

LIBERTY AND THE GOSPEL

1 CORINTHIANS 9

CORINTH



ANCIENT CORINTH



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**GOSPEL PROGRESS IS
FOR THE SAKE OF GOD'S
KINGDOM, NOT OURS**

INTRODUCTION

- Paul continues his argument from chapter 8 as he exhorts the Corinthians to surrender their personal rights and freedoms for the sake of the advancement of the Gospel.
- The main argument that Paul uses to defend this way of life here in chapter 9 is the fact that he is a servant of the church but is not compensated financially by the congregation.

INTRODUCTION

- Paul explains that he has every right and is justified to take a salary from the Corinthian congregation, but he refuses.
- He wants the Gospel to be free from any strings.
- He wants the Gospel to go forth unhindered by any pull or sway from the congregation.

INTRODUCTION

- Paul uses this situation to show that he forfeits his rights within the surrounding culture in order for a greater, more positive reception of the Gospel's message.
- He urges these Christians in Corinth to do the same.

**HARD LABOR
DESERVES REWARD**

1 CORINTHIANS 9:1-18

ENTITLEMENT

- Chapter 9 flows from Paul's arguments against Christian entitlement in chapter 8.
- The apostle wants to persuade the Corinthians to change their mindsets concerning the freedom they have in Christ.
- Paul claims that if giving up meat would help a brother to have a healthier walk with Jesus, he would become a vegetarian.

COMPENSATION

- Paul now moves from what he would hypothetically give up in order to strengthen the body of Christ to what he already has sacrificed to strengthen the body of Christ.
- Paul is deserving of financial support from the Corinthians and yet he refuses to be compensated.
- The apostle believed that taking money from the church at Corinth had the potential to harm ministry, and so he denies himself.

COMPENSATION

- Paul begins creating his case for compensation by asking four rhetorical questions in verses 1 and 2 to which the understood answer is yes.
- Paul is free. He is an apostle. He has seen Jesus. The Corinthian church is proof of his work. Paul is where he belongs. He is qualified to be over them.
- He is, after all, the church's founder. He is admitting that he has done much work; these points build a case for compensation.

COMPENSATION

- The author uses six different lines of defense as to why someone who is vocationally in the service of the Lord (such as himself) should receive compensation.
 1. Other people who work (soldiers, farmers, shepherds) receive support for their labor (v. 7).
 2. The Old Testament supports the idea of fair remuneration (vv. 8–10).

COMPENSATION

3. Beneficial service for the community should be rewarded (v. 11).
4. Other ministers are paid for their work (v. 12).
5. Old Testament priests were compensated (v. 13).
6. Jesus commanded it (v. 14).

COMPENSATION

- With such a strong case for the Corinthian church's putting Paul on the payroll, the author now moves his focus as to why he insists on remaining a volunteer.
- His first reason is that payment for his services might cause him to be a stumbling block for others (v. 12).
- Paul and Barnabas (the other half of the "we" in this verse) did not want to be lumped in with other itinerant teachers, motivated by money.

PREACH THE GOSPEL

- Paul moves on in verses 15 through 18 to present another, this one impassioned, reason as to why he does not accept a reward for preaching the Gospel.
- Paul shares that taking funds for his labor would remove his ground for boasting; that “ground for boasting” is the fact that he refuses to be compensated for his ministry (v. 15).
- Most must make a decision to follow their call to preach or not.

PREACH THE GOSPEL

- But Paul's dramatic conversion and extreme call on his life made it apparent to him that he had no choice in the matter—he must preach the Gospel (vv. 16–17).
- Therefore the apostle does not boast in preaching the Gospel because he had no say in the matter. If he refuses, he faces consequences (v. 16).
- Further, Paul felt that he could not receive compensation for a task that he did not choose on his own.

PREACH THE GOSPEL

- Paul was certainly not without reward. He had the boast that he preached the Gospel without charge (vv. 15, 18) and he had the privilege of seeing people come to Christ.
- There was such an immense joy in seeing the Gospel work in the lives of unbelievers to the point of conviction and conversion. It was fuel for Paul, the reason to continue his mission even in the face of adversity.

LIVE YOUR LIFE WITH A
GOAL IN MIND:
THE FURTHERING OF
THE GOSPEL

1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-27

GIVE UP YOUR RIGHTS

- Paul would give up any of his rights if it meant that more would come to a saving knowledge of Jesus.
- Paul knew his freedoms (v. 1) and he would willingly become a servant to all to win more for the Lord (v. 19).
- Verses 20 through 23 exemplify the principle of becoming servant to all to win them to Christ.

GIVE UP YOUR RIGHTS

- To those under the Law (Jews), Paul lived in such a way that his freedom in Christ didn't lead them astray or to a point of contention (v. 21).
- To those not under the Law (Gentiles), Paul wasn't rigid to make them confused (v. 22).
- The "weak" (v. 23) is a reference to individuals who are already believers. For these, Paul was working to help spur them toward sanctification, not salvation.

GIVE UP YOUR RIGHTS

- In these three examples, Paul isn't encouraging the Corinthians to compromise their beliefs.
- Instead, he presents them with a challenge to live a life of self-sacrifice, just as Christ did.
- Paul explains to the Corinthians that they shouldn't let their rights and freedom compromise the gospel.

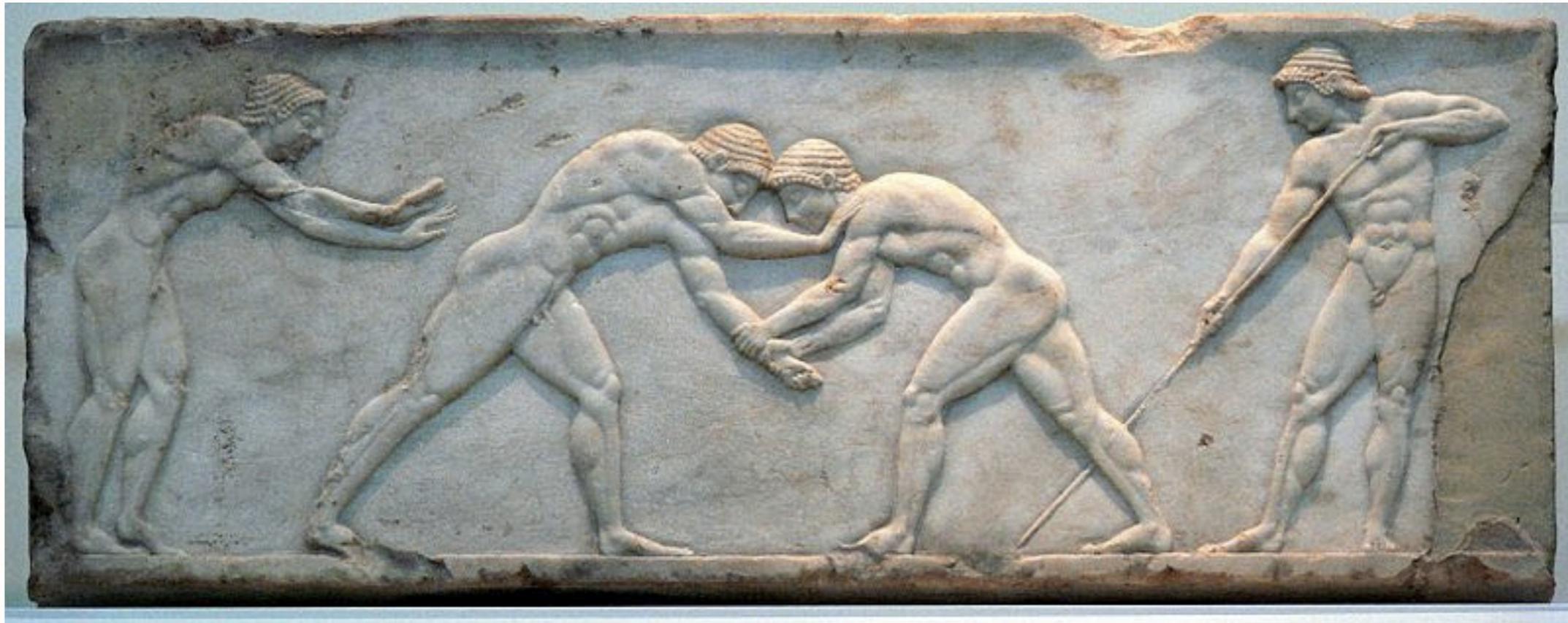
RUN THE RACE

- In his defense, Paul uses the analogy of the athlete because the Isthmian Games were held in Corinth biannually and Paul knew the Corinthians would understand the discipline needed for successful, national athletes.
- He shows them how athletes give up their rights for the sake of training. Their diets. Their work habits. They do all this for the reward of their victory and the wreath presented to them.

ISTHMIAN GAMES



ISTHMIAN GAMES



RUN THE RACE

- Paul connects this to the Gospel and says “how much more so” should we be disciplined and give up our rights for the sake of the imperishable, eternal reward of eternity with Christ.
- “Disqualified” - Paul isn't referring to the fact of losing one's salvation. He is saying we must stay disciplined in order to stay healthy, stay in the race, and keep our faith strong.

RUN THE RACE

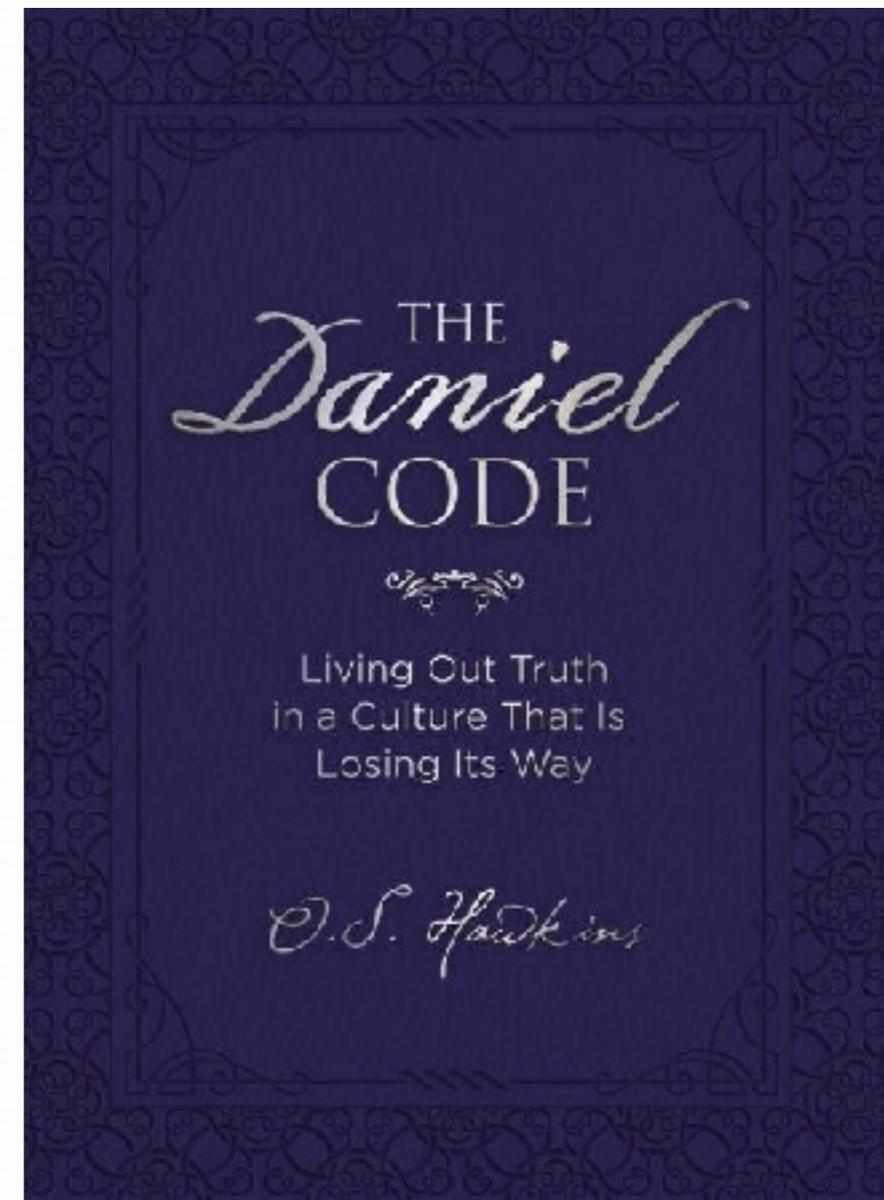
- Paul makes it clear in the beginning of his letter that he believes God will keep these fellow believers until the end. He mentions this in 1:2 and 1:8-9.
- Paul is merely saying press on, work out your faith through discipline and giving up your rights, so that one day Christ will say “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

THE PRINCIPLE OF CONCESSION

1 CORINTHIANS 9:20-23

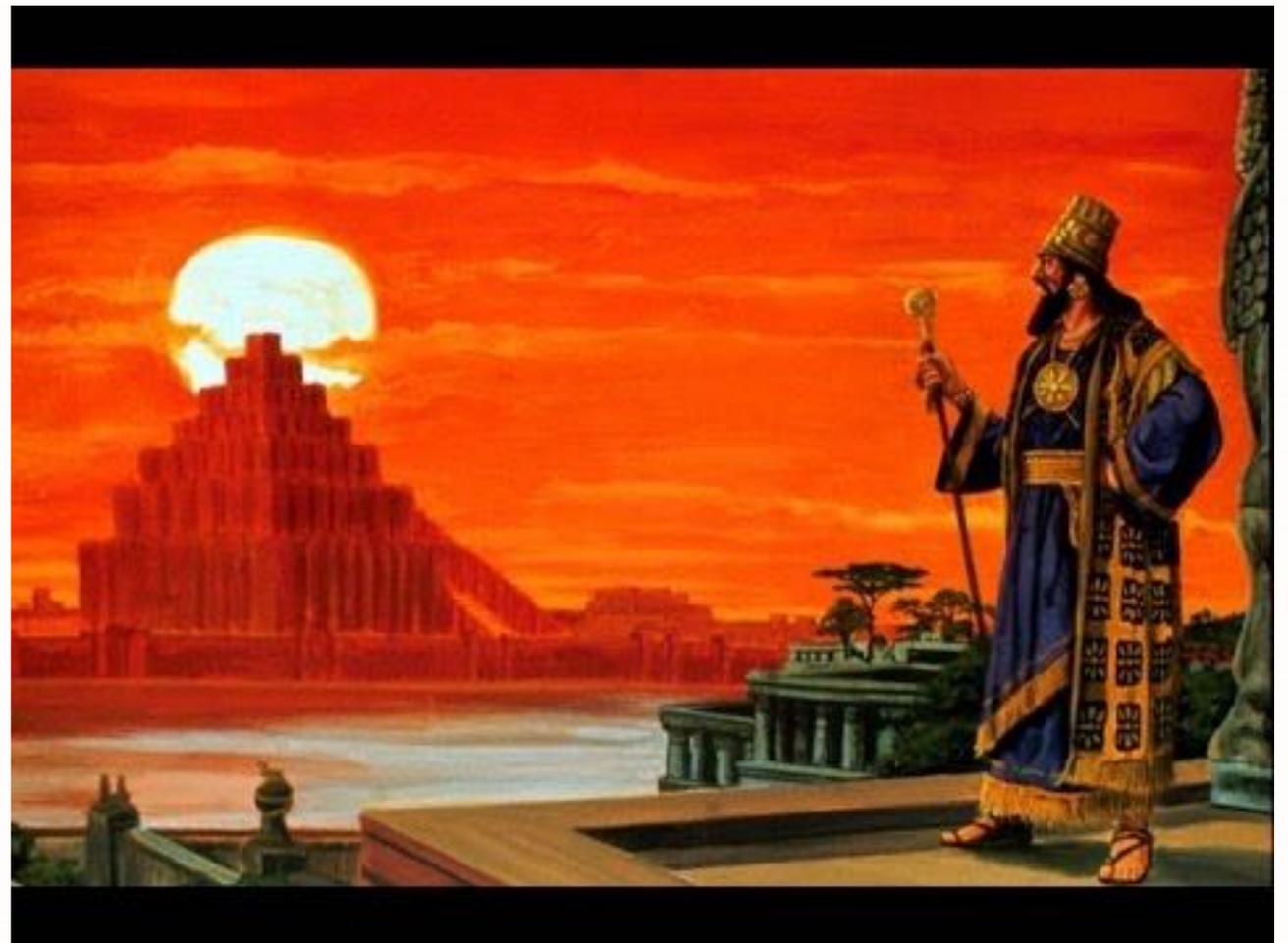
THE DANIEL CODE

- O.S. Hawkins shows how we can engage our broken culture with integrity.
- Daniel was a young man who “wrote the book” on how to survive in a pagan, permissive, and perverse culture.



THE DANIEL CODE

- Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon.
- He was a stern and powerful leader.
- Babylon was the center of his vast empire.



THE DANIEL CODE

- Daniel was a descendent of King Hezekiah who was one of the few good kings in Israel.
- While in Jerusalem, Daniel was caught up in the spiritual revival under King Josiah.
- All of the first chapter of Daniel takes place in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim (605 B.C.).
- The final destruction of Jerusalem took place later (587 B.C.).

THE DANIEL CODE

- Nebuchadnezzar had a plan - to take the best and brightest of Israel (Daniel 1:4) and change them.
- First, he wanted to change their language. His plan was to do away with the Hebrew language.
- It worked. Hebrew as a language was dormant until 1948 when the state of Israel was established.
- Today we hear the language in the streets of Israel, but back then it was eradicated by Nebuchadnezzar.

THE DANIEL CODE

- Second, he set out to change their literature.
- Nebuchadnezzar sought to fill their young minds with Babylonian philosophy, science, astrology, and religion.
- His goal was to reeducate them away from their traditional values.
- Today, we call that “values clarification” and do that in our public educational institutions.

THE DANIEL CODE

- Third, he set out to change their lifestyle.
- This started with their diet (Daniel 1:5). He provided rich portions for them daily.
- He wasn't just trying to feed them. He was trying to change their lifestyle from a Jewish lifestyle and a strict kosher diet to one that was compatible with the pagan Babylonian culture.

THE DANIEL CODE

- Nebuchadnezzar wanted to change their language, literature, and lifestyle so that he ultimately he could change their loyalties.
- That is why he changed their names (Daniel 1:7).
- Daniel means: “God is my judge.” Hananiah means: “beloved of God.” Mishael means: “who is like God.” Azariah means: “the Lord is my help.”

THE DANIEL CODE

- How did Daniel respond?
- He went along with the Babylonian teaching because he already knew what he believed.
- He went along with the name change because he knew they might change his name, but they could never change his heart.
- Daniel drew the line at eating the king's meat because that is where the Bible drew the line.

WHEN TO DRAW THE LINE

- Augustine - “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.”
- Essentials - orthodox doctrine (monotheism, Trinity, deity of Christ, resurrection, salvation by grace).
- Non-essentials - (when to celebrate communion, which Bible translation to use, music).
- Charity - listen carefully, respond graciously, speak the truth in love.

APPLICATION

- 1 Corinthians 9:22 - “I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.”
- Make sure that certain cultural or social distinctions are not keeping you from being an effective witness.
- It doesn't mean we should be like the culture. Jesus called for us to be “in the world, but not of the world” (John 17:16).

APPLICATION

- The principle of concession applied to:
 - Believers - baptism, communion, worship music, church structure, Bible translations, etc.
 - Nonbelievers - politics, human sexuality, origins debate, etc.
- “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.”

