



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERIES: FOLLOWING CHRIST THROUGH CHAOS | •

7.10.22 | • 1 COR. 9:1-27 •

MAIN POINT

A Christian is one who shares what it means to be a follower of Christ with others.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Is there any job that you loved so much you would be willing to do it without pay?

**Have you ever sacrificed your goals and priorities to help someone else?
What was that like?**

When Paul was traveling on the road to Damascus he heard the best news in the world. Paul came face to face with the resurrected Jesus, and it dramatically changed everything about his life. Before Paul met Jesus, he was a devout Pharisee and had earned a reputation as a fervent persecutor of the church. However, after his

encounter with Jesus, Paul completely reoriented his life with one goal: Share the gospel of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible. To do this, he sacrificed comfort and financial gain in order to share the life he had found in Jesus.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 9:1-18.

What was the purpose of Paul's questions? What was he trying to establish?

Why would some of the Corinthians have tried to create doubts about his authority as an apostle?

In the New Testament the role of apostle replaced the Old Testament office of prophet. These individuals were uniquely gifted to lead the church and disclose revelation from God. Paul cites his encounter with the resurrected Jesus and the Corinthian's own conversion and growth as evidences of his apostolic authority.

What was the main point of Paul's defense in verses 4-6?

**Paul mentioned his rights seven times in these verse (vv. 4,5,6,12,15,18).
What rights was he referencing?**

Some in Corinth doubted Paul's authority because Paul refused to exercise certain rights such as the freedom to eat or drink certain foods (v. 4), the right to marry a believing wife (v. 5), and the right to reap financial support from the churches (v. 7-

11). The doubters saw his refusal as evidence that he didn't have these rights. Both the Old Testament law and common sense dictate that people who work are entitled to earn a living for their work. Apostles are no different, but Paul let go of these rights in the service of Christ.

How did Paul demonstrate obedience to his calling? Read Romans 1:16. What motivated him to preach?

What was Paul's ground for boasting? Why would he rather die than be deprived of it? What does Paul see himself as a steward of?

According to verse 18 what does Paul see as his reward?

If it were up to Paul he would have never been a missionary, but Paul's encounter with Jesus left him no other options. Writing to the Romans, Paul introduced himself as a "slave of Christ Jesus" (Romans 1:1). What Paul wanted them to understand was that he had no will but the will of his Master. Jesus was Paul's master and he gave him a clear objective—to carry His name before gentiles, kings, and the Jewish people (Acts 9:15). Everything Paul did was in service to this cause, and he took such pleasure in it that he could willingly forego his right to compensation.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-27.

What does it mean to be a servant? How is this exemplified in Paul's ministry?

Paul did not limit whom he shared the gospel with. Instead he shared with a wide variety of people. Do you ever place limits on those you share the gospel with?

What does it look like to be “all things to all people”? What does it not look like?

Verse 23 refers to the blessings of the gospel. What are some of these blessings?

Paul always took the time to understand his audience. Though he never watered down the central message of the gospel, his ministry included numerous times when he gladly made social and personal accommodations to reach others. Paul made every effort to understand those he told about Jesus. Paul used the world against the world so that he could connect people with Christ.

Why is discipline in our lives essential as believers as we develop relationships with the lost and as we share the gospel?

To what does Paul compare discipline in the Christian life? How does Paul’s analogy help us understand the Christian life?

In verse 25 Paul mentions a wreath (or in some translations a crown). What is the crown for the athletes? What is the crown for the Christian?

Like an athlete in training, Paul disciplined himself with a purpose—winning others to Christ. Paul frequently employed athletic metaphors to describe the rigors and focus required of the practice of self-discipline. He wanted all other desires in his life to be subject to his calling to lead people to Christ. If we want to consistently experience the blessings of the gospel, specifically in the area of bringing others to Jesus, we must focus on spiritual discipline.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In this passage we see Paul's deep passion for sharing the gospel. How would you describe your passion for serving God? When has it been the strongest? The weakest?

Is your life marked by service to others? How does service provide an inroad to share the gospel to people who might not otherwise listen? How can you serve someone this week?

For whom are you a model of Jesus Christ? What kind of model are they seeing?

PRAYER

Thank God for the gospel. Ask God to empower us by His Spirit to share the gospel with others. Pray that He would break down our barriers and division and give us a heart for our lost friends and family. Close by praying for lost friends and family of those in the group. Pray that God would help us to be servants of all to share the good news of Jesus with those around us.

COMMENTARY

1 CORINTHIANS 9:1-27

9:1-2. Paul offers a rhetorical reply to those who questioned his apostolic ministry.

9:3-6. Paul's "rights" as an apostle, which were exercised by other apostles, included: (1) the right to be compensated for his apostolic service; (2) the right to take a believing wife; and (3) the right to refrain from outside work, devoting himself entirely to ministry. Paul did not always choose to exercise these rights.

9:8-11. Paul uses a greater-to-lesser argument to justify his right to an allowance. If he has supplied spiritual things (the greater) to the Corinthians, surely he ought to receive material benefits (the lesser) from them in return.

9:12. Now Paul uses a lesser-to-greater argument to support his right to a living wage. If those who presently labored among the Corinthians received wages, how much more should the one who had founded the church? In response to those who said that Paul was illegitimate because the church did not support him (cp. 2Co 10; 12), he declared that he had yielded this right to a wage so he would not hinder the gospel of Christ.

9:14. The Lord has commanded may refer to Luke 10:4-8, where among other things Jesus says, "The gospel worker is worthy of his wages."

9:16-17. An obligation is placed on me alludes to Paul's commission at Damascus as a "chosen instrument" (Ac 9:15) who had been given a stewardship to discharge the message of the gospel to the nations (4:1). Paul had not chosen missions work as a profession. Rather, God chose it for him.

9:18. Though Paul felt bound as Christ's slave to fulfill his commission (Rm 1:1), his obligation to preach the gospel was rewarding to him. He took such pleasure in it that he could willingly forego his right to compensation.

9:19. Paul as a free man (cp. v. 1) put forward his motive for making himself a slave (lit "I enslaved myself"). He did it in order to win more people.

9:20-22. Paul's "self-imposed slavery" gave him the freedom to accommodate Jews and Gentiles alike and therefore speak the gospel in a forthright manner, unhindered by cultural hang-ups. He exemplified this freedom among Jews when he circumcised Timothy (whose mother was Jewish) to maximize the gospel witness in Jewish areas (Ac 16:3). Among Gentiles who were without the law, he yielded his rights in order to maximize the gospel's advance. For example, he would not take a wage if taking a wage would cause those "outside the law" to stumble. The phrase not being without

God's law but within Christ's law refers to him as one who had the right under God's law to receive a wage (cp. 9:8-10), yet among Gentiles he yielded that right.

9:24-27. Like hard-driven runners and boxers, Paul had a single-minded focus. His exercise of self-control was aimed at keeping him from being disqualified.

"Disqualified" does not mean loss of salvation, which Paul elsewhere said is impossible (Rm 8:38-39; see also Jn 10:28-30), but rather failure to fulfill his God-given commission to evangelize the nations (Ac 9:15; 13:2; Rm 1:1).

9:24-26a. If athletes compete by the rules and master self-control in everything, all for the purpose of winning a crown that will fade away, how much more should Christians discipline themselves for a crown that will never fade away?

9:26b-27. Paul viewed his boxing opponent as his own body. When it resisted giving up rights and liberties, he brought it under strict control (lit "I enslave it"). Paul had already stated that he endured everything (v. 12), made himself a slave to all (v. 19), and exercised self-control (v. 25) to allow a hearing for the gospel (by not taking a wage).