

## 1 Corinthians Study 12

Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-14

### KEY VERSES—

“If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ?” (9:11-12)

### SUMMARY—

This chapter is not a change in subject, but rather is Paul’s own personal example of denying oneself certain liberties for the sake of something better. There were also those in Corinth who disputed the apostleship of Paul (9:1; 2 Corinthians 12:12; 13:3). They evidently used his refusal to accept wages as signs of a guilty conscience or as proof of the spiritual emptiness of his work (9:2ff; 2 Corinthians 11:5ff; 12:13-18). Paul establishes his right to receive support (9:1-14) and then explains why he did not exercise that right (9:15-27). He begins by defending his apostleship (9:1-3) and then establishes his right to receive support from four different illustrations—the example of others who minister the word (9:4-6), common sense (9:7-8a), the Law itself (9:8b-13), and finally by the Lord Himself (9:14).

### QUESTIONS—

- 1) Paul had just discussed the importance of giving up liberties when they were detrimental to others (chapter 8). How does the discussion in chapter 9 relate to those principles? What rights was Paul willing to give up for the benefit of his brethren (8:13; 9:4,12,15)?
- 2) What is Paul defending (9:1-3)? Why does he have to justify himself (2 Corinthians 12:11-13; 13:3-6)?
- 3) Paul implies that he is free—free to make his own choices and do the Lord’s work (9:1). What did he choose to do with that freedom (9:19-23)?
- 4) What two claims does Paul make to establish his apostleship (9:1-2)?

5) Why was it important for Paul to emphasize that he had seen the risen Savior (9:1; cf. 15:8; Acts 1:15-26; 26:16-18)?

6) What is the purpose of a seal on a document (9:2)? What does Paul imply about the Corinthians if he is not truly an apostle?

7) Did Paul have a right to accept support (9:3-6)? With whom does that right make him associated?

8) Who is Cephas (9:5; cf. John 1:40-42)? Could Peter have been the first pope (9:5; cf. Matthew 8:14-15)?

9) Who were the brothers of the Lord (9:5; cf. Matthew 13:55)? Had they always followed Jesus (John 7:3-5; Acts 1:14)?

10) What is the purpose of the illustrations of the soldier, farmer, and shepherd (9:7)? How does that have any bearing on this discussion?

11) Other than common sense, where does this right to receive support come from (9:8-10; cf. Deuteronomy 25:4)? What was God teaching man with this law (9:10)?

12) What is the principle of sowing and reaping that Paul teaches here (9:11)?

13) Not only does he imply a right of the gospel worker to receive, but also the debt of the recipient of the gospel to give. What is the principle at work here (cf. Romans 15:25-27)?

14) Why did Paul choose not to use this right of support with his work in Corinth (9:12; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:5-9)?

15) Was it because he was an imposter, like his enemies may have been implying? Or, was it because of something he had taught the Corinthians (6:12; 9:12)?

16) Who was it who first insisted that religious servants be supported (9:13; cf. Numbers 18:8-13; Deuteronomy 18:1; Nehemiah 12:44-47; 13:10-14)? Why? What are they providing for the people?

17) Who was it who again insisted that religious servants be supported (9:14; cf. Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7)?

18) What principles can preachers learn about financial support from this passage?

19) What principles can churches learn about financial support from this passage?