

First Corinthians 9:15-27
The right to deny myself my rights

Not using my rights—9:15-18

- 1) Choice—9:15 ¹⁵ *But I* (emphatic) *have not made use of any of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done in this way in my case;*
 - a) *for it would be better for me to die than that anyone might make my boasting (glorying) void.*
- 2) Compulsion—9:16
 - a) God's design—9:16a
 - b) God's judgment—9:16b
- 3) Contrast—9:17
 - a) Paul's reward comes from the Owner of the field in which he serves (cf. 3:9).
- 4) Clarification—9:18

Surrendering my rights by enslaving myself to others—9:19-23

- 1) Voluntary enslavement—9:19-22a (cf. Philippians 2:5-8)
 - a) To Jews—9:20a (submits to Jewish punishment; cf. 2nd Corinthians 11:24)
 - b) To proselytes/God-fearers—9:20b
 - c) To Gentiles—9:21 (submits to Gentile punishment; cf. 2nd Corinthians 11:25)
 - i) *(though not being without Law [anomos] toward God,*
 - ii) *but within Law [ennomos] to Christ)*
 - d) To weak Christians—9:22a (cf. 8:13)
- 2) Purposeful enslavement—9:22b-23
 - a) Too often freedom is abused in the direction of self-interest.
 - b) Paul never modifies the message of the gospel.

I must exercise purposeful self-discipline—9:24-27

- The Isthmian Games were held during the years surrounding this letter
- 1) A question—²⁴ *Do you^{pl} not know that ...*
 - a) Many participants but only one winner
 - 2) A command—*Run in such a way that you^{pl} may attain it.*
 - 3) An explanation—²⁵ *Now everyone who competes [agonizomai] exercises self-control in all things.*
 - a) Unsaved—*Now they, on the one hand, do it (exercise self-control) to receive a perishable wreath [stephanos],*
 - b) Saved—*but we, on the other hand, an imperishable.*
 - 4) A set of illustrations—9:26
 - a) Running and boxing
 - 5) An example—9:27 ²⁷ *But I unsparingly train my body and make it my slave,*
 - a) Why? *lest somehow when I have proclaimed to others, I myself should be disqualified [adokimos].* (cf. 2nd Timothy 4:7)
 - b) This is self-restraint, not asceticism or self-flagellation.

“Effective service involves self-surrender, self-control, and self-sacrifice.... Self-indulgent Christians should not expect to be effective in serving the Lord.” (*Moody Bible Commentary*, p. 1788)