

A group of eight people are silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky. They are standing in a line, holding hands, with their arms raised in a gesture of unity or praise. The sky is filled with soft, golden light and scattered clouds, with the sun low on the horizon. The overall mood is one of hope and community.

Forsaking Rights for Sake of the Gospel

1 Corinthians 9:1-18

Kirk Bertsche

8-18-19

Grace Bible Chapel

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Last Week

- **1Cor. 8:9** But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ... **13** Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.



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Overview of Paul's First Letter to Corinth

- Issues Raised by Others (ch. 1-6)
 - Divisions and Wisdom in the Church (ch. 1-4)
 - Disorders and Judging in the Church (ch. 5-6)
- Issues Raised by Corinthians (ch. 7-15)
 - Practical Lifestyle Issues
 - Marriage (ch. 7)
 - **Christian Liberty (ch. 8-10)**
 - Worship (ch. 11-14)
 - Resurrection (ch. 15)
- Issues Raised by Paul (ch. 16)



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Overview of Paul's First Letter to Corinth

- Christian Liberty (ch. 8-10)
 - Food sacrificed to idols (ch. 8)
 - **Paul's rights as a worker (ch. 9a)**
 - Sacrificing our rights to win others (ch. 9b)
 - Israel's example is our warning (ch. 10a)
 - All things are lawful, but not all are profitable (ch. 10b)



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Defense of Rights of Apostleship

- **1Cor. 9:1**
 - Am I not free?
 - Am I not an apostle?
 - Have I NOT seen Jesus our Lord?
 - Are you not my work 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.



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Defense of Right to Receive Support

- **1Cor. 9:3** My defense to those who examine me is this:
 - **4** Do we not have a right to eat and drink?
 - **5** Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?
 - **6** Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?
- **right:** ἐξουσία (*exousia*): freedom, right, power, authority; same word as “liberty” in 8:9

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Paul's Practice of Self-Support

- **Acts 18:1** ... he left Athens and went to Corinth. **2** And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, ... **3** and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. **4** And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.



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1. Right of Support: Illustrations from Everyday Custom

- **7** Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense?
- Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it?
- Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?



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2. Right of Support: Illustration from Old Testament Law

- **1Cor. 9:8** I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? **9** For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.” God is not concerned about oxen, is He? **10** Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*.



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Threshing With Oxen (Ethiopia)



• <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5doY88-vGog>

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3. Right of Support: Illustrations from Principle of Fairness

- **11** If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? **12** If others share the right over you, do we not more?



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Paul Relinquished His Right to Receive Support

- **12b** Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no **hindrance** to the gospel of Christ.
- **hindrance**: ἐγκοπή (*enkopē*): obstacle, hindrance. Originally a military term from verb “to cut into”. Roads were cut to hinder pursuing army.



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4. Right of Support: Illustrations from Temple Service

- **13** Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the *food* of the temple, *and* those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?



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5. Right of Support: Illustration from Jesus

- **14** So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.
- **Mt. 10:10**: the Twelve sent out to preach with no provisions, told that “the worker is worthy of his support.”
- **Lk 10:7**: the Seventy sent out to preach with no provisions, told to “Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages.”

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Paul Relinquished His Right to Receive Support

- **1Cor. 9:15** But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing these things so that something will be done for me. In fact, it would be better for me to die than—
- no one will deprive me of my reason for boasting!



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NET Bible

Paul Relinquished His Right to Receive Support

- **16** For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. **17** For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. **18** What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

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Summary 9:1-18

- Paul had the right to receive support
 - Illustrated by:
 - 1. Everyday custom
 - 2. Old Testament Law
 - 3. Principle of Fairness
 - 4. Temple service
 - 5. Jesus' words
- Paul relinquished this right for sake of the gospel



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Forsaking Rights For Sake of the Gospel

- Principle

- Our decisions on Christian freedom should be determined by what is best for the gospel!
- When should we exercise rights for the sake of the gospel?
- When should we forsake rights for the sake of the gospel?



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