

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**I CORINTHIANS 9****I Corinthians 9**

I Corinthians 9:1-14 is a series of questions that the Apostle poses to the Corinthians, friends and foes alike, and let me add, if you are a follower of Jesus and sold out to Him completely, you will have few friends and many foes! Paul is giving a defense (*Greek-apologia/apology*) of his apostleship and of his behavior while living in Corinth for a concentrated period of eighteen months.

My defense (Greek-apologia/apology) to those who examine me is this: One has to remember that as followers of Jesus, we do not live to do what we have a right to do; on the other hand, we live to do the right thing!

Do we have no right to eat and drink? *The answer is Yes! Of course, Paul is speaking in relation to eating certain things that might offend some, and of drinking wine, which might be offensive to some.*

Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? *The answer is Yes! Paul was celibate, not because he had to be, but because he wanted to dedicate himself to the Lord Jesus completely without bringing a wife and then perhaps children into consideration. When Paul says he wishes that all men could be like him, unmarried, he is not speaking against marriage, he is simply saying that in his case, a wife and family would be a burden he did not want to have as he served the Lord traveling throughout the Greco-Roman world, in and out of prison. Also, he did not want to see his wife and children suffer and be tortured because of his witness, testimony, and life work. Another thought: does anyone know any of the Apostle's wife's names? Of course not. Does that mean she or women in general were not important? God forbid, of course not. What it does is remind us that God calls individuals, not husband and wife teams, for his greatest works. You will not find a husband/wife co-pastor or co-elder example in the New Testament Church. The reason is it simply did not exist. This phenomenon in our day is*

culture-driven, not a Biblical precept, principle, or pattern.

Is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? *Paul and his cohorts, whether Barnabas or someone else, had the right and the Biblical grounds to live from the ministry and the blessings of the people who made up the local assemblies where they served. But they worked and made a living, so they were self-sufficient in order to not "Have to" take anything from anyone. This way, they avoided the stumbling block that some might use as a stone to throw at them.*

Whoever goes to war at his own expense? *Answer: no one...who wins! When you are in the military, the military provides what you need, and everything you need so that you might concentrate on the battle at hand and winning the war, not whether you will be able to live and enjoy the necessities of life without having to stop fighting and earn a living wage.*

Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? *Answer: no one! The person who plants the seed and tends to it and then brings in the fruit should be the one who not only eats the fruit but the best of the fruit.*

Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? *Answer: no one! As in the case of planting the vineyard, so it is with the flock and drinking the milk from the flock. It is simply understood that the one who does the work should be the first to eat and drink from that in which they have invested time and effort.*

Paul is not bragging or boasting about doing what he does, rather, he is using this as an example that what he did in Corinth, he did for them and others, not to please himself. He even states his motivation so that all there would know, as well as for all of us. Paul says, **"Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you."** (I Corinthians 9:23)

Prayer and Action Steps

Father in heaven, thank You that You equip us to live in the fullness of Your Spirit and do what we do for You, and for the sake of the gospel, in order for people to hear the "good news" of the message of forgiveness and redemption in Jesus. Amen