

Summit Woods Baptist Church
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class

1 Corinthians 9:15-18

❖ Day 1

Read 1 Corinthians 9:15-18.

For these lessons, the sermon text is provided in a format that visually helps display the structure of the paragraph or section of text. The main verbs are underlined. The main clauses remain to the left, and the supporting clauses are either directly underneath when they have equal priority to what comes before, or are tabbed to the right when the clause supports, develops, or draws a conclusion from a neighboring clause.

¹⁵But

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.

¹⁶For 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!

¹⁷For 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.

¹⁸What 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.

*Note: These phrases in English translate single Greek verbs.

This week begins with three grammar questions about the structure of the passage before moving on to questions about the content of the passage.

1. What function does “But” have at the beginning of the paragraph?
2. Why is it important to recognize this function and the connection to the preceding paragraphs?
3. Look back at the text in the paragraph flow above. What *key word* has caused us to tab several of the phrases to the right?

Summit Woods Baptist Church
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class

4. To what “rights” and “provision” is Paul referring?
5. Where in the letter did he begin discussing rights?
6. Does Paul want to start using these rights? From where in the text do you get your answer?
7. In verse 15, what does Paul desire more than the financial compensation he could get from them?
8. What is your initial reaction to Paul’s passionate desire to have a ground for boasting?
9. Is preaching the gospel the ground upon which Paul boasts?
10. Why does he say that it is *not* his ground for boasting?

❖ Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 9:15-18 again.

11. How was this “necessity ... laid upon [him]”? (see Acts 26:15-18)
12. Why does Paul say that he must preach, even if it is “not of [his] own will”?

Summit Woods Baptist Church
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class

13. Where in 1 Corinthians has Paul already used language about being a steward, and what did he say?
14. If preaching in and of itself is not grounds for him to boast, what does he claim as his ground for boasting?
15. When we began studying 1 Corinthians last fall, we learned that professional orators were some of the main celebrities in first-century Corinth. Those orators were generally not concerned about the truthfulness of their content. They often crafted their speeches to have the greatest flair and to catch the most attention, which then led to greater pay in their pockets. How might this cultural reality have influenced Paul's determination not to take payment from the Corinthian church?
16. Why might Paul consider his denial of his rights as a valid reason for boasting?
17. From chapter 8 and the first half of chapter 9, summarize how Paul has used both the way he preaches and the way he approaches food as examples of his willingness to give up his rights for the sake of the gospel.

❖ Day 3

Read 1 Corinthians 9:15-18 again.

Summit Woods Baptist Church
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class

18. The Lord chose a unique way to issue his command for Paul to preach the gospel, but the Lord has given all of his followers many commands to obey in His Word. Read Luke 17:7-10. Should a servant or steward expect a reward for doing his duty? Explain.

19. Now look back at 1 Corinthians 3:14. Also read Matthew 19:27-30 where Jesus promises reward for those who serve him faithfully. How should both the ideas of duty and reward motivate us in obedience to the Lord?

20. What do you think Paul wants the Corinthians to think, feel, or do in response to this week's paragraph?

21. How might Paul's denial of his rights encourage the Corinthians towards godliness?

22. How can we emulate Paul's example when we share the gospel with others?

In preparation for Sunday, continue to pray that we would live our lives selflessly for the sake of the gospel and that we would be good stewards of the gospel and faithful ambassadors for the Lord this week.