

1 Corinthians 9:12-27

One Point: Because we have infinite freedom in Christ, we forsake our every right!

Verse 12:

If others have this right to receive benefits from you, don't we even more? However, we have not made use of this right; instead we endure everything so that we will not hinder the gospel of Christ.

However, we have not made use of this right - As Christ-Followers, we have received complete freedom, and yet, we have given up our rights entirely

we endure everything so that we will not hinder the gospel of Christ NASB says: "We put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ." This parallels verse 23, stick a pin in it!

Verse 13-14

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? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should earn their living by the gospel.

the Lord has commanded : Matthew 10:10, Luke 7:10

In both of these instances, Jesus is giving the disciples instructions for going out to share the Gospel in new towns. His instruction is that they allow the people they stay with to feed them and provide them housing, but not to seek provision elsewhere. "A Laborer deserves his wage." The implication for disciples meant that they had to 100% depend on God's provision.

Verse 15

But I have used none of these rights, and I have not written this to make it happen that way for me. For it would be better for me to die than for anyone to deprive me of my boast!

But I have used none of these rights means he has given up his rights

Boast - Glorifying, rejoice. This carries the idea of rejoicing, not a statement of pride.

Philippians 1:25-26, Philippians 2:16, 1 Corinthians 5:6

He switches from using "we" to "I." That, coupled with the broken-down Greek grammar shows that Paul is very emphatic about this point. He feels strongly about renouncing his rights as an apostle - shows deep conviction!

Verse 16

For if I preach the gospel, I have no reason to boast, because an obligation is placed on me. And woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

For if I preach the gospel, I have no reason to boast. The Gospel is grounds for boasting in the Lord, but preaching the Gospel has no grounds for boasting because God has given Paul this responsibility. 1 Corinthians 1:30-31

Obligation - Ananke; Constraint (literally or figuratively); by implication, distress: necessity

Verse 17

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

but if unwillingly, I am entrusted with a stewardship – He is saying that if it wasn't His choice, it was God's choice and so he receives not a "reward" but a "stewardship" (valuable responsibility or duty to be carefully managed).

For if I do this willingly, I have a reward - If he had a choice in the matter, he might deserve a reward. This is like a professor giving you a required assignment vs extra credit work, or your parent asking you to clean your room vs you choosing to clean your room without them asking.

Verse 18

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

Since he was excited to do this, the stewardship was His reward (sharing the Gospel), not financial support (verse 18)

not make full use of my authority in the gospel - He had given up rights his rights.

Verse 19

Although I am a free man and not anyone's slave, I have made myself a slave to everyone, in order to win more people.

I am a free man - Paul is saying: I am free from any obligation to anyone, especially because I don't accept support. However, because of the stewardship I'm charged with, I don't hold tightly to this freedom; I forsake it so I can serve others and they might be freed.

Although I am a free man and not anyone's slave, I have made myself a slave to everyone - Paul becomes a "gospel chameleon." He does everything short of sin to be accepted by others so he can share the gospel with them.

Note: He was not seeking approval or finding value in being accepted. He found his value, or, "reward," in sharing the gospel - which caused him to seek to relate to others by all means possible.

Verse 20

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews; to those under the law, like one under the law—though I myself am not under the law—to win those under the law.

To the Jews I became like a Jew - Paul submitted to the discipline of the community in order to maintain connections and keep open opportunities for preaching in the synagogue.

though I myself am not under the law - Paul is under the rule of grace.

Verse 21

To those who are without that law, like one without the law—not being without God's law but within Christ's law—to win those without the law.

(verse 20) though I myself am not under the law... (verse 21) not being without God's law but within Christ's law - He did not subject Himself to their rules and regulations, but remains under God's law. He still sought to be above reproach in all his dealings. His goal was not to honor or serve people, but to honor God.

Verse 22

To the weak I became weak, in order to win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some.

To the weak I became weak - Referencing not unbelievers, as the word is commonly used for throughout the Bible, but rather believers who are vulnerable to being "destroyed by knowledge," as is referenced multiple times throughout chapters 8-11

1 Corinthians 8: 7-9

Weak: Asthenace; strengthless, more feeble, sick, impotent, w/o strength, weak

by every possible means - By any expense/resource available within the law of God and being faithful to God

Verse 23

Now I do all this because of the gospel, so I may become a partner in its benefits.

Now I do all this because of the gospel - Parallels to verse 9

I may become - This becomes future-tense. All the other "becomes" are present or past. He's looking ahead, to a greater goal, in sharing in the glories of the Gospel.

Verse 24

Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize.

Greeks enjoyed 2 great athletic events, the Olympic Games, and the Isthmian games. Isthmian games were held in Corinth, so this analogy would have been rich in meaning for them.

but only one receives the prize - Is Paul saying that in this big race, only one of us will win? No. We should not over analyze, but realize that Paul is asking us to run as the well-trained and self-disciplined athlete who runs the race with the sights on the final goal. The primary point of this statement is to evaluate how one runs the race.

Run in such a way to win the prize - Imitate Paul and Paul imitates Christ.

When I run in races: I am not focused on any sort of prize; I'm thankful to drag myself over that finish line and not be last!

Verse 25

Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. However, they do it to receive a crown that will fade away, but we a crown that will never fade away.

Perishable: Phthartos; corruptible - This would have made the Greeks think of the crowns of greenery that winning athletes received.

but we a crown that will never fade away - Philippians 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 2 Timothy 4:8, 1 Peter 5:4, Revelation 2:10, James 1:12

Verse 26

Therefore I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air.

Aimlessly - He has already stated his goal in verses 19-22.

box like one beating the air - Not like a shadow boxer who waves his arms without effect.

Verse 27

Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

I discipline my body and bring it under strict control - This parallels verse 19.

Discipline - Hypopiazō; To beat black and blue, to give one intolerable annoyance (beat one out, wear one out). To tease or annoy into compliance, disable an antagonist.

Luke 18:5

I myself will not be disqualified - He is not saying he'll face eternal damnation, but referencing that God is going to test the quality of his works and he will be accountable for what he was entrusted with. "Unapproved" might be a better word for this idea.

Disqualified: Adakomos Unapproved, i.e. rejected; by implication, worthless (literally or morally):
- castaway, rejected, reprobate Titus 1:16, Hebrews 6:7-8

Paul has the highest expectations for the people of the Corinthian church.