

1 Corinthians 9:15-23

Gaining Our Neighbors by Giving Our Rights

*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. 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! 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. 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.*

*For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. 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. 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. 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. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.*

(1 Corinthians 9:15-23 ESV)

In service of the Gospel he loved, Paul tells us two things he was ready and willing to do:

I. Sacrifice His Rights (vv.15-18)

*“...we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.*

*For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.” (1 Thessalonians 2:4-9 ESV).*

*“Come, everyone who thirsts,  
come to the waters;  
and he who has no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without price.  
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,  
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?  
Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,  
and delight yourselves in rich food.  
Incline your ear, and come to me;  
hear, that your soul may live;*

(Isaiah 55:1-3 ESV)

## II. Sacrifice His Freedom (vv.19-23)

He was *never* willing to sacrifice the message, but was *always* willing to sacrifice his preferences.

Never sacrifice the message. Always be willing to sacrifice your preferences, your rights, and opinions, if they would hinder the Gospel message from being heard.

We have to engage our neighbors and hear their thoughts on big questions like:

What are the most important things in life?

Why are we here?

What is wrong with the world?

What will make things right?

What should I do?