

March 21, 2021

A Christian View of Rights

1 Corinthians 9:1-12

Paul's primary concern

Last time we were together, Paul took up a new subject in his letter to the Corinthians, dealing with food sacrificed to idols. He labored to show that idols are nothing (8:4) and that there is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ (8:6). Therefore to eat food that was one sacrificed made no difference whatsoever (8:8). However proving this was not his *main* concern. His main concern was that these stronger brothers in Corinth (who had this knowledge) would refrain from their right *if it meant* causing their weaker brothers (who didn't have this knowledge) to stumble (8:9).

The real enemy

Now Paul is essentially continuing that same line of argumentation by applying this idea of Christian rights to *himself*. One of the things that is at stake in Corinth is the survival of the Church itself. It's so interesting really. Who is the Corinthian's greatest threat to their existence as a Church? The devil? The Romans? Secular thought? No. It was themselves. They were their worst enemy. Paul spends his entire time in this letter essentially showing them, that they are tearing the Church apart with their own hands. Dear congregation, that is why the Corinthian letter is so relevant to us. It is not the state, or a virus, or bullets and bombs that will tear this Church apart. It is ourselves. We are the enemy within the gates.

The doctrine of Christian liberty

Paul is showing us yet another way we can become weapons against each other: by exercising our rights. The idea of rights is mentioned seven times in

these verses.¹ What is a right? Our rights are "...those things that one is morally or legally entitled to do or have...[those things] due to a person...by law, tradition, or nature."² The specific rights in view here are Christian Rights, or better Christian liberty. The WCF puts it like this in **20.2**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it *free* from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to his Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship.

Meaning, if God has not forbid something by His moral law, He has left us free to decide for ourselves. What a glorious truth! No man can bind the conscience save God alone. If the Son has set us free, we are free indeed. That is Christian liberty.

Something better...

What the Corinthian's missed is that Christ did not set them free *merely* so they could exercise their right. Our rights are not the ultimate things, because we are not the ultimate things. There is something better. That is where Paul is going this morning. He's going show us by his own practice, that there is something better than your own rights.

☆ Paul's Resume (v.1-3)

☆ Paul's Rights (v.4-14)

☆ Paul's Renunciation (v.12c)

¹ v.4, 5, 6, 12 (2x), 15, 18

² Source: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/rights> Accessed March 20, 2021

The Big Idea...

Renouncing Christian rights *for the sake of the gospel* is a far greater pleasure than exercising what is our due

I. Paul's Resume

'I have greater rights'

Some understand these first three verses as Paul's defense against the false brothers in the assembly who were calling his apostleship into question. Maybe he is defending his apostleship. But I think his *main aim* is to further his argument from chapter eight. The Corinthians had rights. And they were exercising those rights narcissistically. Now he shows them that he has an even greater right by showing them his resume.

No one is freer than the Christian

Please look at v.1. He asks rhetorically "Am I not free?" In other words: '...have I *not also* been set free by the Son of God just like you?' A Christian is the freest creature in creation.

The Christian has been set free
from the guilt of sin,
the condemning wrath of God,
the curse of the law,
this present evil age,
bondage to Satan,
slavery to sin,
the sting of death,
and the misery of hell.³

³ WCF 20.1

No one is freer than the Christian. Therefore Paul is saying, *first of all*, that he has all the same liberties as the Corinthians.

The marks of his apostleship

But then he goes further. v.1 “Am I not an apostle?” You see he’s not just an ordinary Christian, he is a messenger sent from God.⁴ He has the highest authority in the Church next to Christ Himself because the Church rests on the foundation of the Apostolic doctrine (**Ephesians 2:20**). And he gives two marks that prove his apostleship.⁵ **First** he asks in v.1 “Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?” No man could be an apostle *unless* they had seen the resurrected Christ (**Acts 1:22**) or *unless* Christ Himself gave them an immediate and Heavenly revelation of the gospel. This is how Paul came to be an Apostle, Jesus *revealed* Himself to him on the road to Damascus.⁶ So Paul could later say in **Galatians 1:12** “I did not receive *it* [the gospel] from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”

The **second** mark of his apostleship is at the end of v.1-2: “Are not you *my workmanship* in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are *the seal* of my apostleship in the Lord.” What does he mean “...you are *the seal* of my apostleship?” He means ‘...your conversion is the proof that I am a Divine messenger.’ Conversion is *alone* a work of God. **John 6:63** “It is the Spirit who *gives life*; the flesh is no help at all.” There that the Corinthians were converted under Paul’s preaching demonstrates that God the Spirit had authenticated his ministry.

⁴ 1:1 - “Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes.”

⁵ There are “signs of an apostle” - 2 Cor. 12:12

⁶ Acts 9:1-22

Nobody living has this resume

Paul then concludes in **v.3** “This is my defense to those who would examine me.” In other words, ‘this is my apostolic resume’: **1)** The Lord Jesus Christ *Himself* revealed the gospel to me; and **2)** He has sealed this by converting souls under my ministry. This resume convinced Peter, James and John. In **Galatians 2:9** we read “...when James and Cephas and John...perceived *the grace that was given to me*, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles.” Here’s the point: nobody living has this resume. Nobody can claim they have the same credentials or prestige as Paul.

Narcisgenesis

You see the problem in Corinth is the same problem we face today: everyone acts as if they are the main character of a very special story, that they are the star in their very own movie, and everyone else serves as supporting actors. An expression of this type of narcissism is found in the worn out cliché: “You can be whatever ever you want to be.” Children, it’s simply not true that you can be whatever you want to be. I cannot be an professional basketball player no matter how bad I want it. God has not equipped me to play basketball. Here’s another lie from our narcissistic culture: do you remember the Lego Movie? At the end, Emmet said to Lord Business “You are the most talented, most interesting, most extraordinary person in the universe...and so is everybody.” Children, who is the most talented, most interesting, most extraordinary Person in the universe? God is. But the world, the flesh and the devil are all saying the opposite: this life is about *you*. What’s most important is *you*. Don’t you know that is the very essence of sin? Sin is not *mainly* about doing bad things. Do you know why I can say that? Because you can sin *when* you do good things. Here I am preaching the gospel to you all. Do you know that I could be filled with sin right now? Here’s the revealing question: Am I here proclaiming the Word of God to you today for the glory of God or for the glory of Pastor Josh? We agree that preaching is a good thing, right? But if I am doing this good thing for *my own* honor, *my own* reputation, in order to fulfill

my own desires, then I am sinning. Do you see? The essence of sin is putting me on the throne of the universe. It's all about me.

Paul's method

So Paul's method here is to say: 'Ok let's compare resumes here. Who are you again? I am an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you seen a Heavenly vision of Jesus? Have millions been converted under your ministry? Have you written Scripture? Who do you think you are exactly?'⁷ Now of course Paul is *only* comparing on the human level. He has already said that he is nothing. **1 Corinthians 3:5-7** "What then is Apollos? What is Paul? *Servants through whom you believed*, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. *So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything*, but only God who gives the growth."

1st principle: You are *not* the most extraordinary person in the universe

So here's the **first principle**: *You are not the most talented, most interesting, most extraordinary person in the universe.* You are not the star. On a human level, others are far more gifted and interesting than you. On a spiritual level, you were so wretched that the only way God could save you was by nailing His Son to a tree. Your resume—my resume—is: defeat, disaster, death. That's our **first point**. Before you start to speak about your rights, let's consider your resume.

⁷ Paul does the same thing in Philippians 3:4-7 "...though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ."

II. Paul's Rights

'Do I not have apostolic rights?'

Now Paul moves from his apostolic resume to his entitlements or *rights* as an apostle. Look at v.4-6 "Do we not have *the right* to eat and drink? Do we not have *the right* to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have *no right* to refrain from working for a living?" We have the historical account of Paul entering into Corinth for the first time in Acts 18. We read this in v.1-4:

"After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, and *because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.* And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks."

Jonathan Edwards the janitor?

What an unbelievable account! Paul the Apostle worked making tents so he could support his preaching habit. That would be like Jonathan Edwards, one of the great preachers of the 18th century, working as a janitor at a local public school so that he could support himself as the first President of Princeton University. Now this was understandable when Paul first entered Corinth—and there was no Church to support him—but this was his practice the whole time of his ministry to them. He never took a dime from them. This was his practice in many of the Churches that he planted. He told the Thessalonian Church in **2 Thessalonians 3:8-9** "...nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, *but with toil and labor we worked night and day*, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have *that right*, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate."

‘We have every right!’

Here Paul is making it clear to Corinthians that he has every right to demand that they support him. In v.4 he asserts that he and Barnabas, his apostolic companion, have a right to be fed by them. In v.5 he asserts that if he were married, that his wife would also have a right to be supported. Paul then trots out six indisputable proofs that he has **the right** — *though he is not making use of it* — to be paid by the Church.

First proof: the law of labor

It is the universal law of labor, that is self-evident to all people groups that the worker is *entitled* to wages. Look v.7 “Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?”⁸ It is a gross injustice to withhold wages, and it turns men into slaves.

Second proof: the law of God

Look at v.8-10: “Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.’ Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop.” Paul is quoting **Deuteronomy 25:4** here.⁹ God *is* concerned for oxen. The Scripture is full of places demonstrating God’s continual care for beasts.¹⁰

⁸ Charles Hodge says here: “...if ministers are required to support themselves, the danger is that they will be forced to become men of the world. It is not, however, the evil consequences, so much as the injustice of such a course.” Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2018), pg. 156-157

⁹ This verse very much vindicates the WCF 19.4 “To them also, as a body politic, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging any other now, *further than the general equity thereof may require.*”

¹⁰ See God’s dialog with Job. Psalm 104:14 “You cause the grass to grow for the livestock.” Proverbs 12:10 “Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.”

Recall what He said to Jonah about why He didn't destroy Nineveh. **Jonah 4:11** "And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, *and also much cattle?*" God cares for oxen. Paul's argument is that God *cares so much more* for human laborers. It's a lesser to greater argument. If God commands that non-human laborers deserve wages, then certainly God intends that human laborers deserve wages.

Third proof: the law of reciprocity

Meaning, there is a universal understanding of mutual exchange. Look at v.11 "If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?" Paul unpacks this idea of reciprocity in **Romans 15:27** "...indeed *they owe it to them*. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, *they ought also to be of service to them* in material blessings."¹¹

Fourth proof: the law of practice

Meaning, this was already understood by the Corinthians. They were already paying others to ministers to minister to them. Look at the beginning of v.12 "If *others* share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?" Paul's point here is that: 'if non-apostles have this right, don't we all the more?'

Fifth proof: the law of religion

Look at v.13 "Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings?" As one commentator put it: "Pick a religion, any religion, Paul says. Go to the Jewish temple, or take a walk around downtown

¹¹ Galatians 6:6 "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches."

Corinth to the temple of Apollo or Octavia, and you'll find the same thing. Priests make their living being priests."¹² This is true of all religions.¹³

Sixth proof: the law of Christ

Paul saves his most compelling proof for last: Jesus Himself. Look at **v.14** "In the same way, the Lord [meaning Jesus] commanded that those who proclaim the gospel *should get their living by the gospel.*" When Jesus sent out the 12 disciples to preach the gospel, He told them in **Matthew 10:10** "...[bring] no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, *for the laborer deserves his food.*" Jesus commanded his disciples *not* to seek financial support from secular occupations, but to live off the gospel.¹⁴

2nd principle: Pastors have the right to compensation from their Church

So we arrive at our **second principle**: *It is an obligation on all Christian Churches that they pay their preaching pastor*—those who **1 Timothy 5:17** "labor in preaching in teaching." This is a *right* that applies to all pastors of all ages in all places.¹⁵ Two qualifiers.

1. There is no law against necessity.

Imagine a small poor church doesn't have the means to fully support their preaching pastor—every sacrifice has been made, every penny pinched—and *so for a time* he works as a tent-maker of sorts in order to support the gospel *until such time* when they can fully support him, then I don't believe this Church is violating Jesus' command. On the other hand, a Church that has the means to support their pastor but refuses to do so, or does so in such a way where they

¹² Stephen T. Um, *1 Corinthians: The WORD of the CROSS, Preaching the Word*, Series Editor R. Kent Hughes, (Wheaton, IL.,: Crossway, 2015), pg. 165

¹³ Hodge, pg. 159

¹⁴ *ibid*, pg. 160

¹⁵ 1 Timothy 5:17-18 "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."

keep the minister and his family continually impoverished, that Church is sinning. As we've seen, this right is established in the universal law of labor (v. 7), the law of God(v.8-10), the law of reciprocity (v.11), the law of practice (v., the law of all religion, and the law of Christ Himself.

2. A pastor can forgo this right in some cases

The **second** qualifier is this: the pastor can forgo this *right* in some cases. These what Paul did. Half-way through v.12 “Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right...” Paul had a superior pleasure in view. We'll see that in a minute, but consider briefly what this *meant* for Paul. Paul was turning down money. What can money help you with? So many things. Money can clothe you, feed you, shelter you. But Paul says these were some of the things he was deprived of. **2 Corinthians 11:27** says he was “...in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.” Why Paul? You had a right to money! Dear congregation, would you face hunger and cold and exposure if you had a debit card with money on that you had a right to? No of course not! But Paul did. Before we get to the *why*, consider Paul's instant credibility. He's wasn't sitting in some king's palace eating grapes telling the Corinthians to forgo some of their rights. He was down in the trenches. He faced hunger, and homelessness and yet some of them weren't even willing to give up eating certain kinds of meat. The contrast is shameful. What he is asking of the Corinthians is insignificant compared to what he has done. Dear congregation, are there are Christian rights that you are truly entitled that you are unwilling to give up? Why? Are you still the most important person in your life? That's our **second point**. Paul was entitled by the laws of this world, but God's Word, and by Christ Himself to compensation for his work as an Apostle, but he renounced it for something better.

III. Paul's Renunciation

Anything...everything...for the sake of the gospel!

Why didn't Paul make use of this right? Why did he renounce it? He tells us at the end of **v.12** "...*we have not made us of this right*, but we endure anything rather than put *an obstacle* in the way of the gospel of Christ." How far does Paul take this principle? Please turn with me to **Acts 16**. This is the account where Paul and Silas were preaching the gospel in Philippi. There was a slave girl who was possessed by demons told people's fortunes when people paid her masters. After many days, Paul finally said "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." Instantly she was delivered, and then all hell broke loose. Picking up in **v.19** "But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. *And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely.*"

Why didn't Paul assert his rights and avoid the beating?

Here's the question: why didn't Paul claim his Roman citizenship and get out of this severe beating? Do you think he forgot? If claiming your citizenship could save you 40 lashes, would you forget. I don't think so. Paul didn't forget, he told the magistrates the very next day. And they became exceeding afraid because they beat a Roman citizen without a trial. Why didn't Paul tell them? It's not as though he didn't assert this right at other times. In **Acts 22:25**, as they were stretching him out to be flogged and he asks: "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?" And he was released. Why didn't he do that here? Because he had something else in mind beloved. He took the beating because it advanced the the gospel—it provided some

advantage for the small group of believers in Philippi. Perhaps Paul didn't assert this right because he knew that some of the new believers in Philippi who weren't Roman citizens, and therefore they would not escape a beating if they preached the gospel. So Paul, their apostle—their father in the faith—was unwilling to escape a beating knowing his children wouldn't. He chose to weep with those who weep and bleed with those who bleed. Or perhaps, God gave him some prophetic unction that if he took the beating, it would mean salvation for the Philippian jailor. It was precisely because he didn't claim his Roman citizenship that he went to jail, and that night the Philippian jailor met for the first time the Lord Jesus Christ. His destiny was forever changed because Paul didn't assert his rights. In either case, it is clear that Paul didn't assert his right because it provided some advantage to the Church. Therefore we can see that Paul's principle is *not* that we should *never* assert our rights. Paul *did* assert his rights at times.¹⁶

Paul's ultimate principle

His principle is this: Paul exercised his rights or didn't exercise his rights depending on whether it advanced the gospel or not. His personal comfort wasn't the issue. The gospel was. He was willing to endure anything—even beatings—rather than put an *obstacle* in the way of the gospel. Obstacle is ἐγκοπή egkopē in the Greek. It means a *cutting*. If an enemy was in pursuit you would put an ἐγκοπή in the road, you would *cut* the trees down and block the road, or *cut* down the bridge, or *cut* a trench in the road. ἐγκοπή is *cutting off* others from following you. Don't you see, your actions can *cut others off* from a clear sight of the gospel? It's easy to see that with our sin. When we walk in sin we make Christ unattractive. But Paul is upping the stakes. He is saying that sometimes—even our non-sins, even our God-given rights—can *cut* the gospel path right out from underneath others. This is what the Corinthians were doing. They were cutting off their weaker brothers from the gospel because they didn't

¹⁶ Even with money, Paul didn't always refuse money for his pastoring. He received funds from the Philippian Church in **Philippians 4:14-18**.

want to be deprived of their freedom to eat whatever they wanted. But here we see Paul depriving himself of his very livelihood in order to remove every obstacle from the gospel. The question is why?

Why was this Paul's principle?

Why was this Paul's principle? Why was Paul willing to cast aside his resume and renounce his rights for the sake of the gospel?

The resume of the Lord Jesus

Because he considered the resume of Another: the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the blessed, eternal God. He is the Alpha & Omega, the beginning and the end—before the mountains were brought forth, or the earth was formed, from everlasting to everlasting He has been God.¹⁷ No creature is His equal. No angel can approach His throne without covering their face. At the sound of His voice the heavens and the earth bow down. At the breath of His nostrils the foundations of the world are laid bare. No one can defeat Him. On the last Day, He will consume and burn up all His enemies with the mere breath of his mouth, and all things will be brought to nothing by the appearance of His coming. He is the One called Faithful and True. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The heavens are His throne, the earth His footstool, and His Kingdom rules over all. That is the resume of the Lord Jesus Christ. What are His rights?

The rights of the Lord Jesus

The Lord Jesus Christ has a right to nonstop, unending worship. Because “He is God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father”¹⁸ he therefore has the right to receive the same worship, glory and honor as the Father Himself. “...all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not

¹⁷ Psalm 90:2

¹⁸ Nicene Creed

honor the Father who sent Him” (**John 5:23**¹⁹). “He is thy Lord...worship thou him” (**Psalms 45:11**). “...when he brings the firstborn into the world, God says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him’” (**Hebrews 1:6**) Worship is his native right. Praise is His everlasting entitlement. He always deserves to be the center of everything, to have all eyes fixed on Him, to have all tears be shed because of Him, to all joy to be felt because of Him. He is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. Worship is His supreme right.

The renunciation of the Lord Jesus

Now what did the Lord Jesus do with His resume? What did He do with His rights? He renounced them all. He emptied Himself of His glory.²⁰ God became a creature. He descended from the height of His majesty and took on the form of a servant. The King over all, became a slave. Every native right that was owed Him, He willingly gave up. He clothed Himself with our infirmities and weaknesses when He was born of a woman. He who authored the Law, put Himself under the requirements of the law. This Jesus who had the right to loyalty, was betrayed by Judas. This Jesus who had the right to all affection, was forsaken by His disciples. This Jesus who had the right of homage, was condemned by Pilate. This Jesus who deserved honor and love was subject to the shameful, and cursed death on the cross. This Jesus who had the right to perfect fellowship with His Father, was forsaken by Him. This Jesus who had all the rights of Heaven suffered all the horrors of Hell. Why beloved? Because you faced the greatest obstacle—a *cutting* in the road—an infinite chasm that you could never cross in a thousand lifetimes. Your sin. The Lord Jesus took that *cutting* in His own body²¹—He bore our sins—He became obedient to death, even death on a cross. On the third day He rose again from the dead, defeating every obstacle—sin, Satan, the curse of the law, the sting of death, the wrath of God—so that you could be in fellowship with Him forever. He

¹⁹ NKJV

²⁰ WLC Q. 46

²¹ Daniel 9:26 says “the anointed one shall be *cut off* and shall have nothing.”

renounced everything so that you could share His inexpressible, ineffable, incomprehensible joy to all eternity.²²

Will you renounce your rights?

Beloved this is *why* Paul renounced his rights, because that's what Jesus did in the gospel. Jesus removed every obstacle, though it meant He lost all His rights. For Paul, the gospel became his ultimate compass for moral reasoning. Oh pray for this dear congregation, pray the Holy Spirit would ruin you to anything else. Pray that He would make the gospel be your ultimate guide to which rights you will assert and which ones you won't. Don't you see, there is no greater pleasure than to walk in way that is worthy of Him. Examine your heart. Examine your practices. Examine your Monday through Saturday life. Examine your home life, your work life, your secret life. Are you cutting others off from the gospel—*not by your sinning*—but by your asserting your rights? Are their current obstacles in your relationships that you can remove if you simply don't assert your rights?

If you are here this morning...[unbeliever]

²² Even now, even for all eternity, Jesus in a sense has renounced certain of His rights in order to be near to us. He joined Himself to finitude—He is the God-man forever (Hebrews 7:24-25). He has joined Himself to the Church, whom He calls His fullness (Ephesians 1:23)

The question: How would have taking money from the Corinthians been an obstacle (v.12) to the gospel of Jesus Christ?!

2. Exposition of v.15b-18 (see J.B. Philipps' paraphrase)

- a. (v.15)
- b. (v.16) "Paul does not really have any choice in the matter of *whether* he will preach the gospel or not." (PNTC 416) But he does have the choice to enforce his right of support or not. He chooses not to enforce this right in order to remove every argument against the gospel, i.e., 'Paul is just doing this for the money.'
- c. (v.17) "Paul falls under the latter category, not the former" (PNTC 418)
- d. (v.18) "Paul's reward is the privilege of "offering the 'free' gospel 'free of charge,'" and in doing so "his own ministry becomes a living paradigm of the gospel itself"" (PNTC 420)

D.