

1 CORINTHIANS, Chapters 8 & 9 – Be Sensitive to Conscience; A Pattern of Self-Denial; Serving All Men; Striving For A Crown

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – **Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221**; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Latest Studies” on the right side. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

1 Corinthians Chapters 8-9

The Apostle Paul has received a letter with questions about a lot of things and how to handle them within the Corinthian church. That’s not unusual when people lose confidence or are not getting questions answered. **Concerning – v. 1:11** Contentions re Chole letter; **6:4** Taking brothers to court; **7:1** Sexual immorality-principles of marriage/single; **7:25** Regarding singles;

Now **8:1** things offered to idols! – example of having the right of Christian liberty, almost daily or whenever you bought market meat. Having right sense of proportion, when and what to subject one’s rights.

Chapter 8 In chapters 8–10, Paul uses a question the Corinthians had asked him about meat to address the larger issue of Christian liberty. Buying meat was almost a daily occurrence. Within the city of Corinth were numerous temples dedicated to various idols wherein animals would be sacrificed. A portion of the meat would be consumed on the altar. Another portion would be given to the priest. The remainder of the sacrifice would be sold in markets at much cheaper rates. It was concerning the meat sold in the markets that the Corinthians questioned Paul.

Chapter 9 After exhorting the Corinthian believers to lay down their liberty in order that others wouldn’t stumble, here in chapter 9, Paul uses himself as an example of what it means to do this....He’s is going to talk about his right as a minister of God to be supported by those he is ministering to. Paul says, you want to put me on trial. Then put me on the witness stand and call witnesses. But then after he has made that point, he is going to make a more important point and that is his giving up that right to not stumble anyone.

1 Corinthians 9:25 - THE INCORRUPTIBLE OR IMPERISHABLE CROWN!

The Apostle Paul is trying to get the Corinthians to understand **there is something more important than their rights and their liberties**, which is not a mark of maturity, but of immaturity. There are things that are more important and valuable than their rights, **One important thing is: To have a clear conscience before our weaker brothers, that’s more valuable than we could ever demand!**. Then he spoke about another thing more important than our rights **is our privilege to win people to Christ and to see another person saved**. In verse 24, he talks about still **another thing that is more valuable and more important than our own rights and that is to one day hear from the lips of Jesus those words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord”!** And what right, and privilege that we have as a Christian, that is more valuable than that? As someone has said, “No Christian life can be considered a success, that doesn’t hear those words from the mouth of our Savior.

And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. - Given to those who run the race with discipline! They live their life in moderation. Running to run the race-to lay aside everything that hinders us or slows us down! Strip away everything that slows me down in running the race for Him! Of the five crowns identified in Scripture, the crown to which Paul refers here, is linked to the declaration in **Proverbs 11:30** that “he who wins souls is wise”—and to that of **Daniel 12:3**, that “they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever”. To you who are **more concerned about seeing people saved than about your own pleasure, ease, or liberty a crown will be given**—not merely to wear on your head, but, in light of **1Co 15:41-42** that will determine your function and capacity to enjoy eternity.

1 Surrender All - VanDeVenter; Weeden - Maranatha!

1.All to Jesus I surrender; all to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live.

Refrain -I surrender all, I surrender all, all to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

2.All to Jesus I surrender; humbly at His feet I bow, worldly pleasures all forsaken; take me, Jesus, take me now. (Refrain)

3.All to Jesus I surrender; make me, Savior, wholly Thine; Let me feel the Holy Spirit, Truly know that Thou art mine..(Refrain)

4.All to Jesus I surrender; Lord, I give myself to Thee; fill me with Thy love and power; let Thy blessing fall on me. (Refrain)

5.All to Jesus I surrender; now I feel the sacred flame. O the joy of full salvation! Glory, glory, to His name! (Refrain)

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

1 CORINTHIANS, Chapter 8 – Be Sensitive to Conscience;

1Co 8:1 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

1Co 8:2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

1Co 8:3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

1Co 8:4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.

1Co 8:5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

1Co 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

1Co 8:7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

1Co 8:8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

1Co 8:9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.

1Co 8:10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?

v. 1 Before answering the Corinthians' question concerning meat, Paul begins by addressing the foundational issue. At the very outset of his discussion of liberty, Paul makes it clear that knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

v. 2 You don't know as much as you think you do," says Paul. I find it interesting that after he will say that idols are nothing here in chapter 8, he'll say there are demons behind them in chapter 10 (10:20).

v. 3 *loves God*, It is not what you know, that really counts. It's your love for God. That's what's all important. *this one is known by Him*. The same is known of God. God knows you. His child, He's concerned for you. He watches over you. Now, the fascinating thing to me is that with All of the knowledge that man is obtaining and achieving, it's not a drop in the bucket to all that God knows! If we continue to expand our knowledge as the exponential rate, doubling every five years, throughout eternity, you still would not catch up with God. But the beautiful thing is that God knows me! And God loves me!

vs. 4-6 "It's no big deal," Paul says, "to eat meat sacrificed to idols, for we know there is only one true God—our Father. We know there is only one true Lord—our Savior, Jesus Christ."

v. 7 *However...* Although eating meat offered to idols is not a threat to the true God, and although eating meat offered to idols won't affect me personally, I need to be aware that it may indeed affect those around me. Our natural tendency is to think that the brother or sister who would be righteously indignant over the eating of meat offered to idols would be the spiritual giant, the one most sensitive to the heart of God. But Paul calls such a one "weak." Paul says, in effect, the person who is bound by rules and regulations isn't mature, but weak—for the more spiritually mature one is, the more free he or she will be.

vs. 8-9 You aren't more spiritual if you know idols are nothing, and feel a personal freedom to eat meat sacrificed to idols (neither if we eat are we the better). On the other hand, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. No one is less spiritual for abstaining from meat sacrificed to idols. This is the very point where most stumble in issues relevant to Christian liberty.

v. 1 The example of choosing between meat that had been offered to idols, (a cheaper price and probably better meat) and that meat that was not offered to idols. **Which would you have chosen, when in the meat market?**

v. 2 Knowledge is always subservient to love? **Are we practicing that?**

v. 3 **How does the Lord view your commitment to love versus your commitment to knowledge?**

v. 4 Do you think you're more spiritual when you decide to enter into situations such as only eating meat not offered to idols?

vs. 4b-6 Do we understand the profoundness of the fact that it's only through the true and living God, the Father and through His Son, Jesus Christ that we have total liberty and full assurance of our eternal salvation?

v. 7 Those who were the strongest in their righteous indignant of not eating the meat offered to idols, were actually the weakest in their faith in God. The more **spiritually mature one is, the more free he or she will be**. **Which side of the meat market would you go to?**

vs. 8-10 In situations where there is liberty Christ, do you think you have the liberty to try to talk someone to do things your way, which is against their own conscience? Do you find yourself stumbling others? Do you always go in love? At crossroad where you can go either way, have you ever chosen the way of grace and have regretted it?

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

1Co 8:11 *And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?*

1Co 8:12 *But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.*

1Co 8:13 *Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.*

1 CORINTHIANS, Chapter 9 – A Pattern of Self-Denial; - Paul Surrenders His Rights

1Co 9:1 *Am I not an apostle? (witness #1) Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?*

1Co 9:2 *If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.*

1Co 9:3 *My defense to those who examine me is this:*

1Co 9:4 *Do we have no right to eat and drink?*

1Co 9:5 *Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?*

1Co 9:6 *Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?*

1Co 9:7 *Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?*

1Co 9:8 *Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also?*

vs. 10-11 More important than the knowledge that I am free to have a burger is the realization that my liberty could adversely affect my weaker brother. You see, I might be able to talk him into participating in an activity that is fine for me. But if he does, he may later feel that his walk has been compromised, or that his prayers won't be heard. That is why I never talk anyone out of a personal conviction he has—even if his conviction seems legalistic to me. Oh, I'll discuss it with him if he asks my opinion, but I won't encourage him to abandon his convictions simply on the basis of my own freedom.

v. 12 Not only can a weak conscience become defiled, but it can become wounded. **That is, a weaker brother can be shocked or saddened by observing my liberty. And when we so wound a weaker brother, we sin against Christ.** Why? Because Jesus cares about even His weakest children. Yes, they might be spiritual babies, spoiled brats, scared children—but they're all His, nonetheless. And He cares about them so much that He died for them. Therefore, before I say, “I'll do what I want, go where I want, eat what I want,” I must realize that if, flaunting my liberty and boasting of my maturity, I knowingly cause my weaker brother to stumble, **I sin not only against him but against Christ.**

v. 13 “Here's the overall summary,” says Paul. “If meat offends my weaker brother, **I will eat no meat. Period!!**.” Is it any wonder the Lord so powerfully used him?

vs. 1-3 An apostle is one who was sent out as a spiritual statesman. Paul had been sent to the Corinthians to bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to disciple and develop them as he labored among them. **Mat 10:9-10** *Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, [10] nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.*

vs. 4-6 In these first six verses, Paul says, “Because we are apostles, we have the right to be supported financially as are James, Jude, Peter, and the other apostles.”

v. 7 “In addition to our apostleship, human logic dictates that we be supported, says Paul. “After all, who goes to war and pays for his own equipment?” Paul is right. Those who enlist in the navy don't have to provide their own ships. Those who join the air force don't have to bring their own planes. No, if you serve in the army or navy, your needs are covered. Not only are military personnel provided for, but the farmer and the shepherd are allowed to eat of the fruit of their own labor.

v. 8 Paul appeals to the law itself as substantiation for his right to financial support.

v. 11 We should never let the “knowledge” of liberty cause a weaker brother to perish!

v. 12 The first mention of “sin” in this chapter. And it's given not for eating or not eating, **but it's for stumbling a brother! I sin not only against him but against Christ. Do we get the full impact of that?**

v. 13 We need to have a sense of proportion of what is really important in life! **Is there any liberty worth doing that to another human life-causing them to stumble? Paul says “No!, Never again”!!** Paul so well knew the value of one soul.

vs. 1-2 Paul here gives us his own life experience as an apostle in laying aside certain of his rights because it was the best thing for the people he was ministering to!

v. 3 He begins with laying aside his right as an apostle to be materially and financially supported. He going to be using his discussion as a courtroom, bringing in various witnesses to establish his position.

v. 4 Don't we have a right as an apostle, given to full time ministry, to be given our daily necessities? From the very mouth of Jesus, Mt. 10:10, we are given the answer! But he is telling them that he has given up his right for more important things.

vs. 5-6 Also don't we have the right to take along a believing wife and to refrain from working?

v. 7 And doesn't this right occur with soldiers? With farmers? With ranchers? The answer is yes!

vs. 8-9 Here Paul brings in another witness and that is the law and it's clear example that even an ox should not be muzzled while it treads out the grain!

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

1Co 9:9 For it is written in the law of Moses, “**YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE AN OX WHILE IT TREADS OUT THE GRAIN.**” Is it oxen God is concerned about?

1Co 9:10 Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

1Co 9:11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?

1Co 9:12 If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

1Co 9:13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?

1Co 9:14 Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

1Co 9:15 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.

1Co 9:16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!

1Co 9:17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

1Co 9:18 What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

v. 9 In other words, “The ox who treads out the grain should be able to eat of the grain.” Paul will use this Old Testament reference (Deuteronomy 25:4) again in 1 Timothy 5:17 when he tells his young protegee that elders should be counted worthy of double honor. This law is not only for the benefit of oxen. It’s an illustration for people.

vs. 10-11 Hope being the absolute expectation of coming good, the one who plows away in ministry should expect good things to come his way. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? “Carnal things” referring to finances, Paul goes on to give a fourth reason why he had a right to be supported in ministry....

v. 12 “It’s already your custom to support other ministers,” says Paul. “So why would it be unusual to support us?”

v. 13 Paul not only referred to Old Testament law, but to the practices of the Old Testament community as he reminds the Corinthian believers

v. 14 “Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves,” Jesus said when He sent His disciples out, “for the workman is worthy of his meat” (Matthew 10:9-10). It is to this command Paul refers.

v. 15 On the basis of apostolic authority, human logic, Old Testament law, present custom, Old Testament community, and Jesus’ command, Paul makes a persuasive and powerful case that he had the right to be supported in ministry. But then he says he would rather die than cause the Corinthian believers to stumble in this area.

v. 16 “I don’t glory in the fact that I let go of my right to be supported in order that I might preach to you,” says Paul, “for I have no other choice but to preach.” “I’m tired of speaking in the name of the Lord,” cried Jeremiah from his dungeon cell, until he realized that the Word of God was like fire in his bones and he could not keep quiet (Jeremiah 20:9). That’s what happens in ministry, doesn’t it? You just can’t keep God’s Word to yourself!

v. 17 “Woe is me if I don’t preach,” says Paul. “If I do it willingly, I’ll have a reward. But even if I do it because I have no other choice, the gospel has been entrusted to me.”

v. 18 “I’m not going to charge for the gospel,” Paul declares. “I’m not going to lay a burden on people, play games with people, or present fund-raising gimmicks to people.”

vs. 9-10 Do you agree that this law is not only for the benefit of oxen but is **also for an illustration for people?** Additionally he bring out that one who plows and one who threshes, **they both do it with the anticipation and expectation that they will be partakers of the fruit of their labors.**

v. 11 Here it is made clear that it is right for the spiritual work of God’s ministers to be repaid with the material support of the people they minister unto.

v. 12 Here we see the heart of Paul, Just as strongly as he affirms his right to be supported by the people he ministers unto, he will also **affirm his right to not use that right - if using it might hinder** the gospel of Christ.

v. 13 At this point Paul point to the priesthood, the Corinthians are reminded that priests partook of a portion of the sacrifices brought to the altar.

v. 14 Now our Lord Jesus Christ is used as a witness. When He send His disciples out – see Matthew 10:9-10 – He told them not to take gold or silver, that **the worker is worthy of his hire.**

v. 15 A most persuasive and powerful case for the right to be supported has been made, but then Paul **says he would rather die than cause one believer to stumble** in that area!

v. 16 Both Paul and Jeremiah have made the strong point that **they must preach the gospel.** Your just **can’t keep God’s Word to yourself!**

v. 17 **Woe is me if I don’t preach the gospel** and if I do, **I’ll have a reward!**

v. 18 Paul vows to present the gospel without charge **that he not abuse his authority in the gospel.**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Serving All Men:

1Co 9:19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;
1Co 9:20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;
1Co 9:21 to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;
1Co 9:22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

1Co 9:23 Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.

Striving For A Crown

1Co 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

vs. 19-20 “Because I laid down my rights in order that you wouldn’t stumble, I’m free,” declares Paul. “To the Jews, I don’t flaunt my liberty. Instead, I become like them,” said Paul. And indeed he did. It was for this reason he circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3).

vs. 21-22 Even as he didn’t flaunt his liberty before the Jews, Paul didn’t force the law upon the Gentiles. Without compromising his morals or violating his principles, he fit in with the folks to whom he was called to minister—that he might win them to Christ.

v. 23 Paul gave up his rights in ministry. He blended in with Jews and Gentiles in humility because, rather than be an obstacle that caused people to stumble, Paul chose to be a stone upon which they could step.

v. 24 Picking up the flow of what is happening and that is trying to get the Corinthians to understand there is something more important than their rights and their liberties, which is not a mark of maturity, but of immaturity. There are things that are more important and valuable than their rights, and To have a clear conscience before our weaker brothers, that’s more valuable than we could ever demand!. Then he spoke about **another thing more important than our rights is our privilege to win people to Christ and to see another person saved.** In verse 24, he talks about still another thing that is more valuable and more important than our own rights and **that is to one day hear from the lips of Jesus those words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord”!** And what right, and privilege that we have as a Christian, that is more valuable than that? As someone has said, “No Christian life can be considered a success, that doesn’t hear those words from the mouth of our Savior. So that what Paul talking about.” *“I run . . . I fight:* Sporting events were big in Paul’s day as well as in our own. So he continues the imagery and is using athletics, comparing the living of a Christian life to be like that of running a race, of which they were all familiar with.

vs. 19-20 Even though Paul was free from all men, he made himself a servant to all **that he might win the more!**

vs. 21-22 Without compromise, Paul fit in with those to whom he was called to minister with the one purpose of winning them to Christ!

v. 23 Putting on all humility, Paul give up his rights to the ministry that those rights would not be an obstacle, causing any to stumble!

v. 24 A most important thing to learn is to have a good conscience before God, that we have never elevate our rights to such a degree that we would be willing to stumble another brother in their faith.
May we all have that most fervent desire that to one day hear from the lips of Jesus those words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord”!
We are to run the race of life in such a way that we may obtain that prize!

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

1Co 9:25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

1Co 9:26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.

1Co 9:27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

v. 25 *is temperate.* This term refers to the manner in which Roman athletes had to train for ten months before being allowed in the games. An athlete must refuse things that may be fine in themselves, but would hinder the pursuit of his goal. Even so, the Corinthians might have to refuse things that are fine in themselves (like meat sacrificed to idols), because having them might hinder the pursuit of the important goal: an imperishable crown, a heavenly reward that will never pass away. What you do with your life is so important. Don't bury your talents. Don't waste your time. Don't fritter away your resources and money foolishly. Run to win the prize.

vs. 26-27 *disciplining my body* - This last phrase would be more correctly translated, “I keep my body under.” Before you were saved, your body was not “under.” Your body was on top. That is, your flesh governed your soul—your mind and emotions. It also governed your spirit—the real you that lives forever. Paul didn't want his body to lord it over his being. *Bring it into subjection* is literally to lead about as a slave. Paul was going to make sure that his body was the servant, and his inner man was the master. The desires of his body were not going to rule over himself! *preached to others*: Paul sees himself as both a herald of the games (who announced the rules), and as a participant. Paul told others the rules of the game, and he had to follow the rules himself. *I myself should become disqualified*: In this context, disqualified probably doesn't refer to the loss of salvation (no Greek's citizenship was revoked upon losing), but the loss of reward.

v. 25 We are to be temperate and totally committed to running our race, even as the Olympic athletes do. They do it for a corruptible crown, but **we do it for an everlasting, imperishable crown!**

v. 26 In a foot race, though many participate, only one will win, but in the Christian course, it is much different. If everyone ran as he ought, each would receive the prize! Boxers were said to beat the air when they had to contend with a nimble adversary, who, by running from side to side, stooping, and various contortions of the body, eluded the blows of his antagonist. **We must be diligent in our “fight” not to merely beat the air, but to hit the target – winning souls for Christ!**

v. 27 Paul didn't want his body to lord it over his being, to have the desires of his body ruling over himself! He sees himself needing to discipline his body so that when he preached to others, he himself should become disqualified. This disqualification here probably doesn't refer to the loss of salvation, **but rather the loss of reward.**

SUMMARY:

Chapter 8: Be Sensitive to Conscience.

Never let the law of liberty cause others to stumble.

Rather let the law of love always rule over the law of liberty!

Chapter 9: Self-Denial needs to be a pattern in our lives
There is something more important than our rights and our liberties. We want a clear conscience before our weaker brothers. The most important thing is to win people to Christ and to see other persons saved.

Finally, of paramount importance is to one day hear from the lips of Jesus those words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord”! No Christian life can be considered a success, that doesn't hear those words from the mouth of our Savior.

We want to strongly and obediently finish the race!

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