

Just A Minute! With Scripture

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be underlined, or made bold for emphasis.



Paul was put under a microscope regarding his ministry. False teachers had influenced the Corinth Church to develop these divisions and contentions. Christ's love was manifest in Paul as he didn't react emotionally, being offended, but rather helped them to mature in their faith as a pattern for us.

"Mine answer to them that do examine me is this..." (Verse 3). Paul patiently reminded them of his qualifications. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to and imparted many revelations to Paul, even appointing him as the Apostle of the Gentiles. (Rom. 11:13) He also was the one who had initially shared the Truth with them, that is, how to be justified unto eternal life, *"If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord."* (Verse 2)

The concern addressed in Chapter 9 was Paul's motive in the ministry and whether it was proper for him to receive financial compensation. Paul reminded them that even the Law instructed that ministers were righteous to live off the fruits of their labor. God, through Moses, initially set up this principle i.e. Lev. 6:16,26. He continues, *"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."* (Verse 14) This was God's provision for His workers.

Additionally, Paul reflects that he purposed not to take any funds that the ministry might not be blamed, and to avoid all appearance of evil. Thus, no one could claim he used his power for personal gain: *"...Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel."* (Verse 18)

Ultimately Paul's true motive was revealed in Verses 19-22: *"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more...I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."* Christ's love motivated him to yield and serve others, expecting no gift. Paul is to be our example and his ministry was motivated by grace. He realized his great position and responsibility. The only gain he desired was the natural and eternal benefits of living godly and in the growth of others.

How Are We Judging Others?



Scripture instructs us to make discernments (II Tim. 2:15-23), rather than to be high-minded and puffed up, judging others. To discern means to consider, discriminate, or identify things to apply the Truth. A 'doctrine enforcer' inspects, ever finding faults in others. This is the law. It's a judgmental role that can be quite injurious, especially to our weaker brothers and sisters.

Assessing someone's motives and judging (weighing evidence to determine guilt or innocence) can be tempting for us to do, but it is really the Lord's job. *"...for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men."* (II Chronicles 6:30)

Thus, when we find ourselves looking at and evaluating others, *"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."* (Rom. 14:13)

Some at Corinth brought unfounded accusations against their God-appointed Apostle, revealing spiritual immaturity. Yet, Paul dealt with them in love & grace. *"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand."* (II Cor. 1:24)

Great respect is needed when making allegations against our leaders: *"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine...Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."* (I Tim. 5:17,19) **Better to err on the side of graciousness, than to judge wrongly.**



Search it out!

Living As Who You Are In Christ

I Corinthians 9: Paul's Love Motive For Ministry

Examine verses!



The Corinthians were clearly justified believers having eternal life, yet they had challenges in living a sanctified, holy life, applying what they had been taught. Unbelievers and teachers of other doctrines arose in their midst, confusing and leading them off track.

As a result, the Corinthians departed from sound doctrine. Paul even had to defend his ministry to them, though he had instructed them a year and a half (Acts 17:11), to establish them in the basics. *"Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?"* (Verse 1) Study Chapter 9 to learn about Paul's grace attitude when dealing with this Church:

1. Notice questions: Count how many times Paul asks a question as he teaches I Corinthians 9. Questions help students reflect on what they're thinking, so they can progress in understanding in an area.

2. Purpose of the chapter: Corinth sent Paul a list of questions and it seems that this chapter addresses

some of them. (I Corinthians 7:1 & 9:3) Why would these saints be questioning his motives when he was their spiritual father (I Cor. 4:14-16) He already dealt with his relationship with them. Who were they that were examining Paul? There is a clue in Verse 12.

3. Paul often uses the Old Testament to verify or clarify doctrine he taught: Read through the verses and notice how many times this is done in Chapter 9.

4. Paul teaches us by example: a) Skim through Verses 15-23 and notice the grace attitude he is teaching. b) In Verses 19-23, Paul seems to be taking different roles when he deals with people. What is he doing and how could this be effective in our ministry?

5. Every word is significant: a) How many times is the word 'gain' used in Verses 19-22. Assess the context. What is Paul desiring to gain? b) What does 'Mastery' mean (Verse 25) and how are we to strive toward mastery? What is it we are to master?

6. Read/ask yourself questions: Example-Verse 27: How do we keep your bodies in subjection? Where has Paul taught this issue before? Was it Romans 6-8?

**Newer students: Focus on 'reading' Scripture rather than on using many new study insights.*



Are You Running in the Race or Waiting to 'Feel' Ready?

God always desires the best for His saints, so I Corinthians 9:24-27 teaches believers they're to run in the race to obtain the reward. *"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain."* (Verse 24) The issue of rewards was taught earlier, *"...every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."* (I Cor. 3:8-15) What we do matters!

Being in the race: Our flesh will procrastinate! It won't feel ready to let go of its self-serving ways to live unto Christ. Thus, we each just need to trust God and decide to get in the race of 'living our faith.' Don't let the flesh rule. Study & apply what you learn in life; this is being in the race! Godly skills/confidence grow in you over time.

What it means to 'run': To run means to move, never having both feet on the ground at one time; pass quickly but smoothly; being on a journey, in control and moving toward a goal. We can keep our bodies in subjection as we yield to God's goal, which is to be in this race. The Word gives us the power to set aside fleshly desires/fears to **stand** for Christ, **walk** the walk of faith each day, and learn to go on to **run** in the race to 'obtain' the prize.

Examining the term 'obtain': In the context, it refers to acquiring spiritual maturity. We can learn to apply sound doctrine to attain God's wisdom. We're to *"...press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* (Phil. 3:14) The ultimate goal is to be conformed to the image of Christ and practically use this Truth to stand/walk/run by faith. We have to participate to obtain and it's a choice to yield control of our bodies.

So arise dear brothers and sisters, shake off Satan's derailing ways. Lay aside the course of this world to run, but not to obtain a corruptible crown, nor being uncertain of what God desires. Be confident, focus on the goal by reading and applying the Word in life: *"...So run, that ye may obtain."* (I Cor. 9:24)

To Do: Further define/meditate on "stand," "walk," and "run" for yourself. See how Paul uses them in Scripture.

Keeping Our Body In Subjection

Paul concludes Chapter 9 by dealing with the issue of 'the body.' *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* (I Cor. 9:27) Living in this body can be challenging with fleshly thinking continually bombarding our thoughts. We can easily become a castaway, if we're not self-aware and in the Word, yielding to God. We also need to be conscious of the 'Y' in the road of thinking to choose wisely.

Are we just victims of our flesh? *"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us?"* (Rom. 8:37) Victory is Christ's life living in us. *"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (I Cor. 15:57)

I Corinthians 9:27 teaches us to be victorious, by placing our bodies in subjection. God enables us to keep ourselves under the protection of His Word: 1) Read/meditate on sound doctrine. 2) Believe. 3) Yield to live our convictions, even when we do not fully understand or when it is hard to do. Just trust Him! Time is short, *"...now it is high time to awake out of sleep..."* (Rom 13:11)

If we don't read the Word, or think on it regularly, our flesh controls the body and we will give ourselves to be castaways. As a result, we become spiritually dead and slaves to our feelings, emotions, and the god of this world; none other than Satan himself. Not a pretty picture indeed! This would be foolish and contrary to who Christ made us. It is spiritual death to our time, energy, and the efforts in this life.

Allow Christ to be in control in your life, keeping in mind I Corinthians 9:27. It's easy for you to follow the flesh or even do nothing, immobilized. You're an adult believer (son) of the Most High, our Father! He desires you to stand/walk/run by faith!

Practical Ideas on How to Study: Part IV

Paul's epistles will actually teach you **how to study**. Here are a few examples in the book of Romans:

- 1) **New or repeating terms/phrases:** Each are a flag to the reader to think on and define. (Ex. Rom. 1:11: spiritual gift)
- 2) **Questions:** These are used to address key topics in the readers mind, to mature them. (Rom 2:3,4,21,22, etc.)
- 3) **Summary words/phrases:** These reflect and review what has just been taught. (Rom. 3:28: therefore & conclude)
- 4) **Examples:** The use of examples help you gain depth in understanding. (Rom. 4:1 & 6: Abraham/David's faith response)
- 5) **Contrasts and comparisons:** These are writing tools, which progress you in grasping difficult concepts. (Rom. 5:15 & 19: 'But not as...so also is...' 'For as by...so by...')

Study insights are taught as the student reads and studies. Scripture also 'reads you' as you place it in your inner man. Hebrews 4:12 says, *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* God knows what you need by the Spirit, teaching precisely what's needed. (I Cor. 2:9-13) Pray to be observant and walk by faith as you are in the Scriptures.

A key, impacting **study insight** is to be aware of the context surrounding the verses you read/study. (Study, rightly dividing: II Tim 2:15) For example, Paul's epistles are written specifically 'to' the Body of Christ. As you realize this insight, you know where to focus your study. (Romans-Philemon) Romans begins milk doctrine to establish you, providing confidence to walk by faith. (Rom. 1:11) The meatier doctrine begins in Ephesians.

You may read Romans and respond by thinking, "Oh this is too hard, I can't understand this, I'm going to read a different book in the Bible!" However, you can walk by faith to see a new **study insight**: Humbled, you can realize you can't do this alone, and yield to be led by the Spirit through this opportunity." (Rom. 8:14)

Another **study insight** is to learn patience in the study process. The Scripture is not like any other book, it is understood in layers, over a lifetime. It takes diligence and regular time and effort to read, reread, study, meditate, and pray on the Scripture for clarity in understanding and to apply it in your life. (Continued)

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Stamp

To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)

Personal Insights...continued

Practical Ideas on How to Study: Part IV

God’s way to teach you is also a **study insight**. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17)* One’s flesh will scream and kick, a temper tantrum of a sort, against God’s way. Man looks to find an easier, more effective way than God’s way, thinking ‘he knows better,’ rather than simply trusting God.

Let the Scripture be the focus, not your flesh or emotions. (Rom. 8:14) This can be an important **study insight**. Some saints use ‘most all’ their study time/energy to get nuggets of new doctrine or pieces of data by reading books or listening to men, rather than personal study ‘in the Word.’ Read the Bible daily, but be ready, the flesh will rebel. Push through this stronghold, yielding to God. Be patient. Understanding and application of Scripture takes time. God’s work is invisible and within. A few suggestions:

1. Plan time to read the Scripture, like first thing in the morning. This will enable you to meditate on it through the day. Think how to apply it to your life.
2. Find wise counsel to get questions answered. If you can’t find this resource, call us for suggestions.
3. Set your flesh aside when it rebels, allowing Christ in you to drive what you do and think, especially when it comes to regular time in the Word.
4. Realize that even in this time of grace, there is labor to be done. It is God’s work in us. As we yield, God motivates us to do His will, that is, to grow up unto spiritual adult believers. (Eph. 4:15)



‘On A Personal Side’

We welcome feedback & questions and would like to hear from you

Survey feedback from attendees of the Florida Retreat

Some of the comments on ‘What did you learn’:

- “It was great to be reminded of the importance of being gentle and sharing in love.”
- “Something that touched me was the first session, on how to be a strong believer and not measure other’s growth against my own.”
- “A glimpse of how to study & hold forth the Word of Life.”
- “To do all things for the Lord, not a person.”
- “I need to study Romans slower.”
- “I have to get heart knowledge, not just head knowledge.”
- “How to better witness and help other Christians read and study the Bible.”
- “I loved how Deb explained, how to study.”

General comments:

- “This year was the best year yet!”
- “I liked the balance of discussion and lecture time.”
- “I loved the activities.”
- “The Retreat went very well and the addition of other speakers worked well. There was less group discussions and more working through passages which I liked very much. (Sometimes too many group discussions don’t lead to much.) Testimony was touching and encouraging. Overall, teaching was edifying & fellowship encouraging. No negative to say!”
- “It was a highly encouraging and edifying time of fellowship in the Word.”

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