

Paul's First Letter to  
the Corinthians

# FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMUNITY

*I have become all things to all people, that by all  
means I might save some.*

*-1 Corinthians 9:22*

## Class Time

- Prayer Requests
- Scripture Reading and Summary – **1st Corinthians 9:15-27**
- Class Discussion:
- Outline and Lesson

1 Corinthians 9:15–27 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. <sup>16</sup> For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! <sup>17</sup> For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. <sup>18</sup> What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. <sup>19</sup> For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. <sup>20</sup> To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law..

<sup>21</sup> To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. <sup>23</sup> I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings. <sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. <sup>25</sup> Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. <sup>26</sup> So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. <sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified

**Summary Statement**

Since Paul is compelled by God's will, preaching cannot be grounds for boasting, so his boasting, his reward, comes from relinquishing his right to support and preaching the gospel free of charge. Even though he possesses the same freedom in Christ as all believers, he considers himself a servant to Jews, Gentiles and those of weak conscience, conforming himself to those under the law and those outside the law so he might save some. He compares his practice to athletes running a race for a worldly prize, but his prize is eternal. He preaches with purpose and discipline so he may finish the race well and not be himself disqualified.

**Discussion  
Question #1**

What does Paul mean when he says “necessity is laid upon me” in 9:16. See Amos 3:8; Acts 4:20; 9:6; Rom 1:14; 1 Jn 1:1,3 and contexts for background.

**Discussion  
Question #1**  
*(comparison  
verses)*

Amos 3:8 (ESV) <sup>8</sup> The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?"

Acts 4:20 (ESV) <sup>20</sup> for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

Acts 9:6 (ESV) <sup>6</sup> But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."

**Discussion  
Question #1**  
*(comparison  
verses)*

Romans 1:14 (ESV) <sup>14</sup> I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

1 John 1:1,3 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— <sup>3</sup> that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

**Discussion  
Question #2**

In 9:21 what does Paul mean when he says he is willing to become as one outside the law in order to win those outside the law? Likewise, he says he is willing to become all things to all people. Does this mean that Paul was willing to sin along with the Gentiles in order to have the opportunity to win them to Christ?

**Discussion  
Question #3**

Here is a lexicon definition of “disqualified” in verse 27:

*not standing the test, not approved. that which does not prove itself such as it ought, unfit for, unproved, spurious, reprobate.*

Was Paul right to be so concerned about being disqualified? Should we be? How does a Christian engage in discipline to avoid running “aimlessly”?

- I. Paul's Necessary Commitment vv 15-18
  - A. The ground of boasting vv 15-16
  - B. A chosen reward v18
- II. Paul's Universal Service vv 19-23
  - A. A servant to all vv 19-22
  - B. For the sake of the gospel v 23
- III. Paul's Imperishable Reward vv 24-27
  - A. The race and its reward vv 24-25
  - B. The race and its purpose vv 26-27