

1 CORINTHIANS

9:1-17 | STUDY GUIDE

Committed

1 CORINTHIANS 9:1, "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?" (ESV)

- Paul provides a defense and compares it to their claims for "right"
 - "This is my defense to those who would examine me." (1 Corinthians 9:3, ESV)
 - Both words "defense" and "examine" are straight from Roman law court
 - Defense = ἀπολογία
 - Examine = ἀνακρίνω
- Paul uses elsewhere
 - Acts 22:1 (speaking in Hebrew)
 - Philemon 1:7, 16 & 2 Timothy 4:16

1 CORINTHIANS 9:4-5, "Do we not have the right to eat and drink? 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?" (ESV)

- "we" is referring to Paul and the apostles
- Paul has already once in his letter let the Corinthians know how they have treated the apostles
 - "Like men sentenced to death" (1 Corinthians 4:9)
- Paul notes how he and Barnabas have made particular sacrifices

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- "Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?" (1 Corinthians 9:6, ESV)
- Barnabas generosity Acts 4:36-37

1 CORINTHIANS 9:7, "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?" (ESV)

- Pure logic
 - Going to war, working in agriculture, shepherding, etc.: all are done with an expectation of compensation
 - Paul further supports with Mosaic law
 - "Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same?" (1 Corinthians 9:8, ESV)

1 CORINTHIANS 9:10, "Does he not certainly speak 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." (ESV)

- Paul is about to make clear where he's headed with this line of reasoning
 - "If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?" (1 Corinthians 9:11, ESV)

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1 CORINTHIANS 9:15, "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." (ESV)

- He's not interested in any material reward
- He must preach: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16, ESV)
- Paul is a "steward"
 - "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." (1 Corinthians 9:17, ESV)
 - Steward = slave
 - Paul willingly takes the brand of slave, knowing that his reward is not in this life

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, Timothy Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom, Stoic Philosophy, and the Ancient Economy*, Craig Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, N.T. Wright, *The New Testament in Its World*