

First Corinthians

VERSE-BY-VERSE

1st Corinthians

59 A.D.
Date of Writing

Ephesus
Place of Writing

In the first eighteen verses of chapter nine, Paul had defended his rights as an apostle to give up his freedoms he enjoys as a believer saved by grace through faith. His primary point was *those who preach the Gospel should be able to live off the Gospel*, and that this was God's plan for preachers of the Gospel. Yet, Paul gave up his right to receive a salary for preaching the gospel because God had *committed* him or *faithed* him to preach the gospel. Paul did not choose to be a preacher of the Gospel; he didn't do it willingly, rather it was against his will (9:17). Therefore, he would not be rewarded by man, rather he would preach the gospel without charge.

Six Questions Paul Answers

1. What about **marriage**? (Chapter 7).
2. What about Christian **liberty**? (Chapter 8-10).
3. What about Church **conduct**? (Chapter 11).
4. What about spiritual **gifts**? (Chapters 12-14).
5. What about the **Resurrection**? (Chapter 15).
6. What about the **collection**? (Chapter 16).

Chapter 9:19-27 | Paul's Method of Preaching the Gospel

Verse 19–

There was no reward given to Paul by the church or by any man, **or though I be free from all men**. That didn't mean Paul felt he could do whatever he desired or act anyway he wanted to. **Yet I have made myself servant unto all**. He became a servant of all. Paul was following Christ's example who *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister* (Mark 8:45). By serving others Paul said, **I might gain more**.

Verses 20-22–

Unto the Jews (Literally Judeans) **I became as a Jew** (Judean). The Judeans were Jews from Judea which is the area in and surrounding Jerusalem, i.e., the former Southern Kingdom made up of the tribe of Judah. The Judeans here are Jews who had been scattered throughout the nations (*ethnos*). When Paul says **I became as** he means he accommodated them, he fit in with their needs. The result; **that I might gain the Jews** (Judeans).

To them that are under the law, as under the law. There were Jews who still were clinging to the Mosaic law. Paul put himself into their mindset so that he **might gain them**.

To them that are without the law (vs. 21), that is the uncircumcised (or the non-Jew) he fit in with them (although he himself was never lawless, and always submitting himself to the highest law, that is the law of Christ). The law of Christ is *love*. The result was to gain new believers under grace.

(vs. 22) **To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak** (see 8:13). His pattern is easy to follow and he sums it up; **I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some**.

Verse 23–

Why do this? Why become all things to all men? **For the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you**. His ultimate goal is evangelism of those who are lost. Paul is speaking here of evangelism. A church never needs to worrying getting bad sheep in the church or mixing wolves with the sheep when it comes to evangelism. Evangelism is reaching out to anyone, anywhere, anytime. It is discipleship/ Bible study that will keep the church pure and in perfect harmony with the gospel of grace.

Verse 24–

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all. The reason Paul *became all things to all men* was so he could partake with them in the gospel, but he was concerned that his work of sharing the gospel would be in vain if he slacked off at the finish line. **So run that ye may obtain**. Paul uses running imagery in several places, Galatians 2:2; 5:7; Philippians 2:16; Hebrews 12:1; 2 Timothy 4:7.

Verse 25–

Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. A professional athlete is one who strives to master his sport and is self-controlled as he trains and competes. The professional does his training **to obtain a corruptible crown** (The gold medal). **But we are incorruptible.** We share our faith and the gospel of Jesus Christ and by doing so will gain an incorruptible crown. The Bible mentions various crowns (and that crowns will be received) but doesn't say much more about them.

-Crown of righteousness | 2 Timothy 4:8

-Crown of life | James 1:12

-Crown of glory | 1 Peter 5:4

-Crown of life | Revelation 2:10

-Crown | Revelation 2:10

We should be careful that we don't make stuff up about rewards. It should simply be enough to say that if we are faithful we will receive *an incorruptible crown*.

Paul gives his example of how he runs the race.

Verse 26–

I therefore run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: There has to be a goal. Paul had a plan and didn't go about haphazardly. He had directions from Christ and he stuck to his message of salvation by grace through faith. And, his message was clear; He didn't mix law with grace.

Verse 27–

But I keep under my body and bring it unto subjection: Paul kept his natural body in line with his spiritual. To **keep under** is a difficult word to translate. Most translations use *discipline*, and that certainly might be a good English translation, but it might be more that *I am keeping a watchful eye on my body*. Does he mean this in a physical sense as well as spiritual: the kind of shape he is in, how he treats his body by what he eats? It could mean those things. He is not going to allow his body to get the better of him. The word **subjection** is a compound word in the Greek that means, bring into slavery.

Lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. The word castaway means to be rejected. ESV and NKJV use the word *disqualified*. That is unfortunate since it has caused many to think this verse means one can lose their salvation. He doesn't mean rejected by God, he mean rejected by those he is preaching the gospel to. If he has no plan for the gospel, if he slacks off on spiritual convictions from the word and just beats the air, if he lets his physical cravings get the better of his body, he makes himself unqualified, or disqualified. Maybe a 21st century way of translating this would be, I'll just be preaching #fakenews.