4. Paul was writing about **priorities**, the things that are really **important** to us in our lives.
5. It is my intent to adjust my personal **priorities** and to **encourage** you to do the same to advance the kingdom of God.

**KEY THOUGHT:** If I could **lead** all of us to practice Matthew 6:33, there would be adequate money for missions, plenty of manpower for service, and the kingdom would **expand**.

**II. THREE REASONS PAUL DECLINED SUPPORT FROM THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH (1 COR. 9:15-27)**

A. For the sake of the **Gospel** (1 Cor. 9:15-18)

1. Paul did not want to “hinder the Gospel of Christ” with claims that he preached the Gospel for **profit** (v. 12); in addition, he was clear to present **divine** truth that was different than the false teaching (1 Cor. 2:1-5).
2. Paul wanted no “profit” from teaching the Gospel (v. 16) and only to be found **faithful** of its **stewardship** entrusted to him (1 Cor. 4:2).
3. It is unfortunate when the Gospel is hindered sometimes by an **overemphasis** on money, so Paul sought to remove all **doubt** with his refusal of support (1 Cor. 9:18).

B. For the sake of the **sinner** (1 Cor. 9:19-23)

1. Because Paul was **free**, he was able to serve others and set aside his own **rights** for their benefit (1 Cor. 9:19; 2 Cor. 4:5).
2. Paul was not a chameleon who changed his **message** (1 Cor. 9:22), but he was careful not to **offend** the Jew or the Gentile by his observance of the Law (Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1; Eph. 3:8).
3. Paul did not have a “stump speech” that he simply **modified** to the audience; rather, he modeled his ministry after **Jesus** (John 3 & 4).

C. For Paul’s own **sake** (1 Cor. 9:24-27)

1. Paul likened his spiritual life to that of a **disciplined** athlete **training** diligently for an important competition (1 Cor. 9:24).
2. Paul was not running this disciplined race to get to **heaven**, but **because** he was already saved through faith in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 9:25).
3. The crown is given to all who discipline themselves for the sake of **servicing** Christ and **winning** lost souls (1 Cor. 9:26-27).

**KEY THOUGHT:** Paul’s one great goal in life was to **glorify** God by winning the lost and **building** up the saints.

**MY PERSONAL PRIORITIES**

1. How can I serve the Lord more effectively by **servicing others**?
2. What personal **material** sacrifices can I make to advance the kingdom of God?

*“He is no fool who gives what he cannot **keep** to gain what he cannot **lose**.”*

– Jim Elliott

**FOR FURTHER STUDY AND PERSONAL GROWTH**

**July 11, 2010**

**SUNDAY: *Building the kingdom of God is about every Christian making a small, consistent contribution (Matt. 6:33)!*** Liberty can be abused. Paul wanted to use his liberty in Christ to glorify the Lord. Paul was an example to the Corinthians of living for the Gospel when he declined the financial support that was his right. It seems that those in the church that are stronger in the faith should consider setting aside their rights for the sake of growing the weaker saints. In simple terms, Paul was writing about priorities in this life that really mattered: my time, my talent, and my treasure. It is my intent to adjust my personal priorities to build the kingdom of God and to encourage as many other Christians as I can to do the same. If we could all live by the kingdom perspective of Matthew 6:33, then we would see a steady growth, if not an explosion, in the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33). ***May each of us remember to keep the kingdom of God first and foremost in our minds and live like it is all that really matters!***

**MONDAY: *Serving our Lord is reward enough (1 Cor. 4:2)!*** Paul was very conscious that any actions that were attributed to him could help, or hinder, the spread of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:12). When he preached the Gospel, he was careful to articulate its divine nature and distance himself from the false teachers circulating around the city (1 Cor. 2:1-5). It was Paul's intention to be a faithful steward of the Gospel that had been entrusted to him by the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 4:2). Paul was careful to protect the Gospel from the claim that he was a huckster selling religion. If he was labeled as such, then the Gospel he preached would be false as well (1 Cor. 9:16). Are you constantly examining your actions, conversations, and motivations to see if they are harming the Gospel? Are you choosing to find your specific and viable place of service within the church to make a contribution to the spreading of the Gospel? ***May the growth of the kingdom of God become an important goal in each of our lives!***

**TUESDAY: *Financial resources should not be connected with the presentation of the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:18)!*** It is necessary to discuss how a believer utilizes the financial resources given to him by God. Discipline in this specific area is crucial to the development of so many other spiritual disciplines. When a Christian has a disciplined approach to using his time and money, he has a "leg up" on conquering greed and selfishness. However, the overemphasis on money and the preoccupation with it in connection to the spreading of the gospel causes doubt to creep in to the mind of the listeners. If contributions are in any way linked to the preaching of the gospel or its impact on your life, it will bring the gospel into question. Paul wanted to protect the integrity of the gospel by removing his personal financial support from the equation (1 Cor. 9:18). ***May your desire to grow the kingdom of God blossom to the degree you would protect the kingdom against any criticism with any personal sacrifice!***

**WEDNESDAY: *My freedom in Christ allows me to set aside my rights if it benefits those I serve (1 Cor. 9:19)!*** Paul was absolutely free in Christ to receive what he had coming as a minister of the gospel. However, Paul set aside the right of compensation because he felt it could impact the integrity of the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:19). Though Paul was free to receive his benefit of financial support, he chose to become a bondservant of Christ and to those he served by bringing the Gospel to them unhindered (2 Cor. 4:5). Paul's goal was to win more people to

Jesus and change their eternal destinies. What things do you need to set aside to protect and promote the Gospel? Your pattern of speech and the topics you discuss may need to be altered. Your selfish attitude about your own activities and your personal “rights” to cell phones, personal space, and control of your time may need adjustment. Could you change how your time is spent and invest in the life of someone else? ***May the sacrifice Paul made in Corinth become an example that will lead you to lend more integrity to the gospel in your life!***

**THURSDAY: *My life and ministry should be patterned after Jesus (John 3 & 4)!*** Paul was not a chameleon who changed his message in front of each new audience (1 Cor. 9:22). Nothing about the Gospel was political to Paul. Yet, he was careful not to make his adherence to some of the Jewish Law offensive to the Jews or the Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-15). Paul had a great love for his countrymen (Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1). However, Paul was clearly called to reach the Gentiles with the Gospel (Eph. 3:8). Paul modeled his ministry after the evangelism practiced by Jesus. For the Jewish leader, Nicodemus, Jesus spoke about the spiritual birth (John 3). For the Samaritan women at the well, Jesus used a simple illustration of “living water” (John 4). The message never changed, but the context did because of the audience. Have you thought about patterning your life and ministry after Jesus? What is the first thing you must adjust to begin that process? How would you actually begin to act and function more like Jesus? ***May this exercise of thinking about Jesus living through you bring immediate and lasting changes in your life that will promote the Gospel!***

**FRIDAY: *Spiritual discipline is important in the life of a Christian seeking to share his faith (1 Cor. 9:24-25)!*** Desiring to act upon the leadership of the Holy Spirit in life to bring about the changes necessary to conform more closely to the life of Jesus would demand spiritual discipline. Paul likened his spiritual life to that of a disciplined athlete training diligently for an important competition (1 Cor. 9:24). Like Paul, each of us is not running this disciplined race to get to heaven, but he was running *because* he was already saved through faith in Jesus (v. 25). The disciplined life involves learning more about Jesus and practicing what you have learned. A great place to start is reading through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to become more acquainted with Jesus. You can even plan to read through the New Testament in a year. Start now and have an extra six months to help you make it through, or read it through twice! ***May your increased awareness about the life and ministry of Jesus become a real encouragement to your Christian life!***

**SATURDAY: *My goal is to glorify Jesus by serving others and sharing the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:26-27)!*** I will receive rewards in heaven based on the life I live for Jesus while on earth (2 Cor. 5:10). That is the crown of which Paul spoke of when he said one racer would be crowned in the games. However, in the Christian life, all the disciplined racers will receive the same crown. Christians who are busy serving their Lord and winning lost souls to Jesus are accomplishing the great goal of glorifying God with their lives. If you would be willing to devote the time to serving Jesus, how could you be used effectively to help spread the gospel? Are you a friendly person? Would you be willing to greet people at church events and help them with directions? Can you make yourself available to pick-up people on the way to church and take them back home? Ask the Lord how you can help reach others for Jesus. ***May your meditation on the life of Jesus quicken your heart to help build the kingdom of God!***