

Bible Study Group Notes

1 Corinthians 9

THE BIG PICTURE

We are continuing our series, God's guidance for life's decisions, from 1 Corinthians 8-10. Last week, from chapter 8, we asked: *Will this wound another Christian?* This week, from chapter 9, we ask: *Will this help or hinder the gospel?*

Paul is not simply asking, "What am I allowed to do?" He is asking, "What decision will best serve the progress of the gospel?" God guides us in the grey areas not by secret signs, but by reshaped priorities: hold your rights lightly, meet people where they are, and live with purpose.

INVESTIGATE

Hold your rights lightly – read 1 Corinthians 9.1–18.

1. What rights does Paul claim to have in 9.1-14?
2. Why has Paul chosen not to make full use of these rights in Corinth? See especially 9.12.
3. What does 9.16-18 reveal about Paul's sense of gospel responsibility?
4. How does this section help us ask not only, "Do I have the right?" but, "Should I insist on this right here?"

Meet people where they are – read 1 Corinthians 9.19–23.

5. What does Paul mean when he says, "though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all"?
6. What examples does Paul give of adapting himself for the sake of others?
7. What boundaries does Paul place around his flexibility in 9.21?
8. What does 9.23 reveal about Paul's deepest motivation?

Live with purpose – read 1 Corinthians 9.24–27.

9. What athletic images does Paul use, and what point is he making through them?

10. What is the difference between running “aimlessly” and running for the “imperishable” prize?

11. Why does Paul discipline himself in 9.27? What warning should we hear here?

REFLECT & APPLY

12. Think of a current decision involving time, money, home, work, habits, church life, or relationships. How might the question “Will this help or hinder the gospel?” reshape your thinking?

13. What legitimate right, comfort, or preference might you need to hold more lightly for the sake of the gospel?

14. Who might God be calling you to move towards – a neighbour, colleague, newcomer, younger Christian, older Christian, or someone outside your usual circle?

15. Is your life currently structured with room for prayer, people, ministry, and gospel usefulness – or are you mostly drifting/reacting?

PRAY

- Thank God for the gospel and for the Lord Jesus, who gave himself for us.
- Ask Him to help us hold our rights lightly, meet people where they are, and live with purpose.
- Pray that our decisions would help, not hinder, the spread of the gospel.

NB The Church Prayer Pointers for this month are available in church or on the WhatsApp group.