

GOSPEL of *Grace*
FELLOWSHIP

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Paul Becomes All Things to Gain More

by Bob DeWaay

November 12, 2023

Free Paul Enslaved Himself

1 Corinthians 9:19 (LEB)

For although I am free from **all** people, I have enslaved myself to **all**, **in order that** I may **gain** more.

- **Irony:** being a slave to all made Paul free!
- **"Gain"** is *kerdaino_* is used 5 times in vs 19-23 and can also be translated "win"
- **"All"** is used 5 times in these verses
- **"in order that"** *hina* is used 7 times

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

1

An Example of Being a Slave to All

1 Corinthians 9:20 (LEB)

I have become like a Jew to the Jews, **in order that** I may **gain** the Jews. To those under the law I became as under the law (although I myself am not under the law) **in order that** I may **gain** those under the law.

- **Many** have rightly pointed out that Paul's actions in Acts 21 reflect this attitude
- **The key difference** between Judaizing and true liberty lies in motives

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

2

Paul's Freedom and Calling

1 Corinthians 9:21 (LEB)

To those outside the law I became as outside the law (although I am **not outside the law of God, but subject to the law of Christ**) **in order that** I may gain those outside the law.

- **The word** *anomos* (typically "lawless") appears 4 times in this verse
- **These uses** have different nuances which must be carefully identified in context

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

3

Paul's Repetition Shows Purpose

1 Corinthians 9:22 (LEB)

To the weak I became weak, **in order that** I may **gain the weak**. I have become all things to all people, **in order that** by all means I may **save some**.

- **The parallel construction** shows the meaning of "gain" = "save"
- **Weak** is not a pejorative term in 1 Cor.
- **The weak** are typically despised by man

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

4

Paul's Motive Is Gospel Fellowship

1 Corinthians 9:23 (LEB)

I do all this **for the sake of the gospel**, **in order that** I may become a participant with it.

- **The key word** in this verse is "participant" which translates *sugkoino_nos* (4x NT)
- **Paul** is a sharer in gospel fellowship with all Christians in Corinth including the weak
- **His approach** to ministry involved serving and fellowship with all who are in Christ

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

5

Implications and Applications

- The world despises the weak, the very people God chooses and uses
- Fellowship in the gospel is a great honor and more valuable than anything the world offers

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

6

God's Actions Show His Purposes

1 Corinthians 1:26b-28 (NASB)

there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and **God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong**, and the base things of the world and **the despised God has chosen**, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

7

Paul's Thorn in the Flesh Produced Weakness

2 Corinthians 12:9 (ESV)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, **for my power is made perfect in weakness.**" Therefore **I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses**, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

8

Fellowship Together in Grace

Philippians 1:5-6 7b (LEB)

because of your **participation in the gospel** from the first day until now, convinced of this same thing, that the one who began a good work in you will finish it until the day of Christ Jesus,... all of you are **sharers of grace** with me.

- 'Participation' is *koino_nia*
- 'Sharers' is *sugkoino_nos*

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

9