

## INTRODUCTION

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- What is this chapter all about? What is this chapter doing here?

*This chapter is part of the section of the epistle that begins with 8:1 and ends at 11:1. The section deals with food offered to idols and whether believers may eat of it. In Chapter 8, he told them that our conduct must not be governed by knowledge alone. Love must rule. We must consider others before self. The situation then was that as far as their knowledge is concerned, it was A1. As for conduct, it is F9! In 8:13, Paul said that if eating meat will cause a brother to stumble, then he would be willing to be a life-long vegetarian!*

*Having said that, now in Chapter 9, Paul is going to show them that he has practiced what he preached. As an apostle, he has rights. But he chose not to exercise his rights, out of love for sinners, for the believers, for the gospel. In other words, Paul wants to tell these Corinthian believers that we should live our Christian Life and carry out our Christian Service in a cross-shaped manner. What molds and motivates all that we do is Christ, who in love sacrificed Himself, who died that we may live!*

## SECTION ONE: VERSES 1-14

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**The Message:** *Gospel workers have the rights to be supported by Gospel believers. Hence Paul the apostle has the rights to be supported by the Corinthian believers.*

**The Support:** (i) *V4-6 - All other apostles and gospel workers are being supported, having exercised their rights.*

(ii) *V7 - Common sense, common practice of the world: soldier, farmer and shepherd.*

(iii) *V8-10 - The Law of God (Deuteronomy 25:4)*

(iv) *V11-12a - Reasonable thing to do: Spiritual things above material things, so if I input spiritual things, not too much to receive material things.*

(v) *V13 - Old Testament priests and Levites*

(vi) *V14 - Our Lord's teachings (Luke 10:7)*

**The Facts:** (a) *From v11-12, he was not supported!*

(b) *From v1-3, he was not respected!*

## SECTION TWO: VERSES 15-18

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**The Message:** *Paul rejects the exercise of his rights.*

**Verse 12b:** *Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.*

**Verse 15:** *But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.*

*His similar practice elsewhere: 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8*

**The Reason:** *Paul had laboured among them free of charge. He should be highly valued and respected, but he was not. In fact, it was possible that some of the Corinthians reasoned thus: The best are paid the highest. He is not paid. Hence, he's not worth listening to!*

*Despite that, Paul stands his ground and continues to reject his rights to be supported. He used the word 'endure' in verse 12. It means 'to roof over, figuratively to cover in silence'. In other words, Paul rather suffers hunger and thirst in silence than to raise the matter. He also used the word 'hinder' in verse 12, which is a military word. It is the word used to cut off a road, to prevent the enemies from advancing. So he is saying*

*that he would not do anything that will cut off the road, preventing the advance of the gospel! And this is his reason: The advance of the gospel!*

*So passionate was he in this matter that verse 15 is rather emotional! The Greek original has Paul stopping his sentence half-way . . . he didn't finish what he wanted to say!!*

**The Driving Force:** *Here we are looking at verses 16-18. Overall, he is saying that he has a commission from Christ to preach the gospel. It wasn't something he has chosen to do but it was something he was entrusted to do. And so now he lives his life by this commission - to preach the Gospel, to advance the gospel, to ensure that the gospel is spread far and wide! As long as the gospel is spreading, it doesn't matter how much it costs him!!*

Question: *How does this relate to us?*

*(Note: The decision to exercise the rights (to be supported) or not, it does not belong to the church. Rather it belongs to the gospel worker!)*

### SECTION THREE: VERSES 19-23

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**Main Point:** This is *how much* the spread of the gospel matter to Paul!

**What he did?** *V19 - He made himself a slave to all!*

**Why he did it?** *V19 - That he might win the more! In other words, he is making himself a slave to all so that he can win more people to Christ! Paul believes that God has elected people for salvation, and those whom He elected will most definitely be saved. Yet that does not stop him from doing what he can, all that he can, as long as it is Scriptural, to bring more and more people to Jesus. He does not say, "If they are elect, then they will be saved." He sowed the seed. Yes he did. But he did more than sow the seed!*

*V22d gives us another glimpse into this: that I might by all means save some.*

*V23 states another reason: That I may be partaker of the gospel with you. That I may prove to have a share in the gospel! If I have a share in the gospel, then I will be very concerned about how the gospel is advancing in this world!*

**How he did it?** *To the Jews, he became a Jew (v02); to the Gentiles, he became a Gentile (v21). To the weak, he became weak (v22). This means that he will not do anything that will unnecessary offend his hearers, that he will be prepared to do anything that will gain him a hearing from them. As long as they are not sin, as long as they do not involve compromise, he will set aside his own personal preference and get alongside them! However, he will not do anything with them that they will have to stop or leave, if they are converted!*

*Overall, we see that Paul will submerge his any and every personal considerations in the great aim of 'by all means save some'. He is a gospel-dominated man. No sacrifice is to great if it aided the gospel's advance. The salvation of sinners is the supreme blessing that motivates Paul to do what he is doing. What an inspiration and challenge! Is this how we live? Is this how our church live?*

**Learn to ask:** *How does this affect the progress of the gospel?  
Will it make it easier or harder for people to hear, believe and be saved?*

**Question:** *Is the gospel and its advance, as important to us as it was to Paul?  
Are we giving up anything for the sake of the gospel?*

#### SECTION FOUR: VERSES 24-27

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**Main Point:** *This is how Paul lived his life!*

**Focus:** (i) *Run to win! Verse 24. He doesn't play games or play a fool. He is dead serious. He is in it to win!*

(ii) *Temperate in order to win! Verse 25. Careful about what he eats and drinks, what time he goes to bed and gets up, how many times he train, etc.*

(iii) *Clear-sighted in order to win! Verse 26. Fixes his eye on the finishing line, knows where he is headed.*

(iv) *Rule his body in order to win! Verse 27. Does not indulge his body, pamper his body, but commands it! Literally, it means 'I give my own body a black eye, I beat my face black and blue'!*

**Fear:** *Lest he be disqualified! What does this mean? Immediately, it would mean that as a gospel preacher, he disciplined himself lest after he has laboured for some time as a preacher, he fell into sin and hence disqualify himself from the ministry. But broader application would mean that this discipline-in-ministry would also mean discipline-in-living, that as he calls himself a Christian and tell others about Christ, he will be disciplined lest he starts to indulge his flesh, obey his lusts and finally proves to be a unbeliever!!*

#### CONCLUSION

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*The way Paul lives reminds us of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

*John 4:34 ~ My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.*

*John 9:4 ~ I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day . . .*

*John 10:11 ~ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.*

*Philippians 2:7,8 ~ But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men . . . became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

*Hebrews 10:5-7 ~ Therefore, when He came into the world, He said, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, "Behold, I have come - in the volume of the book it is written of Me - To do Your will, O God."*