### 1 Corinthians

## Chapter 9

1Am I not free?  
  
Am I not an Apostle?  
  
Haven’t I seen our Lord Jesus, and aren’t you my works in the Lord?  
  
2If I weren’t an Apostle to all the rest, I certainly am to you, because you’re the seal that confirms my Apostleship in the Lord!  
  
3So I say this in my defense before those who would judge me:  
  
4I can eat or drink whatever I wish, 5and I could also take a sister as my wife [if I wished], as did the other Apostles, the Lord’s brothers, and Cephas (Peter).  
  
6And are BarNabas and I [the only Apostles] that should have to work for a living? 7For, who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and doesn’t eat its fruit? And who shepherds a flock and doesn’t drink some of the [sheep’s] milk?  
  
8Is this just human reasoning, or doesn’t the Law tell us the same thing? 9For it’s written in the Law of Moses:  
  
 ‘You must not muzzle a bull when it’s threshing the grain.’ [Deuteronomy 25:4]  
  
So does God just care about bulls, 10or didn’t he say that for all of our sakes? Really, it was written for all of us, because the man who plows ought to plow in hope, and the man who threshes ought to do so in hope of eating [the grain].  
  
11Therefore, if we’ve planted things of the Spirit within you, is it such a big thing for us to harvest things of the flesh from you? 12And if the people you work for are benefiting from your efforts, shouldn’t we [benefit] from them even more?  
  
Yet, we haven’t really used the [full] authority that we have, for we’ve been taking care of ourselves so that we don’t get in the way of the good news about the Anointed One.  
  
13Don’t you know that those who serve in the Temple also eat the things that are [contributed], and that those who serve at the Altar also share in the things that are sacrificed there? 14So the Lord meant for those who preach the good news to be provided for by means of this good news.  
  
15However, I haven’t used any of these provisions, and I’m not writing this so that will to happen to me… For I’d rather die than allow someone to take away my reason for boasting!  
  
16Now, there’s no reason for me to boast when it comes to preaching the good news, because it’s something that I must to do… In fact, woe to me if I don’t preach the good news!  
  
17For if I do this willingly, I’ll receive my wages. However, if I don’t do it willingly, it’s still my assignment.  
  
18Therefore, what’s my reward?  
  
It’s my ability to preach the good news free of charge.  
  
And by doing this, I’m not abusing the authority that I have in the good news, 19which leaves me free from being indebted to anyone. Yes, I’ve made myself a slave to everyone so that I can gain more.  
  
  
 20I became a Jew to Jews, so I could gain Jews;  
  
 I became as under the Law to those who are under the Law (although I’m not under the Law), so I could gain those who are under the Law;  
  
 21I became like someone who’s without the Law to those who aren’t under the Law (although I’m not without law towards God, and I’m under the law of the Anointed One), so I could gain those who are without the Law;  
  
 22And I became weak to those who are weak, so I could gain the weak.  
  
  
Yes, I’ve become everything to everyone and used every means to save some of them, 23doing it all for the sake of the good news, so that I might share it with others!  
  
24Don’t you know that even though everyone who [enters a] race in the stadium must run, only one gets the prize?  
  
So, run to win!  
  
25Also, every fighter has to maintain full control of himself just to win a garland that rots away… But we’ll receive something that doesn’t rot.  
  
26As a result, I’m not running timidly nor am I just swinging my arms; I’m boxing! 27I beat my body and treat it like a slave, so that after I’ve preached to others, I won’t be rejected!