

Paul's First Letter to
the Corinthians

FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMUNITY

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.

- 1 Corinthians 12b

Class Time

- Prayer Requests
- Scripture Reading and Summary – **1st Corinthians 9:1-14**
- Class Discussion:
- Outline and Lesson

1 Corinthians 9:1–7 (ESV)

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? ² If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

³ This is my defense to those who would examine me. ⁴ Do we not have the right to eat and drink? ⁵ 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? ⁶ Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? 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?

1 Corinthians 9:8-12a (ESV)

⁸ Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? ⁹ For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 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. ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? ¹² If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?

1 Corinthians 9:12b-14 (ESV)

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. ¹³ Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

Summary Statement

Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions that emphasize and defend his apostleship, calling out the changed lives of the Corinthians as a seal that proves that his apostleship was genuine. He gives examples to demonstrate his right to receive support as an apostle. Even though both the Law and the Lord's command confirm this right, Paul does not avail himself of it lest it should prove to be an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

**Discussion
Question #1**

Compare vv 1, 12 and 13 in chapter 8 with 9:12. What general principle should govern our interactions with fellow believers?

1 Corinthians 9:12 (ESV)

12 If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more? 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.

**Discussion
Question #1**
*(comparison
verses)*

1 Corinthians 8:1 (ESV)

1 Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up.

1 Corinthians 8:12 (ESV)

12 Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:13 (ESV)

13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

**Discussion
Question #2**

In 9:2 Paul defends his apostleship, giving proof that he is an apostle. Compare 2 Cor 3:2. What is this proof (he calls it a “seal”) and how does it make the case?

**Discussion
Question #3**

Suppose you are teaching this lesson. Formulate a discussion question that underscores an important point in 9:1-14. Base your question and answer on our text. Be prepared to give the answer to your own question if no one gives the correct response.

- I. Defense of Paul's Apostleship vv 1-3
 - A. Four Rhetorical Questions v 1
 - B. One Profound Fact vv 2-3
- II. Instances of Paul's Rights vv 4-8
 - A. The Same as Other Apostles vv 4-6
 - B. The Same as Any Laborer v 7
- III. Authority for Paul's Position vv 8-14
 - A. The Law vv 8-12a
 - B. The Lord vv 12b-14