



(For access to all available commentaries and sermons of Charlie's click [HERE](#))

# 1 Corinthians

**In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.** 1 Corinthians 9:14

Paul has made a logical and orderly defense concerning the rights of those who minister to others in spiritual matters. He even reached back to the law both from a spiritual application and concerning those who "serve in the temple" and "those who serve at the altar." In a final and unambiguous defense, he notes that the Lord Himself "has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel."

Although the gospel which was preached during the Lord's earthly ministry lacked a knowledge of the "church age" for both those He commissioned to teach it as well as those who heard it, it was still a preaching of the gospel. Though the disciples at that time expected the gospel to be immediately realized as one of an earthly kingdom, something He corrected them on in Acts 1:6-8, it was nonetheless the gospel proclamation. At that time, he gave these instructions to the twelve apostles -

"Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. <sup>6</sup> Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. <sup>7</sup> As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' <sup>8</sup> Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

<sup>9</sup> "Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— <sup>10</sup> no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his

keep. <sup>11</sup> Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. <sup>12</sup> As you enter the home, give it your greeting. <sup>13</sup> If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you." Matthew 10:5-13

His words "the worker is worth his keep" indicates that these men were to be cared for during their travels as they carried this good news to the people of Israel. Based on this, along with all of his other supporting thoughts, it was clearly evident that Paul (and all who preach the gospel) are to be given the same support as they minister to others.

Paul's reference to "the Lord has commanded" implies that the words were already being circulated among believers. In other words, there were probably copies of these words from Matthew already out among the people. If not, then he would have most likely said something like "as Peter informed me, the Lord has commanded." The fact that he left the source out of his letter implies that the gospel narrative was already known to those in Corinth. It is an attestation of a very early date for the writing of the gospel record.

Finally for this verse, Paul notes that preachers "should receive their living from the gospel." In essence, he is equating the "gospel" with the "altar" of his previous thoughts. The work of the temple only prefigured the greater work of Christ. Thus we see in Hebrews these words -

"We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat. <sup>11</sup> The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. <sup>12</sup> And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. <sup>13</sup> Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. <sup>14</sup> For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come." Hebrews 13:10-14

Life application: Remember as you go to your respective place of worship, that your pastor is entitled to certain benefits and honors. If faithful in his proclamation of the gospel, which includes the whole counsel of God, then don't be timid to do something special for him from time to time. In many ways, serving as a pastor can be a brutal job. People get angry and leave for petty reasons and this will cut the metal of the toughest man eventually. So let him know you support him as long as he continues to present the Bible in a careful and God-honoring way.

**But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.** 1 Corinthians 9:15

For the past 14 verses, Paul has clearly and methodically defended his apostleship and then his right to compensation for the conducting of the duties of that office. This right was one granted even by the Lord Himself. However, he now introduces a new direction concerning this by stating "but." In contradistinction to what he has clearly laid out, he says "I have used none of these things." This is not in defiance of the Lord, but in support of the cause of the Lord's church.

All of the rights and privileges that should be associated with the exercise of his office have been turned down by him. He will explain this directly in this verse and for the next three verses, and then he will divide that explanation into two separate reasons -

- 1) His serving of men to impress upon them the gospel of Christ (verses 19-23).
- 2) His desire to run the race and receive the prize set before him (verses 24-27).

In order to lay the foundation for those things, he continues with his thoughts by saying, "nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me." In other words, it is as if he were saying, "Though I am entitled to these benefits and as of

yet have not received them, this letter is not to get you to recognize this and correct it." Instead, his words are twofold. First, that they recognize his apostleship as valid (which he has done). Secondly, to understand why he has not accepted the rights that go along with the position and why he will continue to not accept those privileges.

And to show the absolute determination concerning his resolve in this matter, he finishes the verse with, "for it *would* be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void." To him, the impartation of the gospel was the most important aspect of his life. He had been called out of darkness and into light directly by the Lord. He had received the highest measure of God's grace and he felt that to accept payment for such a wondrous gift would be worse than death. And if his life was sharing the gospel, then death would mean he could no longer share the gospel, something he earnestly desired to do. It is the strongest assertion possible that his motives were focused only on the sharing of what he had been bestowed.

Life application: People do certain things because they love to do them. We will pay large amounts of money to go mountain skiing, adventuring in the African safari, or go on an ocean cruise. Who would expect to be paid for doing such things? Paul's passion was sharing the gospel and so he was willing to share it without payment. And each person who truly loves Christ should likewise feel the desire and hunger to help in some way in this endeavor. Local missionary work, helping keep up the church, or even just carrying around tracts to hand out after dinner at a restaurant are ways to spread the message. What value is Christ to you? Are you showing it to others in self-sacrificing ways?

**For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! 1 Corinthians 9:16**

In his previous words, Paul tied the very continuance of his life in with the preaching of the gospel. He does this elsewhere as well. In Philippians 1, he wrote that there were two paths ahead of him. One was to depart and be with Christ (meaning he would die) and the second was that he would remain and continue

preaching the gospel and teaching those he was a minister to. Here are his words -

"I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again." Philippians 1:23-26

If his life was literally tied to the performance of his gospel preaching, then how could he boast in preaching? One cannot boast in taking breaths, one cannot boast in the beating of the heart, and one cannot boast in the need to eat food. These are necessary things for the continuance of the person. Likewise, Paul could not boast in the preaching of the gospel. It was to him simply a necessity. Jeremiah felt the same burden -

"Then I said, 'I will not make mention of Him,  
Nor speak anymore in His name.'  
But *His word* was in my heart like a burning fire  
Shut up in my bones;  
I was weary of holding *it* back,  
And I could not." Jeremiah 20:9

Jeremiah could not hold back what he was impelled to do without dying. If he were to hold back from food, he would die. Likewise, if he held back from speaking out the word of the Lord, his end would come. This is what Paul felt as well. As he says, "for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" As this was so, then how could he boast in his efforts in the gospel, the very thing that sustained his life? Rather, he had a boast in the gospel itself, not in his conveyance of it. In Galatians, he explicitly states this -

"But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Galatians 6:14

Life application: If you have been called by Christ, then you have a calling in Christ. The question is, have you allowed that calling to take root? A plant can only survive if it receives the nourishment it derives through its roots. And even if it survives, the amount it flourishes is derived externally as well - soil, water, sun, pruning, etc, all determine the health of the plant. Are you using your external sources properly - the Bible, prayer, fellowship, etc? Determine today to let nothing hinder you in developing your calling in Christ.

**For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. 1 Corinthians 9:17**

In his previous comment, Paul said, "I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" Therefore, this verse now follows logically from that thought. If necessity is laid upon him (meaning if he was compelled by a force he could not contain), then no reward should be expected. As he says, "For if I do this willingly, I have a reward."

Suppose he wasn't compelled to preach, but rather did it of his own free will. In such a case, he could expect a reward. When he showed up in a town such as Corinth, whatever pay they offered would be this reward and it would be his just due. However, this isn't the case with him and so he enters the word "but." This portion will explain the position he is actually in which is, "if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship."

Using a hypothetical (which is what applies to him) he shows that if one is under constraint to do something, they have been given a directive which is their obligation to fulfill. In this sense, he is likening himself to a bondservant (a term he specifically refers to himself as elsewhere). A bondservant is told what to do and he does it. No pay is expected for such services. Rather, the reward merely rests in pleasing the master of the house.

Like the bondservant, Paul's efforts in the gospel ministry were not for expected pay, but to fulfill an obligation that he was bound under. The reward is not from

the work, but from the approval of the one who assigns the work. His approval and His reward is found in Christ, not in what he can gain from proclaiming Christ.

Life application: The more freedom one has realized in Christ, the more indebted to Christ the person must naturally feel. Paul's freedom from persecuting the church led him to an attitude of complete servitude to Christ. Some are freed from alcohol, some from drugs or murder or prostitution. Everyone will feel a different level of gratitude and willingness to return to the Lord a measure of appreciation. The question for each is, "How much do I feel I have gained in being saved by Christ?" The level of appreciation should be reflected in the level of willing return to the Lord without thought of receiving something for the effort put forth.

**What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.**  
1 Corinthians 9:18

Paul noted already that "necessity" was laid upon him to preach the gospel and that he had no expectation of a reward of compensation from those he preached to. However, this doesn't mean there was no reward at all in his preaching, and so he asks, "What is my reward then?" There is always a reward for fulfilling one's duties.

If a person has a job and he fulfills his duties, he will receive wages for doing that job. However, if he is a slave, he won't receive any wages. Nevertheless, he has a reward. If he has a harsh master and he fails to work, the master may beat him. His reward then when doing his job is to simply not be beaten. If he has a kind master who would never beat him, he will still lose his reward if he fails to work. It will be whatever punishment the master decides upon. But being a kind and gentle master, when the slave does his job, the reward may be a smile, a thumbs up, or a thank you. Though none are required, they are a reward in and of themselves.

But there is also the reward of merely doing the job because it is a job that the slave loves. He loves his master, he loves the type of work he is doing, and he loves that it gets done. The satisfaction is in the doing. This is Paul's reward. As he says, "That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge." Because he had necessity laid upon him, he followed through with that which impelled him and he found satisfaction in that. Had he asked for or received any wages for his work, then it would mean he was being rewarded for something he *had* to do. In this, there would be a taking advantage of his rights in a way which he felt was inappropriate. Instead, he refused this right, as he says, "that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

Life application: If you are employed and have set wages and benefits which you regularly receive, then you are receiving what you agreed on when you took the job. If you are offered something from an outside contractor to "help" you make your mind up about something which would affect the company you worked for, then you would be abusing your position within your company. Paul stood fast on the gospel. If he received something for his preaching, then others could claim that they had an influence on his doctrine, whether it was true or not. Others are always evaluating our actions and we are asked to be upright in our dealings with those we come in contact with. This is an expectation of the follower of Christ.

**For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; 1 Corinthians 9:19**

The word "for" begins Paul's thought. It is then building upon his previous discussion. He said that he preached through "necessity," as one bound under a master and that his reward was solely in the preaching of the gospel. Hence, "for" shows an extra weightiness in what he will now say. "For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all."

Paul had no person that he was bound to. He was a Roman citizen and thus free within the Roman society. He was also liberated from the bondage of the law by Christ and had no person over him in Jerusalem. He was not accountable to the Sanhedrin or to the high priest. He had no boss over him. Instead, he made tents

while working with his own hands. And he preached the gospel without recompense from those he preached it to. Thus, he was not bound to any person or group within the church. He was free from obligation to any and all humans as far as a society could consider a person.

And yet, despite his exceptional freedoms, he willingly made himself "a servant to all." The word translated as "servant" is *douloo* and is more appropriately to be rendered "slave" in this context - "I have enslaved myself to all." What would be the reason for such a choice? Why would this man, free from all constraints, decide to treat everyone around him as a master to whom he was indebted? His reason shows a beautifully pure desire for that which freed him on the road to Damascus - "that I might win the more."

The sole desire of Paul's life of work and toil was to bring others to Christ. His refusal to accept payment was because he was showing his status as one who is actually a slave to Jesus Christ. In this position, he was thus allowing himself to be considered a slave to any and all who *might* call on Him. It is the mark of a truly selfless individual who understood what it meant to be "in Christ" both for himself and those around him.

Life application: To what extent are you willing to spread the gospel? Are you willing to give up on sleep in order to get up early and prepare for the day's battle? Are you willing to forgo lunch if it means an opportunity to tell someone about your faith. Will you give up on payment for your efforts, or will you even be willing to spend money out of your own pocket to share your faith? What is Christ worth to you? At one time you were without Him, but someone took the time to lead you to Him. Now that right and privilege is yours. Don't squander it!

*Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help*

*Whose hope is in the LORD his God*

*Who made heaven and earth*

*Even the beautiful earth where man does trod*

*Also He made the rich and abundant sea  
And all that is in each of them as well  
He is the great and wondrous God of glory  
As the wisdom of His creation does tell*

*He is the God who keeps truth forever  
Who executes justice for the oppressed  
Who gives food to the hungry  
The LORD to weary souls He gives rest*

**...and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;**  
1 Corinthians 9:20

This verse begins to explain his previous verse where he said, "I have made myself a servant to all." He will defend this thought for three verses and give a summary in the fourth. As a "servant to all, he showed himself to the Jew as becoming as a Jew. He did this, as he says, "that I might win Jews." In Philippians 3:4, 5, he says this -

"If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews.*"

Paul was neither overly proud of his Israelite heritage, nor did he run from it. He held it in its proper place and to those around him, he lived as a Jew so that they could see there was no conflict between his national status and his faith in Christ. If through such a presentation of his life and heritage he could convince some that his Christian faith was the right, natural, and logical path for the Jew, then he was willing to use that approach.

But there was another aspect of him which he addresses in this verse. He goes on to say that "to those *who are* under the law" he became "as under the law." And again, he gives the same reason, "that I might win those *who are* under the law." Continuing on in Philippians 3:5, 6, he said -

"...concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

Not only did he conduct himself in a way where he continued to live faithfully within his national heritage, but he did it as one who was obedient to the religious heritage of that national identity as well. There were many observant Jews in his time. They lived under the Law of Moses and followed the edicts of those placed above them.

Likewise, some of them lived within the strictest sects of the faith, as Pharisees or Sadducees. These people were those who were considered by others as the epitome of righteousness within the society at that time. Regardless of whether this was actually the case, because Paul originally came from them, he had the ability to demonstrate his obedience to the Law of Moses while at the same time showing that it in no way conflicted with his faith in Christ.

Unlike Peter who was actually unfaithful to the real principles of freedom in Christ while being observant as a Jew, Paul was able to work within both realms without showing any contradiction or hypocrisy between the two. And how could he do this? He gave up his freedoms in order to be a servant to all. This is exactly what his previous many verses were leading up to which concerned his true apostleship and the fact that though he deserved recompense for it, he didn't use that right. He was a man who meticulously fit his life into every category he could in order to win some to Christ.

Life application: In Paul's time, some Jews viewed themselves from a point of national identity. Others viewed themselves from a point of religious identity. This is still true today within the Jewish race. Should you have the chance to talk to a Jew, be he an observant Jew or a "national Jew" you can still show, directly from

the Bible, that there is no conflict between their Jewish connection and the truth of Christianity. It can be extremely difficult to change their thoughts on this for many reasons, but it is possible. More than anything else, prayer and patience is needed. One cannot force Christianity onto another, but through the word of God, through a loving attitude, and through heartfelt prayer, it can come about.

**...to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;**  
1 Corinthians 9:21

Paul has been addressing his willingness to spread the gospel to all classes of people in all ways. In the previous verse, he addressed those who lived as national Jews as himself being a national Jew. He also addressed those who lived under the law (meaning those who lived as religious Jews) as himself living as if he were under the law. At the same time, he now addresses those who are "without law." This is a reference to the Gentile peoples, of whom he is the apostle.

In his apostleship to them, he lived "as without law." In other words, they are without the Law of Moses and he showed that they were acceptable to Christ in that fashion. Paul notes that he so lived in that manner as well, through his words and through his writings. It is Christ which makes you acceptable to God, not adhering to the precepts of the law. However, he then qualifies his statement by saying in a parenthetical thought that though "not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ."

The law which he was under was God's law that reveals Christ. It is the understood law that man is infected with sin and that the only remedy to that problem is the cross of Jesus Christ. Christ is the embodiment of the law, having fulfilled it in our stead. When we place our trust in Him, we should have the desire to fulfill the law of conscience written on our hearts and be observant to the moral laws which are ingrained in us. Paul notes this in the early chapters of Romans. No one can be absolutely without law and be pleasing to God. Therefore we are not without law toward God because we are under law toward Christ.

This "law" which he observed has now been revealed in the writings of the New Testament. Particularly in Paul's words which are doctrine for the church. When we follow these guidelines, we are emulating what Christ would have for us because they are the inspired words which have been given for this purpose.

Paul lived this life that he mentions so "that I might win those *who are* without law." Once they were won to Christ by him, they could be rightly instructed in the "law toward Christ." Faith through grace saves. However, salvation implies being obedient to the One who has saved us. We are not without law in this regard; we do not have license to sin. The teaching that being in Christ means we have complete license to act as we wish is known as the antinomian error and it is something that is warned against throughout his writings.

Life application: We are all slaves to something. If we are a slave to Christ, then we are free from sin's condemnation. However, we are not free from sins consequences. If we live in sin after being saved by Christ, we will suffer the consequences of our sin. But we have been given freedom to live for Christ. Use that freedom wisely and live in a manner which will glorify our Lord.

*In Christ I am freed from sin's condemnation*

*In Christ I have been saved through and through*

*But in Christ I may still suffer tribulation*

*This is something I should expect, I know it's true*

*How much more when I fail to properly heed*

*The words and directions He has given for my life!*

*If I act against his words in tongue and in deed*

*Should I expect anything but trouble and strife?*

*Rather, I will keep my nose deep in His word*

*And then apply its precepts to my walk each day*

*In grateful obedience to my gracious Lord*

*Yes, I will thankfully walk in His holy way*

**...to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.** 1 Corinthians 9:22

So far, Paul has shown himself to be accommodating to others who viewed their faith differently than he did. He has identified himself as a servant to all, as a Jew, as one under the law, and as one without the law (meaning the Law of Moses, and thus implying a Gentile). He now, despite his vast knowledge of what it means to be a Christian, says that "to the weak I became as weak." This is certainly referring back to those he spoke of in 1 Corinthians 8. There he referred to believers lacking proper knowledge on certain issues.

An example of such a lack of knowledge might be eating pork. When someone didn't understand that eating pork was acceptable, he wouldn't have thrown it back in his face by having a pork-chop in front of him. Whatever the person's weakness, he would have made himself like them. He explained the need for this in that chapter with these words -

"And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? <sup>12</sup> But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble." 1 Cor 8:11-13

He took his role as an apostle seriously and meant to never harm someone who viewed their position before the Lord differently. This included those weak in the faith. And the reason for this was "that I might win the weak." To him, having the superior knowledge was of less immediate importance than demonstrating love to the one lacking knowledge. That person could later be properly instructed and also grow in his knowledge if he wasn't first chased away by Paul's actions.

And so having described several different categories of people, he sums up his accommodations by saying, "I have become all things to all *men*." As long as it wasn't improper or harmful, Paul would work within the parameters he had been granted as an apostle in order to bring others to faith or to build others up in their faith. All of this was done with the noble cause "that I might by all means save some."

This final thought is tagged on to show that his adjustments were for a right and noble purpose, not to simply be a man-pleaser, something that he knew would lead very quickly to heresy. He even states this explicitly in Galatians 1 after speaking of exactly that scenario -

"For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ." Galatians 1:10

In all ways, Paul knew that the purity of the gospel was paramount, and yet within that purity there was room for accommodation. He always attempted to find that right and untainted balance as he walked through the life of his apostleship.

Life application: "Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies." These words of Paul should be remembered by those who have the greater knowledge. In exercising love while instructing in right doctrine, the immature Christian will be built up in his faith and in his heart as well.

**Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.**  
1 Corinthians 9:23

Summing up his thoughts of the previous four verses, we read Paul's reflection on why he became "all things to all *men*". He's already said that it was that he "might by all means save some." But for him, there is a wondrous bonus tied into that notion. By doing this "for the gospel's sake" Paul knew that this would make him a "partaker of it with" those who heard and believed.

And isn't this the burden on our own hearts for those we love? Don't we longingly desire that the people we share our daily lives with will also share heaven's glory with us? Paul looked even beyond his close associates and relatives and desired this for all men. He knew that he was once far off from the Lord and that only through his calling on the road to Damascus was his salvation possible. He looked for that same heartfelt conversion in others.

Life application: As you pass by people on the street, do you take the time to think "that is a person created in God's image."? Isn't every person of equal value when it comes to sharing Jesus? Even our enemies can be changed. Try to have Paul's attitude and realize that sharing the good news is something we should do at all times and with all people.

**Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.** 1 Corinthians 9:24

In this verse, Paul moves from his thoughts concerning serving men in order to impress upon them the gospel of Christ (verses 19-23), to his desire to run the race and receive the prize set before him (verses 24-27). In this, he begins with "Do you not know...?" This is way of saying, "You certainly know." The reference he will now make will be to the Isthmian Games which took place on the Isthmus of Corinth. They were comparable to our modern Olympics and were something every person would be aware of. In Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, he describes these games:

"These, like the other games of Greece—the Olympian, Pythian, and Nemean— included every form of athletic exercise, and stood on an entirely different footing from anything of the kind in modern times. For the Greek, these contests were great national and religious festivals. None but freemen could enter the lists, and they only after they had satisfied the appointed officers that they had for ten months undergone the necessary preliminary training. For thirty days previous to the contest the candidates had to attend the exercises at the gymnasium, and only after the fulfilment of these conditions were they allowed, when the time arrived, to contend in the sight of assembled Greece. Proclamation was made of

the name and country of each competitor by a herald. The victor was crowned with a garland of pine leaves or ivy. The family of the conqueror was honoured by his victory, and when he returned to his native town he would enter it through a breach in the walls, the object of this being to symbolise that for a town which was honoured with such a citizen no walls of defence were needful."

This is the reference Paul is making. The athletes of his time, and those of ours as well, have the same end goal in common. They "all run, but one receives the prize." There was only one victor's wreath then and there is only one gold medal now. Those who are capable, well-trained, and endure the rigors of the race are the ones who win and receive their reward. Paul tells those in Corinth to act this way in their race to the finish. Writing to all, but with each individual in mind, he hints that each should "run in such a way that you may obtain *it*."

He will continue with his thoughts on this for three more verses, showing the necessity for each of us to train with rigor and to persevere in our steps all of our days as we look forward to the Prize which awaits us.

Life application: Paul's use of an athlete who strives to be the champion in the Isthmian games is an excellent example for us. We can look at those who work towards the gold medal in the modern Olympic games and understand what he was referring to. These people put out maximum effort for the thing they desired. If our desire is truly Christ, then we should be even more willing to put out all we can in order to please Him. We have one short life in which to earn our heavenly rewards. Let us not squander it, but strive forward with our eyes firmly fixed on Him!