

24 August

 Break the ice

Write down what God is saying to you in today's message:

TOPIC: 1 Corinthians – week 15



Let's hear your story

1. Tell of a time when you had to explain to a friend or family member what the Word of God says about financial support for pastors?
2. What does Paul tell the church in v.2? **(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.)**
3. What is Paul's argument in v.7? **(Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit?)**
4. What does v.9 tell us? **(For it is written in the Law of Moses, "you shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.")**



Let's go deeper

5. How does Paul answer in v.10? **(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.)**
6. What is the principle in v.11? **(If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?)**
7. What is the principle in v.13? **(Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple.)**
8. What does v.14 tell us? **(The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.)**



Let's apply this

9. 1 Corinthians 9:7 & 9; 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? **v.9;** For it is written in the Law of Moses, "you shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain."

- What has God called you to do for Him?
- Which church family did God call you to serve with?
- How can you use your time, talents, treasures to serve the church?
- Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and power to fulfil God's plan and purpose for your life.

SUMMARY:

Week 15 – Paul defends himself to receive financial support **Read:** 1 Cor. 9: 1 – 14

Background: The Greeks despised manual labour. They had slaves to do manual labour so that the citizens could enjoy sports, philosophy, and comfort. The Jews celebrated honest labour. Even the learned rabbis each practiced a trade, and they taught the people, "he who does not teach his son to work, teaches him to be a thief." Paul was trained as a tentmaker, a worker in leather.

vv.1 – 6; Paul's apostleship: The word apostle means "sent one" or one sent under commission. The New Testament apostles laid the foundation of the early church (Ephesians 2:20). One of the qualifications for being an apostle was a personal experience of seeing the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:21 – 22). Paul saw the Lord when he was traveling to Damascus to arrest Christians in Acts 9:1 – 9. The apostles were to be witnesses of Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39 – 43).

As an apostle, Paul a representative of Christ deserved to be welcomed and cared for. If Paul had a wife, she too would have had the right to be supported by the church. Peter was a married man (Mark 1:30), and his wife travelled with him.

v.7; Human experience: Everyday experience teaches us that a workman deserves some reward for his labours. If a man becomes a soldier, the government pays his wages and provides supplies for him. The man who plants a vineyard gets to eat the fruit, just as the shepherd has the right to use the milk from the animals. Paul was comparing the church to an army, a vineyard, and a flock. Paul was in the front line of the battle. The Christian worker has the right to expect benefits for his labours.

vv.8 – 12; Old Testament law: Paul saw a spiritual principle in this commandment: The labourer has the right to share in the harvest. The ox had plowed the soil for sowing, and now he was treading out the grain that had been harvested. Paul had plowed the soil in Corinth. He had seen a harvest from the seed he had planted and can now enjoy the fruits of that harvest. **v.11;** highlights a principle of Christian life: If we receive spiritual blessings, we should in turn share material blessings. Paul did accept financial support from churches. The Philippian believers sent him gifts when he went to Thessalonica (Philippians 4:15 – 16).

vv.13; Old Testament practice: The priests and Levites lived of the sacrifices and offerings that were brought to the temple. If the Old Testament ministers under the law were supported by the people to whom they ministered, should not God's servants who minister under grace also be supported?

v.14; The teaching of Jesus: Paul was referring to our Lord's words recorded in Luke 10:7 – 8 and Matthew 10:10. The labourer is worthy of his wages and is a principle that the church should not neglect.