

URGENT

1st
CENTURY
CIRCA ROM



1 Corinthians



The Apostle Paul's Mission to the Corinthians



Christ Bible Church



Adult Bible Class Calendar Spring 2023

Date			Lesson Portion of 1 Corinthians
1	February	5	Review of 1 Corinthians 1-7 & Preview of 1 Corinthians 8-11
2	February	12	1 Corinthians 8:1-6
3	February	19	1 Corinthians 8:7-13
4	February	26	1 Corinthians 9:1-14
5	March	5	1 Corinthians 9:15-27
6	March	12	1 Corinthians 10:1-13
7	March	19	1 Corinthians 10:14-22
8	March	26	1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1
9	April	2	1 Corinthians 11:2-16
10	April	9	1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Freedom of Conscience
Concerning Things God
Does Not Forbid or Command
1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1

1 Corinthians 9:15-27

CONCERNING FOODS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS (8:1-11:1)
Modeling Proper Use and Non-Use of Christian Freedom (9:1-27)

Outline of 1 Corinthians

- I. Introduction (1:1-9).
- II. Responses to Received Reliable Oral Reports from the Corinthians (1:10-6:20).
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1-16:4).
 - A. Concerning Marriage and Related Questions (7:1-40).
 - B. Concerning Foods Sacrificed to Idols (8:1-11:1).
 - 1. Correcting the Problem: Knowledge and Love (8:1-13).
 - 2. Modeling Proper Use & Non-Use of Christian Freedom (9:1-27).
 - a. Rights of Freedom (9:1-14).
 - b. Freedom from Use of Rights (9:15-27).**
 - 3. Applying a Warning: Israel's Example (10:1-13).
 - 4. An Analogy: The Lord's Table (10:14-22).
 - 5. Summarizing the Corrective: True Limitations of Christian Freedom (10:23-11:1).

1 Corinthians 9:15-27

Freedom from Use of Rights.

- Free to Feature the Free Gospel (9:15-18).
- Free to Save People from All of Society (9:19-22).
- Free to Save Himself (9:23-27).

Freedom to Feature the Free Gospel

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1 CORINTHIANS 9:15-18

1 Corinthians 9:15-18

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. 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! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. 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.


Preaching the Gospel & Financial Support

- Paul's argument turns a sharp corner—"But I have made no use of any of these rights. . . ."
- Paul anticipates this in verse 12—"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."
- He reiterates that he has not used his apostolic right to receive remuneration, a right granted to him by Christ.
- Paul assures the Corinthians that he is not now going to call for them to support him—"Nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision."
- He is zealous—"For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting."
- Paul's refusal to receive financial support will become significant in later correspondence to the Corinthians. **See 2 Corinthians 11:1-11.**
- Paul's mention of boasting seems odd. **Several times in the letter he has already condemned boating.** Here, his boast is in the Lord who called him.

Paul's Defense of Himself & the Gospel

I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.

Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!



Paul Condemns Boasting

- **1 Corinthians 1:28-29**—“God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human might boast in the presence of God.
- **1 Corinthians 1:31**—“It is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”
- **1 Corinthians 3:21**—“So, let no one boast in men.”
- **1 Corinthians 4:7**—“For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?”
- **1 Corinthians 5:6**—“Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?”

Paul's Preaching is No Basis for Boasting

- Paul's allusion is to Christ's calling him on the Damascus road.
- Paul presents his calling hyperbolically—he has no choice.
- He announces a curse on himself—“Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!”
- He is compelled to preach. Preaching is no basis for a boast.
 - If I say, “I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name,”
there is in my heart as it were a burning fire
shut up in my bones,
and I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot (Jeremiah 20:9).

What Is My Reward?

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.

- He keeps before the Corinthians his message about foregoing the right of a free conscience.
- His reward is to preach the gospel “free of charge.”

Freedom to Save People from All of Society

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1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-23

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

Paul Elaborates on Why He Does Not Receive an Income from the Corinthians

- “For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.”
- Martin Luther captures this: “A Christian is a free lord of everything and subject to no one. A Christian is a willing servant of everything and subject to everyone” (*On Christian Freedom*).

Four Categories of People to Whom Paul Is A Servant for the Gospel

“I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means, I might save some.”

- “To the Jews, I became like a Jew, to win the Jews.”
- “To those under the Law, I became like one under the Law (though I myself am not under the Law), to win those under the Law.”
- “To those not having the Law, I became like one not having the Law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), to win those not having the Law.”
- To the weak (in conscience), I have become weak, to win the weak.”

“To the Jews, I became like a Jew, to win the Jews.”

- **Paul had Timothy, a half Jew, circumcised to join him as a ministry associate so that he could enter synagogues to preach the gospel.**
- **Acts 16:1-5—**Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So, the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

“To the Jews, I became like a Jew, to win the Jews.”

Acts 21:17-26—When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law, and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality.” Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.

“To those under the Law, I became like one under the Law to win those under the Law.”

- Not identical to the first category. This category includes Gentile proselytes to Judaism.
- **Romans 6:14-15**—“For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under the Law but under Grace. What then? Are we to sin because we are not under the Law but under Grace? By no means!”
- “Under the Law” = “Under the Old Covenant” = “under sin” = “under a curse” = “under a guardian.”
- Hence, Paul says, “though I myself am not under the Law.”
- Still, Paul could conduct himself as if he were under the Law to win those under the Law’s governance to belief in the promised Messiah.

“To those not having the Law, I became like one not having the Law.”

- “To those not having the Law” = Gentiles.
- Paul did not have Titus, a Greek non-Jew, circumcised.
- **Galatians 2:1-5**—Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

“To the weak (in conscience), I have become weak, to win the weak.”

- **“To the weak” = Jewish and Proselyte converts to the gospel.**
- **Paul, strong in faith, deferred to those weak in conscience lest he induce them to sin against their consciences.**
- **Romans 14**—As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Four Categories of People to Whom Paul Is A Servant for the Gospel

“I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means, I might save some.”

Paul, as a Jew, whom Christ Jesus called and appointed to become “the apostle to the Gentiles,” was in a unique position. He could adapt culturally without compromising the Gospel to minister the gospel to both Jew and Gentile.

“I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”

Verse 23 is transitional and may properly belong to the next paragraph

ESV—“I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”

Better—“I do all this on account of the gospel that I might be a fellow participant in it.”

Freedom to Save Himself

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1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So, I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.



The Isthmian Games, held every 2 years about 10 miles from Corinth, was one of four sites that hosted the rotating Olympic Games in ancient Greece: Isthmia, Nemea, Olympia, Delphi.



Games dedicated to Poseidon.

A pine wreath was awarded winners of the various athletic events.

Five events: running, long jump, shot put, javelin, boxing, pankration, and equestrian events.



Paul's Message in 1 Corinthians 9:23-27

- The athletic imagery was universally recognized, but especially in Corinth near the site of the Isthmian Games.
- The athletic imagery is a fitting closure on Paul's theme throughout the chapter concerning himself as a model to be followed in foregoing one's rights for the welfare of others.
- He means that his salvation is bound up with how he executes his calling as an apostle.
- He appeals to the Corinthians to join him in persevering in the gospel of Christ that they might be saved.

Paul's Example for Us

“Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be reprobated.”

Teachers & Preachers, Take Heed!

This is the call upon every teacher and preacher of our Lord's gospel. So, Paul exhorts Timothy,

“Take heed to yourself and the doctrine. Persevere in them, for if you do, you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Timothy 4:16).

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