

The Mature Use of Christian Liberty

1 Corinthians 9:1-18

Key Words: Right, Rights

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1 Corinthians 9:1-18

9 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? 2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3 This is my defense to those who would examine me. 4 Do we not have the right to eat and drink? 5 Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? 6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? 7 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?

- 8 Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 10 Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. 11 **If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?** 12 If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

13 Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? 14 In the same way, the Lord commanded that **those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.**

15 But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. 16 For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. 18 **What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.**

➤ **The Mature use of Liberty**

- The way up is down
- Self-fulfillment by giving one's self away
- Desire to see others saved

Outline

1. A defense from his apostleship (1-6)
2. A defense from human experience (7)
3. A defense from OT Law (8-12)
4. A defense from OT Practice (13)
5. A defense from the teaching of Jesus (14)
6. All for the Gospel (15-18)

1. A Defense from his Apostleship (1-8)

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? 2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3 This is my defense to those who would examine me. 4 Do we not have the right to eat and drink? 5 Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? 6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?

- **You don't need a new teacher, you need to honor the one you have!**

2. A Defense from Human Experience (7)

- v. 7 - Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?
- Work is rewarded with payment
- Exerting effort should be recognized and rewarded
- **Point: I have the right to be paid for my work**

3. An Appeal from OT Law (8-12)

- 8 Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 10 Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. 11 **If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?** 12 If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more? **Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.**
 - V. 12 - Nevertheless...
 - **The gospel was more important than his rights**

4. A Defense from OT Practice (v. 13)

- 13 Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings?
- **Those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel**

5. A Defense from the Teaching of Jesus (14)

14 In the same way, the Lord commanded that **those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.**

- Luke 10:7-8 – “for the laborer deserves his wages.”
- Matthew 10:10 – “for the laborer deserves his food.”
- **Paul did not have the right to give up his liberty in Christ but he did have the liberty to give up his rights.**
- Matthew 6:33 – But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

6. All for the Gospel (15-18)

- 15 But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. 16 For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. 18 **What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.**
- **Paul did not want anything to get in the way of the truth of the gospel.**

