

## **The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians**

### **Freedom to Not Make Full Use of Your Rights**

1 Corinthians 9:14-19

1. **The Directive** (v.14)

The Lord has prescribed that ministers of the gospel should be supported physically by those who benefit spiritually from their service (cf. vs.3-6, 11). In both secular (vs.7-10) and sacred (v.13) vocations, a worker is worthy of being supported through his labor (Matt 10:10; 1 Tim. 5:18). The local church should strive to lighten the burden of the minister as through intentional submission (Heb. 13:17) and generous support (1 Tim. 5:17-18).

2. **The Decision** (v.15)

Paul's compelling and forceful directive from the Lord for the church in caring for ministers of the gospel was not an argument for his own financial benefit. He steadfastly maintained his own refusal to make use of this right because of how he had engaged in his ministry there (cf. v.12).

3. **The Drive** (v.16)

Paul did not even consider His preaching the gospel to be optional because of how he had been called by the Lord (Acts 9:15-16). One of Jesus' primary activities had been preaching the gospel (Luke 4:43). Proclaiming the gospel of Christ and calling others to follow Him is a common characteristic of all ministers of the gospel (Acts 5:27-32; 18:24-28; cf. Luke 4:43). Paul had warned the Corinthians that the message of the gospel and the benefits received through Christ are not matters for human boasting (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-31; 5:6), and elsewhere Peter exhorted that elders maintain proper perspective for their service (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

4. **The Dividend [Reward/Wage]** (vs.17-18)

Paul's ministry and apostleship came about, not because of Paul's intention (Acts 9:1ff), but because of God's plan and intention before he was born (Acts 26:14; 1 Cor. 7:22; Gal. 1:15; cf. Rom. 6:22). Paul wanted his reward from ministering in Corinth to be the ability to testify that he was not interested in taking their money so as to remove one more possible hindrance to believing the gospel (cf. v.12).

5. **The Design [Example]** (v.19)

Paul's emphasis of his right (vs.1-14) and his convictional refusal to make full use of this right (vs.15-18) is an example of the lengths at which he is limiting his own liberty out of love for others and for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ.