

I Corinthians

Chapter 9:1-27

1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

Constable > The absence of the key phrase "now concerning" is the clue that this chapter does not deal with a new subject. It is a continuation of the discussion of eating in idol temples that Paul began in 8:1. Subjecting our freedom for the welfare of other people is not something any of us does naturally.

Benson > It appears from this, and several other passages of the epistles to the Corinthians, that some of them, influenced probably by false teachers, who had crept in among them, objected to St. Paul's being an apostle, because he had not asserted his privilege in demanding and receiving such maintenance from the churches as was due to that office, inferring from this circumstance that he did not judge himself entitled to any such privilege, and therefore had wrought at a trade, to support himself thereby.

Am I not free? ... > (Robertson) All these questions expect an affirmative answer.

Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? > (Utley) (The Greek grammar) implies that a past action has resulted in a current state of being. Wuest translates it as > *Have I not seen the Lord with a discerning eye and at present have Him in my mind's eye?*

Barclay > Over and over again the Book of Acts makes it clear that the supreme test of an apostle is that he is a witness of the Resurrection. (Acts 1:22; Acts 2:32; Acts 3:15; Acts 4:33). This is of intense importance. Faith, in the New Testament, is very seldom acquiescence in a creed; it is almost always trust in a person. Paul does not say, "I know what I have believed." He says, "I know whom I have believed." (2 Timothy 1:12).

2 If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

If > (Strong's) ei

If I am not an apostle to others > (Constable) Paul did not begin by justifying his renunciation of his apostolic rights, but by establishing that he had these rights. He evidently had to begin there because the Corinthians were challenging these rights. They were assuming that Paul had worked with his hands because he lacked apostolic rights, not because he had chosen to forgo them.

³ My **defense** to those who **examine** me is this: ⁴ Do we not have a **right** to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we not have a **right to take along** a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

Defense > (Strong's) *apologia* > a speech in defense

Examine > (Strong's) properly, to scrutinize, i.e. (by implication) investigate, interrogate, determine

Barnes > The word used here is properly a forensic term, and is usually applied to judges in courts; to those who sit in judgment, and investigate and decide in litigated cases brought before them

Right > (Strong's) power to act, authority

To take along > (Strong's) to take around (as a companion); reflexively, to walk around -- compass, go (round) about, lead about.

6 Or do only Barnabas and I have no right to refrain from working?

Or do only Barnabas and I ... > (Barclay) The Greeks despised manual labor; no free Greek would willingly work with his hands. Aristotle declared that all men were divided into two classes--the cultured and the hewers of wood and drawers of water who existed solely to perform the menial tasks for the others, and whom it was not only mistaken but actually wrong to seek to raise and educate. The enemies of Socrates and Plato had in fact taunted them because they took no money for teaching and had hinted that they did so because their teaching was worth nothing. It is true that every Jewish Rabbi was supposed to teach for nothing and to have a trade whereby he earned his daily bread; but these same Rabbis took very good care to inculcate the teaching that there was no more meritorious deed than to support a Rabbi. If a man wished a comfortable place in heaven, he could not better assure himself of it than by supplying all a Rabbi's needs.

Interesting comment from **Utley** > Barnabas is also called an apostle, which shows a wider use of the term than simply the initial Twelve (cf. Acts 14:14, 18:5).

⁷ Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit? Or who **tends** a flock and does not consume some of the milk of the flock?

Tends > (Strong's) shepherd

You might want to compare the individuals in the given illustrations to those Christians performing the functions given by the Lord > Soldiers, Vignerons, Shepherds

⁸I am not just asserting these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does the Law not say these things as well? ⁹For it is written in the Law of Moses: "You shall not muzzle the ox while it is threshing." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? ¹⁰Or is He speaking entirely for our sake? Yes, it was written for our sake, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing in the crops.

Entirely > (Strong's) altogether, by all means, no doubt.

Hope > (Strong's) (to anticipate, usually with pleasure); expectation (abstractly or concretely) or confidence

¹¹If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? ¹²If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

If ... if ... if > (Strong's) ei

Material > (Strong's) pertaining to the flesh, carnal

Wuest Translation > As for us, since we sowed spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we shall reap from you the things which are needful to sustain our physical existence?

Right > (Strong's) power to act, authority

If others share the right over you > (Utley) Other leaders were exercising the right (i.e., *exousia*) to be materially compensated.

Endure > Interesting word > (Strong's) to roof over, i.e. (figuratively) to cover with silence (endure patiently)

Hinderance > (Utley) This was a strong military term. The word was used for breaking up a road to keep an enemy from using it.

¹³Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?

Barclay > There were five main offerings.

- (i) The **Burnt-Offering**. This alone was burnt entire except the stomach, the entrails and the sinew of the thigh (compare Genesis 32:32). But even in this the priests received the hides and did a flourishing trade with them.

- (ii) The ***Sin-Offering***. In this case only the fat was burned on the altar and the priests received all the flesh.
- (iii) The ***Trespass-Offering***. Again the fat alone was burned and the priests received all the flesh.
- (iv) The ***Meat-Offering***. This consisted of flour and wine and oil. Only a token part was offered on the altar; by far the greater part was the perquisite of the priests.
- (v) The ***Peace-Offering***. The fat and the entrails were burned on the altar; the priest received the breast and the right shoulder; and the rest was given back to the worshipper.

The priests enjoyed still further perquisites.

- (vi) They received the first-fruits of the seven kinds--wheat, barley, the vine, the fig-tree, the pomegranate, the olive and honey.
- (vii) The *Terumah*. This was the offering of the choicest fruits of every growing thing. The priests had the right to an average of one fiftieth of any crop.
- (viii) The Tithe. A tithe had to be given of "everything which may be used as food and is cultivated and grows out of the earth." This tithe belonged to the Levites; but the priests received a tithe of the tithe that the Levites received.
- (ix) The *Challah*. This was the offering of kneaded dough. If dough was made with wheat, barley, spelt, oats or rye, a private individual had to give to the priests one twenty-fourth part, a public baker one forty-eighth part.

¹⁴ *So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.*

So also the Lord directed > Matthew 10:10, Luke 10:7 > The Matthew passage referencing the Lord sending out the 12; and the Luke passage referencing the Lord sending out the 72.

Matthew 10:10 > "... for the worker is deserving of his support."

Luke 10:7 > "... for the laborer is deserving of his wages."

¹⁵ *But I have used none of these things. And I have not written these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than that. No one shall make my boast an empty one!* ¹⁶ *For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast about, for I am under compulsion; for woe to me if I do not preach the gospel.*

Done > (Strong's) to come into being, to happen, to become

If ... if > (Strong's) ean

Compulsion > (Strong's) constraint (literally or figuratively); by implication, distress

The word used is VERY interesting!! The core word has the meaning of > *the bent arm*. **Helps Word Studies** states “a bent/uplifted arm poised to meet a pressing need”

¹⁷For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a commission nonetheless. ¹⁸What, then, is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

If ... if > (Strong's) ei

Reward > (Strong's) Apparently a primary word; pay for service (literally or figuratively)

Commission > (Strong's) administration (of a household or estate); specially, a (religious) "economy" -- dispensation, stewardship.

Vincent > Lit., I am entrusted with a stewardship

Constable > Paul's reward for preaching the gospel willingly was the privilege of preaching it "without cost (charge)" to his hearers. His "highest pay" was the privilege of preaching.

Wuest Translation > *What then is my remuneration? namely, that when I am proclaiming the good news I may give out the good news without charge, with the end in view of not making full use of my right in the good news.*

¹⁹For though I am free from all people, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may gain more.

I have made myself a slave to all > Keep this thought in mind as we read the following verses > “In what sense is Paul placing himself as ‘slave to all’?”

²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might gain Jews; to those who are under the Law, I became as one under the Law, though not being under the Law myself, so that I might gain those who are under the Law;

To the Jews I became as a Jew > (Barnes) I complied with their rites, customs, prejudices, as far as I could with a good conscience. I did not needlessly offend them. I did not attack and oppose their views, when there was no danger that my conduct should be mistaken.

As one under the Law, though not being under the Law myself > Paul ‘mirrored’ his audience so he would not be an offense to them and, thus, thwart the giving of the gospel.

Uttley > Paul's main concern was evangelism. Therefore, he circumcised Timothy so as to work with Jews, but would not circumcise Titus so as not to compromise the freedom of the gospel among Gentiles.

²¹ to those who are without the Law, I became as one without the Law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might gain those who are without the Law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak; I have become all things to all people, so that I may by all means save some. ²³ I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

Though not being without ... > Again, circumspect within an obedience to the Lord.

To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak > (Barnes) I did not shock them. I complied with their customs. I conformed to them in my dress, habits, manner of life, and even in the services of religion. I abstained from food which they deemed it their duty to abstain from; and where, if I had partaken of it, I should have offended them.

All ... all ... all > (Utley) Paul's inner self has been transformed from self-centered to gospel-centered. He is free to serve Christ, to serve the gospel, to serve the Kingdom (cf. Rom. 6:11; 7:4). Flexibility, intentionality, and love are crucial aspects of Paul's life and ministry!

I do all things for the sake of the gospel > (Constable) The work of "the gospel" was the great axis around which everything in Paul's life revolved.

²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. So they do it to obtain a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

Race > (Strong's) *stadion* > a stadium (a Gr. measure of length), by impl. a racecourse (See the picture on the next page)

Vincent > Hence a stated distance; a standard of length. In all other New-Testament passages it is used of a measure of length, and is rendered furlong, representing 606.75 English feet. From the fact that the race-courses were usually of exactly this length, the word was applied to the race-course itself.



Competes > (Strong's) *agónizomai* > to contend for a prize, struggle

Winner's Wreath

Wreath > (Strong's) see to the side of this page



The well preserved Delphi stadium shows the layout of Greek stadia. The 600 foot running course of Corinth's new stadium was also flanked by seat-covered embankments on each side of the running track.

²⁶ Therefore I run in such a way as not to run aimlessly; I box in such a way, as **to avoid hitting air;** ²⁷ but I strictly **discipline** my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be **disqualified.**

To avoid hitting air > (Barnes) The phrase also is applicable to a "missing the aim," when a blow was struck in a real struggle, and when the adversary would elude the blow, so that it would be spent in the empty air. This last the idea which Paul means to present. He did not miss his aim; he did not exert himself and spend his strength for nothing. Every blow that he struck told; and he did not waste his energies on that which would produce no result. He did not strive with rash, ill-advised, or uncertain blows; but all his efforts were directed, with good account, to the grand purpose or subjugating his enemy - sin - and the corrupt desires of the flesh - and bringing everything into captivity to God

Discipline> (Strong's) to strike under the eye

Disqualified> (Strong's) not standing the test, rejected

Barnes > This word is taken from "bad metals" and properly denotes those which will not bear the "test" that is applied to them; that are found to be base and worthless, and are therefore rejected and cast away.