

The Royal Route to Heaven

1 Corinthians Chapter 9

In Chapter 8 Paul explained the importance of walking in the law of love over the law of liberty. Now, remembering there were no chapter breaks in the original letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 9 continues this thought with his personal example of walking out this principle of self-sacrifice and considers the true motivation that should be behind the preaching of the gospel.

Pray that this study will challenge and encourage you in your walk and in your motives as you run this race we call the Royal Route.

Key Word(s)

Read through the entire chapter, looking for words or themes that are repeated. You might want to underline them in your Bible.

1. In the first few verses a word we find that is used several times is “apostle”.

a. How many times did you find this word?

b. Write a definition below.

2. A word found more often in this chapter than any other in 1 Corinthians is “gospel”.

a. How many times did you find this word?

b. Write a definition below.

3. Make note of any other words that are repeated or that you feel are significant here and include a definition.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-2.

Chapter 9 begins with four questions. The first, “*Am I not an apostle?*”, shows that his apostleship had been questioned. The next three questions are actually the answers to the first one, or Paul’s evidence that he is an apostle. Consider each of the following questions and what they mean to you as evidence of his apostleship.

1. “*Am I not free?*” – Paul is free to be an apostle because he was appointed by God. How do the following verses support this?

a. Acts 9:10-15

b. Acts 13:1-4

c. Galatians 1:1

2. “*Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?*” Read Acts 9:3-9 and relate the incident where Paul saw the Lord.

3. “*Are you not my work in the Lord?*” This church in Corinth was itself one of the successful ministries established by Paul as an apostle. What does he say in 1 Corinthians 9:2 to answer this question?

Read 1 Corinthians 9:3-14.

In this section Paul presents his defense, implying that he had been attacked or charged by some in the church not only in his apostleship, but in his actions in ministry. The defense he presents will also serve for our understanding of what is scripturally due to those who minister the gospel.

1. What rights does Paul present as questions in 1 Corinthians 9:3-6?

a. Who does he mention is given these rights?

b. Who does he say has been denied these rights?

2. Verse 7 gives several very practical examples of support for service.

a. Write these examples below.

b. What did Jesus say about this in Luke 10:3-7?

3. Next Paul takes his defense to the Old Testament, quoting Deuteronomy 25:4, “*You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.*” Read 1 Corinthians 9:8-13, then write the concluding point from verse 14 below.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:15-18.

1. After presenting his defense for the rights of the minister of the gospel, Paul then makes a statement that is important to understanding his motives.

a. Write out the first phrase in verse 15 below.

b. What does 1 Corinthians 9:12 add to this?

Continuing in 1 Corinthians 9:15 Paul says that he is not writing so they would support him, he would rather die than that! Then he speaks of not making his boasting void. What is this boasting? Damien Kyle says “His boast was that he did not want them to turn around and accuse him of being in the ministry for money.”

2. What does Galatians 6:14 tell us of Paul’s true attitude toward boasting?

3. From 1 Corinthians 9:16-17, why does Paul say he preaches the gospel?

4. Once Paul has clearly presented his reasons for not asking for financial support, he now tells us what his reward is for preaching the gospel. Write it below from verse 18.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

In Chapter 8 we read of Paul’s exhortation to lay down liberty when it hinders another, letting the sacrifice of love rule over your actions. So far in chapter 9 he has shown his personal example of sacrifice, in working rather than being financially supported. Now he goes further in showing how he will walk in love by willingly laying down **any** liberty if it furthers the gospel.

1. In 1 Corinthians 9:19 Paul declares that he is free from all men, but what is he willing to become?

a. How did Jesus teach this principle in Luke 22:24-27?

b. What example did Jesus set in John 13:12-17?

2. In 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 Paul lists what he would become and why.

a. Fill in the blanks below from these verses.

1. verse 19:

“I have made myself as _____”

“...that I might _____”

2. verse 20a:

“I became as a _____”

“...that I might _____”

3. verse 20b:

“...to those who are under the law (*I have become*) as _____”

“...that I might _____”

4. verse 21:

“...to those who are without the law (*I have become*) as _____”

“...that I might _____”

Note Paul’s parenthetical explanation here. Why is this important?

5. verse 22a:

“...to the weak I became _____”

“...that I might _____”

6. Verse 22b sums up this thought. Write out the sentence here.

b. Considering the examples above, what are some areas you might think of in your daily walk where you might follow these examples?

3. Write the reason for laying down liberties as stated by Paul in verse 23.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

These verses may be familiar as Paul uses the example of a race to give the picture of our walk - or of the Royal Route! This example was perfect for the Corinthians since the Isthmian games were held in Corinth every two years, second only to the Olympics. They may have often seen athletes training for the races.

1. 1 Corinthians 9:24 says there is a prize, “*Run in such a way that you may obtain it.*” How do each of the verses say you are to run?

a. verse 25

b. verse 26

c. verse 27

2. The prize for the Isthmian games was first a crown of dry wild celery, then it was changed to a pine wreath in Roman times.

a. How would these prizes be “*perishable*”?

b. What *perishable* prizes does the world race to win?

3. As believers we run for an *imperishable* crown. Explain what that crown is below and include scriptures if possible.

4. “*But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection...*” In our daily walk, how can we discipline ourselves for our race?

In 1 Corinthians 9:27 Paul says he does all of these things “...lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” He is not speaking of losing his salvation, but it is possible to do something that disqualifies your witness or your ministry.

If you have time...

Read the account of Samson in Judges 16 and consider how his example was different from Paul's?

In closing...

1. Paul presents an amazing example, a higher road for us to walk, but we do make mistakes that do not disqualify us. How do the following scriptures encourage you in this?

a. Psalm 37:23-24

b. Proverbs 24:16

2. Having read Paul's personal example in this chapter, what has the Lord shown you about your example? In what areas do you think you can apply this lesson in your own life?