

“An Honorable Life Illustrated”
1 Corinthians 9: Part 1 and 2
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Introduction:

Chapter 9 continues Paul's discussion of meat offered to idols. Chapter 9 is an illustration of Paul giving up his rights as an apostle so as to win as many people to Christ as possible. The statement has been made by several godly men----

“We do **not** have the right to give up our freedom, but we do have the freedom to give up our rights.”

Galatians 5:1

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

NIV

We want to honor God and be a good witness but not be **legalistic**. No one likes a legalistic Christian. Do not give way to **license**. Live holy in **liberty**. Make sense?

I. Paul's Argument: Verses 1-12a (I Have Rights)

Verse 1

Paul's use of a legal law term in **verse 3** sets the course.

This is my answer – or defense.

Greek - ἀπολογία – apologetics (That branch of Christian Theology which has as its aim the reasoned advocacy of the Christian faith. It includes both positive arguments for the truth

of Christianity and rebuttals of criticisms leveled against it, Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology, Erickson), apology or defense (An apologists), clearing of self, answer.

- Am I free – as all Christians? (**eleutheros**- unrestrained, free, not liable, at liberty).
- Am I an Apostle? He had seen Christ on the road to Damascus?
- Have I seen Jesus? Damascus. Eyewitness of the Resurrection.
- Are you not the result of my ministry? You are proof of my calling, Wow! What a statement!
- Paul is saying that he, like everyone else has freedom in Jesus. He, more than most people, had a pretty good resume. Paul was mature in the faith.

Paul is laying the ground work and foundation for his argument (Apology, defense) that what he is teaching them is correct. He asked... “how many of you are apostles? How many of you have seen Jesus? How many of you have proof of your ministry in saved souls?” “Don’t I have freedom in my liberty?”

- I always love it when people walk in the door and try to tell me what we need to do as a church. So what we have done for the past 18 years is no good now? The proof of a man’s ministry is before your eyes.

Verse 2:

Seal – A signet or stamp. This was a mark of genuineness or privacy from a signet. They were his proof of Apostleship.

Greek: Seal is sphragis. This is the word for signet. This would be a seal or fencing to protect against misappropriation. This is a mark of genuineness and ownership. Privacy. This is an

extremely important word Paul uses to describe his relationship with the Corinthians.

John 6:27

On him God the Father has placed his **seal** of approval."

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2 Cor 1:21-22

21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his **seal** of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

NIV

Eph 1:13-14

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a **seal**, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

NIV

Rev 6:1, 3-5

I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven **seals**.

3 When the Lamb opened the second **seal**, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" 4 Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

5 When the Lamb opened the third **seal**,

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I am amazed at the folk who are cared for, fed, ministered to and loved, and then fly the coop. They grow in Christ; they learn ministry from their pastor; they are allowed to participate and serve Jesus; they are given a wonderful place to worship; they are

allowed into the body and fellowship, and then they disrespect their Pastor, staff, and body of Christ.

The fruit of your ministry is the seal of my calling and Pastoral ministry. You, the body, are the proof and seal of my calling. Do you think we are connected? You bet we are. *“Shepherd and sheep together”* is not just a slogan or theme... it’s our existence.

Verse 3:

You are my defense to those who criticize me.

I have had people say, “I do not consider Jerry Grey as my Pastor.” Someone told them – “then you need to find a Pastor in another church.”

*Usually when people say that – they go join a church 5 times this size so they can get special attention from the Pastor. Get it?

Paul says, “here is my defense.” My **apologia**.

Verse 4-6:

Paul states that the church had a responsibility to take care of him; food, drink – a believing wife – yet he and Barnabus chose to work for their own sustenance.

*Many Philosophers and teachers came through Corinth and demanded fees and financial support. They lost credibility due to this. Same today.

Paul chose to be bi-vocational and support himself so as to have greater influence. **I would prefer to be given something out of love and respect every time over a demanded gifts.**

1 Cor 9:6

6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who must work for a living?

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Paul's Examples: Verse 7-

1. **Soldiers**: No soldier should go into battle and serve his country and buy his own gun and armor. Does a soldier pay his own expense for fighting?
2. **Vineyard Farmer**: If you cultivate a vine you are entitled to its fruit. You eat from it (Charlie).
3. **Shepherd**: Does a farmer or shepherd have the right to drink the milk from the herd? Yes.

Verse 8:

This refers to spiritual matters as well. Paul says the law was his foundation for saying these things.

Verse 9:

Deuteronomy 25:4 – The ox has a right to eat as he works. Very simple. But Paul says Moses was not just speaking about Oxen.

Verse 10:

4. **The plowman and thresher**: One who plants and hoes a field should eat its bounty. One who threshes the grain eats the bread. One who plows eats the corn.

The goal is to share in the crop. What is the crop. Physical and spiritual sustenance.

Verse 11:

Our way of thinking is mainly materialistic. Many people don't want preachers to have anything better than they do. Many do not understand that when one blesses the prophet they get a prophet's reward. I believe this is biblical concerning Israel as well.

*I have literally had people say preachers should not be paid or pay them with chickens. Paul puts it clearly... sowing the spiritual things into the lives of the flock allows one to reap the benefits of the physical sustenance as well.

Matt 10:40-42

40 "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. 41 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."

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Luke 10:5-7

5 "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. 7 Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

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I really do take it seriously when people do kind things for me. I don't ever expect anything but when I am blessed by your kindness I return the favor with prayer for God to bless you richly.

- WEMC doesn't take chickens.
- The expectations of Pastors and staff today require full-time ministers. Bi-Vocational men still exist but the demands are great on them. They usually don't get compensated well at all. They usually end up working full time anyway.
- I have heard this in the hall ways of Woodlake Baptist church when finance and personnel was about to meet... "If you give

the staff a 3% raise, I will leave the church.” I happen to be close enough by to hear that with my own ears.

“You get what you pay for.” That doesn't sound godly, but it's true!

Verse 12a:

I'm amazed at what people will support but never consider supporting the Kingdom, the church and their staff.

Illustration:

Have you ever heard this, “All the preacher ever does is talk about money.” That's not true. Only greedy people that have never led a soul to Christ say things like that. I only mention money when it comes up in the text and then it is my responsibility to do so.

Let's play a game!

You are now in charge of starting a church.

- Where will you meet?
- Who will lead? How long will he do it without pay?
- Will you incorporate? How do you get to tax-exempt status? Who will pay the fees for rent, and who pays the Pastor? Who pays the state for non-profit status.
- Who pays for Sunday School literature?
- Will we heat and cool the building?
- For fellowships, who buys the food?
- Who buys the Baptistry, Piano and sound system?
- Who buys the plates for offerings, and Lord's Supper?
- Renter's Insurance, Workmen's Comp and Liability if someone falls?
- Counselor's Insurance?
- Toilet paper & paper towels?

- Trash cans?
- Copier and paper, Postage?
- Furniture for the staff?
- Chairs - \$40 x 200 – approx. \$7500.00
- Paint, walls, etc.

You know where we got the money to start WBC? – From people who invested in the kingdom of God and who love Jesus with all their hearts. They love Jesus more than the kingdom of this world.

Paul said this... ***“If others have this right to receive benefits from you, don’t we even more?”***

Matt 6:19-21

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But **store up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

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II. Paul's Example: 12b-23 (I Gave Up My Rights)

“But we did not use this right.” Also verse 15. Chraomai-to employ, entreat, or use.

Paul's goal in life was to never appear like others who swindled the people. The gospel prostitutes is what I call them. That’s a bit crude but it’s illustrated vividly in their lives. There are many pimps of the gospel. Those who take advantage of the sheep. Paul set aside his personal authority and rights for the gospel. Again, Paul has repeated this teaching over and over in this section of scripture. In chapters 8-10, the context is about giving up our rights for others that are weaker in the faith. The shepherd is not

to live as a hireling. The shepherd is the leader and protector of the sheep not the pensionary, swindler, or con man.

*** The gospel was first in this man's (Paul) mind. Whatever a man does, he is not to hinder the ministry of the gospel. Being greedy and lazy are at the top of the list.**

Verse 13:

The key to v.13 is the word **work, ergazomai- (ergon)**. To minister, work, commit to, labor for, etc. *“Don’t you know that those who work in the ministry, or service of the temple, make their living from the temple.”*

Unfortunately, the ministry is a hiding place for lazy people. Young men today start churches with the idea of easy living, power, and influence. Many older men try to cruise along until Social Security kicks in. The old hymn writer says it best... “We’ll work... till Jesus comes, we’ll work...”

God expects men of integrity to earn their food from the temple. He also expects His people to provide for His man. This is a two way street. Capitalism is how you do it. You sell a product for a price and the buyer gets goods and services for the transaction. That’s a win, win, situation. When only one party gets, and the giver pays too, it’s wrong. That’s communism or what a swindler does.

Paul loves this phrase, **“Don’t you know.”** Some churches have the attitude that their job is to keep the preacher poor and God can keep him humble. The Levites were **not** given an allotment of land because the people were to take care of the Levites and Priest that served in the Temple.

Verse 14: Paul’s teaching here is backed by scripture (Deuteronomy 25:4).

It is okay to earn a living from preaching the gospel. But earn it. **However**, Paul didn't exercise that right.

Deut 18:1-2

The priests, who are Levites — indeed the whole tribe of Levi — are to have no allotment or inheritance with Israel. They shall live on the offerings made to the Lord by fire, for that is their inheritance. 2 They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the Lord is their inheritance, as he promised them.

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Deut 25:4

4 Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.

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Verse 15:

Paul chose to give up his rights so as to not be deprived of his glory. His boast. Nobody controlled Paul with money. “Preach this or we will not pay you.” The preacher is still employed by God. Jesus is his boss. Well, he wasn't getting paid anyway! No one has the right to tell the pastor what to preach. That relationship is sacred with Jesus. The preacher is never to be blackmailed.

I can say with a clear heart that in 35 years of ministry I have never asked for a raise. I have left it to God. I will ask for the staff and the people that have worked for me. I have never left a ministry position for another because of money. I have let my effort, passion, work, preparation, and shepherding speak for me. I have left the recommendations to others. **It is not right to put the pastor in the position to have to ask for more money.** Most times, he will not ask, he will just move to another field.

Read verse 15: I think Paul makes it clear what his calling was, and who his boss was. He also made it clear what his principals were.

How did he make it in the ministry?

Philippians 4:14-19

¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

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In verse 15, here in our text, and in Philippians 4:17, Paul says, “I am not saying this so as to prompt you to give me a gift, I am just stating what happened.” He was thanking them.

This is ministry – people invest eternally in our ministry when they come here. I want you to invest in WBC. This is kingdom work.

God meets our needs in ministry! When we give to our missionaries we are being just like the Philippians. That should excite you.

Paul says that he would rather die than lose his ability and leverage against anyone who says that he was taking advantage of the churches for money.

As a matter of fact, Paul's concern was for the churches to prosper and especially the poor Saints in Jerusalem.

1 Cor 16:1-4

Now about **(Now Concerning)** the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. 3 Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

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Gal 2:9-10

9 James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. 10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

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Illustration: When the young preachers are about to graduate from seminary there is one big concern in their lives. What do you think that is? Where am I going and can I get a job. God quickly gets the attention of His man. We are never to look for a job. Brethren, we are called men of God. If you find a guy looking for a spot, he's a "wannabe" preacher. All he wants is a paycheck. Dr. Rogers used to say to the guys looking for a church, "Did God call you to preach?" Yes Dr. Rogers, He did. "Then preach son. Preach on the street corner every day and I will promise you that God will give you a pulpit." Share Jesus all day and every day and God will reward that. It is okay to send out resumes and seek a church but keep in mind you are God's man and that you are seeking the will of God. It's about the kingdom, not a job.

Ya'll alright? Paul's calling was to preach with or without a pulpit, a church, or a temple.

Illustration: Tell your personal story as to how you ended up at CHBC.

Read the book of Acts... what did Paul do every time he entered a new city. He preached anywhere he could. He went to the temple and preached on the steps or the Aeropogus. Paul would preach in a grave yard if he had too.

The pastor-preacher puts his life into the hands of God and prays someone will do what's right by him. Why? Verse 16 answers the question.

Verse 16:

Greek text says – ἀνάγκη “necessity is laid upon me.”

(P M/P I) - ἐπίκειμαι – laid upon.

To impose or press upon – down or upon.

Necessity – anagke. Constraint, must needs, distress, needful, have to. Root is from the word for angle or curve. The angle in the arm.

Like Jeremiah – Paul had a fire in his bones. I can't explain what it is, but there is something that God gave me with my calling that explodes in my heart when I preach this book. There is a necessity that is engrafted into the heart of the preacher. I have to do this.

Heb 5:1-4

Every high priest is appointed to help others by offering gifts and sacrifices to God because of their sins. 2 A high priest has weaknesses of his own, and he feels sorry for foolish and sinful people. 3 That is why he must offer sacrifices for his own sins and

for the sins of others. 4 But no one can have the honor of being a high priest simply by wanting to be one. Only God can choose a priest, and God is the one who chose Aaron.

CEV

You may call it *unction*, an *impression*, a *heralding*, *preaching*, *throwing down* or *just bringing the word*, but by all means, Preach, – be compelled! Do it with passion. Do it like you are summoned by God Himself because you are. If I go too long without preaching I become distressed.

No fire, no unction, no necessity, then no calling. A preacher that “has” to preach each Sunday has a serious spiritual problem.

That’s like a poet that doesn’t like to write. That’s like a painter that hates to paint. That’s like a pilot that hates to fly.

Listen, I have been called to preach – paid or not.

Woe- or alas if I do not. **Ouai-** woe! There is some woe, and pain, and suffering, coming to the men that do not preach the gospel and preach it willingly. My rights and privileges are not to hinder my preaching the gospel. Never compromise. Never back up or apologize for the truth of the gospel- **ευαγγελιζω**, to declare, to bring, to deliver or to preach the good tiding of the gospel message.

Verse 17: Interesting in the original.

Paul states that the compulsion comes with being **entrusted**. Even if you do not preach voluntarily, the stewardship you are **entrusted** with is still there.

ESV – “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.”

The root word for stewardship refers to building a household or a dwelling – **oikos- (Oikonomia)**. The preacher is a builder of lives by way of preaching.

If I do this calling willingly, I get a **misthos**- a reward, wages, or my hire. I also read this verse this way... If I preach as if it's a burden or some stewardship of a dispensation, then it becomes a job. No matter... if a man is called... he is called. Do it out of passion and the gift that God has given. I consider the gift of preaching the greatest gift on earth.

1 Cor 1:18-22

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19

For it is written: (Isa 29:14)

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;

the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."

20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

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Illustration: I was seated next to a pastor one night on the platform and as we waited for the choir to come out I noticed that the pastor kept looking at his watch. He then said under his breath, as if he were speaking to the minister of music... "Hurry up so that we can get this over with." I had a chill go through my entire body. I lost respect for the man right then and there.

The preaching of the gospel has been entrusted to the Pastor, the evangelist, the Sunday School teacher, the deacon, and all of us as called people of God.

The word for “**entrusted is pisteuo**. This is the word for **faith**. A dispensation (Privilege, allowance, exemption), a stewardship of preaching has been “**faithed**” to us, the called.

1 Cor 9:17

17 If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me

NIV

1 Cor 9:17

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

KJV

1 Cor 9:17

17 For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.

NASU

1 Cor 9:17

17 If I did it because it was my own choice, I would deserve to be paid. But I have no choice. I must tell the Good News. So I am only doing the duty that was given to me.

Easy-to-Read Version

1 Cor 9:17-18

17 If I preach because I want to, I will be paid. But even if I don't want to, it is still something God has sent me to do.

CEV

Verse 18: (Exegete verse)

“For a man to deny his call to preach will cost him so much more than preaching for free.” JRG

“For a man not to do his best in sacred preparation and delivery will cost him shame on the Day of The Lord.” JRG

“To use the gift of preaching for anything other than preaching the gospel, building the saints, revealing the father, and bringing glory to God, is punishable and blasphemous.” JRG

It is contrary to the gospel ministry and its standards for a Christian, much less, a called man of God, to be cheap. A parsimonious Christian's extreme frugality is contrary to God's giving nature. The Gospel is giving!

Paul's example was humility, sacrifice, giving and yielding to others.

What a reward. I have mine now. The blessings of preaching to you each week the truths of the Word and the gospel are reward enough for me. I call the Holy Spirit as my witness... the things that God gives me, and shows me in the Word are for your benefit and His glory, but I have to say that as the truth passes through my heart and mind to you, I glean the riches of God's grace and glory in my soul, and why God has chosen me to deliver this message is beyond my human comprehension. But I will say that understand it or not, I have loved every second of sacred preparation and delivery of His precious book. If I die tomorrow, I have had a full life because of my calling. This has been the greatest life a sinful man could have lived. Those of you who know me, I do not have to convince that this is true. My thoughts and actions are continually seeking revealed truth and a perfect delivery for your understanding and my God's glory. O, what a message the gospel is?

*******How can a man charge for what has freely been given to him?

Verse 19:

Paul did not become a backslider to reach sinners. He is not compromising the truth. He is meeting people where they are spiritually, e.g. the woman at the well, Nicodemus and the Roman Centurion. Paul was willing to give up his authority, rights, privileges, honor, attention, praise, personal preferences, and anything else that would keep him from winning souls to Christ.

Kerdaino- to gain, or win. Used four times here.

Paul says that he has done exactly what Jesus did in order to win as many as possible. Although he was born a free man he has placed himself with those who have no rights to win as many as possible.

Verse 20-21:

- A Jew to the Jews
- Ceremonial days and rituals, dietary laws, etc. What was once obedience to the law was now an opportunity to witness to his own people. Paul didn't have to do anything under the law but was willing to share the truth in any way to win a man's soul.
- When he was with the Gentiles he adjusted so as to lead them to Christ.

To the weak - weak I became. He would present the gospel as much and as often as needed. He would give up his rights to accommodate the weak. If you don't eat meat I will not eat meat. When you are saved the Holy Spirit will teach you better.

- To the weak, weak. Present the gospel on each man's level. Do it as often as possible.

Greek: *asthenés* – the strengthless, more feeble, impotent, sick –the weak.

* That's what we do as Christians. We try to reach the sick (spiritually).

In Luke 4:18, Jesus said he was anointed to preach to the poor, the prisoners, the blind, the oppressed – this is the weak!

22-23- *So as (v19) & (22b) to win as many as possible.

Win used 4xs in this section. If you are with a weak believer you must use kid gloves until they grow up in the faith.

* If I could get all God's people to see that working like a slave for the gospel brings blessings, we could make some progress.

We are **partners**. **συγκοινωνος**– (with and fellowship)- To **partake** in the rewards of the gospel.

Nothing is to interfere with the delivery of the message.

Suggestions:

- Get settled before the delivery. Pray and be ready.
- Know that I believe that the time of delivery each week is the most important time of the week.
- Put your phone on silent.
- Go to the bathroom like a big boy before the service, or sit in the back. Treat the invitation and offertory like it's an opportunity for the lost to be saved.
- Don't be a distraction unless you have to.

The example is simple – give up and serve Christ so as to be blessed and bless others with the message. **Everything we do is for the gospels sake.**

"For the sake of" - δια -- accusative preposition -- because of or as a channel through. Paul's method of reaching men was “through” the gospel. The channel of salvation was through the gospel.

Phil 3:4-8 (Paul's view of The gospel)

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 **But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.**

8 Yea doubtless, and I count **all things but loss** for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: **for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,**

KJV

Why did Paul give up his rights?

1 Cor 9:23

23 I do all this for the good news, because I want to share in its blessings.

CEV

**The greatest investment in life is the gospel!!!
The greatest rewards in life come from the gospel!!!**

III. Paul's Invitation vv. 24-27 (Come Join Me)

Verse 24: Run to win!

In this race all who run get a prize, but run so as to get THE prize. Do all you do for the glory of God. Do your best. Are you giving the kingdom its due?

Run to win!

Run- trecho- To walk or run hastily. To be on a course or trek. Journey. Not all can run but if you can walk, get after it. (PAI)

Verse 25:

Strict training: Temperance.

An athlete shows temperance of self-restraint- **egkrateuomai**. He strives or labors in mastery. **αγωνιζομαι**- **agony**.

2 Tim 2:3-7

3 Endure hardship with us like a good **soldier** of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs — he wants to please his commanding officer. 5 Similarly, if anyone competes as an **athlete**, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hardworking **farmer** should be the first to receive a share of the crops. 7 Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

NIV

* In other words – get a PhD in Christian Living. Take this journey seriously.

Illustration: What was the first thing you thought about when you heard about Michael Phelps smoking weed? - How stupid to put pot in a finely tuned body like that! How about Tiger Woods?

Perishable vs. Imperishable, v.25b- The world's rewards don't last. Our rewards last eternally; do you want it now or later?

Living for the eternal helps with our temperance. Eternity changes everything.

Verse 26:

I'm not shadow boxing here. This spiritual training is not like a boxer punching air. I'm not running blind. **Adelos**- without certainty. We are not running this **trek** aimlessly. The promise is that this journey has purpose.

* Spiritual training is truly productive. Run to win

Illustration:

Annika Sorenstam as a junior golfer would lose on the last hole of Junior Tournaments to keep from having to talk to the press. She was shy.

We see the same effort from so many who don't give their best.

* Losing is ok – Getting beat is okay- quitting isn't.

* See, it's one thing to train and not win. It's another to train poorly and not do well, cheat, or get disqualified.

Verse 27:

Paul says, “I enslave my body so that I'm in control of it so that I can be the proper example and not end up a castaway, disqualified, or a reprobate.

We are to put our bodies under strict control.

The saddest thing in all of the world is a man with a calling who has disqualified himself from the ministry because he chose to exercise his rights and lost control of his body. This breaks our hearts.

Greek: *adokimos*- unfit for use or worthless. A castaway, reprobate, rejected or unapproved.

Paul's Argument – I have rights.

Paul's Example – Give those rights up for the gospel.

Paul's Invitation - Come join me.

Closing:

I thought that a good example of a castaway might move you to sorrow for all who have become castaways in the ministry and faith. Instead, I think I would like to tell you that the first step in becoming a castaway is to think somebody owes you something.

* That's where it starts. I thought Christians and golfers were sissies before I was saved. Both are the hardest two things I have tried to master. I am sure Paul was aware of the Olympics in his day. He knew training was necessary for success. If men train to get a trophy that passes away, how much more shall we train for eternal rewards?

Closings: John Bisagno- The list of names he had in his bible of all his heroes. Great preachers that he marked out one by one as they became castaways.