

So That I May Win More Outline

1st Corinthians 9

- I. Some “grounding”.
 - A. Grounding is putting your life on a secure footing... “putting your roots firmly in the ground”.
 - B. The question *What am I here for?* How you answer that reveals your grounding.
 - II. The fastest growing religion in the world today—“Self-Worship”.
 - A. The six commandments of the “Self-Love” religion:
 - 1. “The answers are within”
 - 2. “Follow your heart”
 - 3. “Live YOUR truth”
 - 4. “YOLO” = You only live once.
 - 5. “Never change”
 - 6. “Authenticity”
 - B. The problem?
 - 1. We are NOT GOD!
 - a. We are designed to be in awe of something larger than ourselves.
- “The more self-absorbed we are, the less awe we experience; the less awe we experience, the less fully and freely ourselves we become....We were made to revere someone infinitely more interesting and awesome than ourselves.”*** -- Thaddeus Williams
- III. “Why am I here?”
 - A. Ultimately to glorify God—Revelation 4:8-11
 - B. To be reconciled to God—Acts 17:30
 - C. I am here to serve and obey God—Ecclesiastes 12:13
 - D. I am here to prepare for eternity—Hebrews 9:27
 - IV. The apostle Paul’s example—1st Corinthians 8-10

- A. Chapter 9 is a continuation of chapter 8’s argument regarding Christian liberty and causing a brother to stumble—“*Is it ok to eat meat offered to idols?*”
 - B. Paul increases the intensity of “Rights” with his own example of being an apostle.
 - C. The “office” of apostle:
 - 1. A witness of the resurrected Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Explicitly chosen by the Holy Spirit (Paul chosen by Jesus Christ).
 - 3. Laid the “foundation” of the church.
 - D. Paul, an apostle had RIGHTS!
 - 1. To eat and drink.
 - 2. To take along a wife while “ministering”.
 - 3. TO GET PAID FOR MINISTERIAL WORK!
 - a. Does a soldier have to pay himself while soldiering?
 - b. Does a vine grower not get to eat his own grapes?
 - c. Does a shepherd get to drink milk from his sheep?
 - 4. What about God’s law? **You shall muzzle an ox while it is threshing?**
 - E. “*But I don’t want a paycheck!*”
 - 1. I preach because I MUST preach! **Woe to me if I don’t preach!**
 - a. I desire to preach
 - b. I have a “stewardship entrusted to me”..
- V. What this is not.
- A. This is not Paul telling churches to stop paying their pastors!
 - B. It is not revealing some “martyr syndrome” in the apostle Paul.
- VI. What this is.
- A. Before looking at his own needs, Paul evaluated the needs of others.
 - 1. After evaluating the situation in Corinth, Paul realized being compensated by the church would have been detrimental to his ministry—“*you’re doing this for the money!*”

- a. Paul did accept compensation from other, more spiritually mature churches—Philippi and some of the churches in Macedonia.
- B. Paul's true motivation—His "purpose in life".
 - 1. SO THAT I MIGHT WIN MORE (V.19).

So That I May Win More Pastoral

1st Corinthians 9

There is nothing more counter to the Biblical, Christian world view than the World's view... what we've been seeing as we've been going through 1st Corinthians is nothing short of a major example of this seismic clash between world views...

What the apostle Paul has been showing us is so very foreign ...so outside of our main stream cultural views in our society today...I had to press the pause button early this week to just stop and consider how difficult it must be for many of you...

Especially if you are somewhat new to Christianity...others of you who accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior sometime past and since you've attended churches... but never really got into God's Word...and now... sitting out there Sunday after Sunday... hearing about living a life that is so very contrary to everything you see and being demonstrated around you every day of the week.

So I want to begin with some grounding...grounding is the process of planting yourself firmly in the ground... putting your life on a secure footing so that you can then build your life on it... your life will be secure regardless of what comes at you.... The Christian will falter without proper grounding.

God through His word is always beckoning us to ground ourselves... one way He does it is by relentless in putting in front of us the question "*What am I here for?*" ... God through His Word doesn't do it necessarily in those exact words...the Bible is far more nuanced than that...it may not even ask the question but rather present to us situations or sets of circumstances which make the reader beg the question... *well then... what am I here on this earth for?*

The entire book of Ecclesiastes does this to us... the reason this question keeps resurfacing is because the answer seems to never be fully embraced... most spiritually mature Christians can give an answer to the question... but living it out in life is another thing.... living out the answer goes against our nature... our culture... even our desires if we are to be completely honest.

The world around us is a melting pot of answers to that question and they are in our faces every day...everywhere we look and everywhere we turn... I read a few days ago that the fastest growing religion in the world today is... not Islam, not Asian mysticism, and not Christianity... but "**Self-Worship**".

The religion of self-worship answers the question "why am I here" with "to please myself"...

In their recent book *Good Faith: Being a Christian When Society Thinks You're Irrelevant and Extreme*, David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons document that 84 percent of Americans believe that "**enjoying yourself is the highest goal of life.**"

Further, 86 percent believe that to enjoy yourself you must “*pursue the things you desire most.*”...And 91 percent affirm this statement: “*To find yourself, look within yourself.*”...in other words... all grounding is on yourself... [that makes me feel insecure!]

Thaddius Williams wrote a good article on all this huge fastest growing religion... for the Gospel Coalition... Six Commandments of the religion of Self-Love: *These are the sacred commandments of this ancient and still-trending world religion:*

- Your mind is the source and standard of truth, so no matter what, trust yourself. #theanswersarewithin 8:1 ...*knowledge puffs up, but love builds up*
- Your emotions are authoritative, so never question (or let anyone else question) your feelings. #followyourheart *follow your conscience (if you follow your heart you'll end up with another cat....or dog)*
- You are sovereign, so flex your omnipotence and bend the universe around your dreams and desires. #liveyourtruth (6) *There is one God from whom are all things and we exist for Him.....*
- You are supreme, so always act according to your chief end, to glorify and enjoy yourself forever. #yolo {You only live once!}
- You are the summum bonum—the standard of goodness—so don't let anyone oppress you with the antiquated notion of being a sinner who needs grace. #neverchange.
- You are the Creator, so use that limitless creative power to craft your identity and purpose. #authenticity.

Those are the six commandments of today's world view... This religion lies beneath many of the most hot-button social and political issues of our day.... The problem with it is... it is all lies. listen to what Thaddeus concludes... he says it well...

Here's the problem with this cult of self-worship—besides the obvious problem of being in rebellion against God:...listen carefully... When we try to be our own sources of truth, we slowly drive ourselves crazy. When we try to be our own sources of satisfaction, we become miserable wrecks. When we become our own standard of goodness and justice, we become obnoxiously self-righteous. When we seek self-glorification, we become more inglorious.

*Why? It's simple. We are not God. We were never meant to trust in or be defined by, satisfied in, and captivated by ourselves. We were made to revere someone infinitely more interesting and awesome than ourselves. **We become most truly and freely ourselves in a state of self-forgetful reverence.** As Albert Einstein put it, “A person first starts to live when he can live outside himself.”*

The more self-absorbed we are, the less awe we experience; the less awe we experience, the less fully and freely ourselves we become....We were made to revere someone infinitely more interesting and awesome than ourselves.

I love it when Science discovers things the Bible has proclaimed for thousands of years...I've read several science related articles this week that support the importance of being in awe with something greater than ourselves...important to our human condition...

Scientist Paul Piff from the University of Irvine through much experimentation concluded that people subjected to "*elicitors of awe*"....what's that?... things much larger than themselves... things outside of themselves that are so amazing... so AWESOME... things that make you gasp... makes you in "awe"...

Things like climbing Mt. Everest... in fact... his conclusion was we humans were made... designed to be awed by things much larger than ourselves... that's why... More than 35,000 people a year attempt to climb Mt Everest..., 4.5 million to the Grand Canyon... 3.5 million to Yosemite... and 30 million to Niagara Falls.... Deep down, we crave awe. We were made for it. WHEN WE INDULGE IN AWESOME THINGS....we become a term that

Scientist Piff coined...*a "small self"*... He reported, "*we found that people [people who can be in awe in things other than themselves] felt smaller, less self-important, and behaved in a more pro-social fashion.*" *Awestruck people were more generous, more dialed into the needs of others, and more caring toward the natural world.*

When we see that the world is bigger than us...more awesome than us... we tend to care about things outside of ourselves.

Here's another one... Arizona State behavioral scientist Michelle Lani Shiota has found that awe not only increases generous decision-making... it also drastically improves our cognition. Awe makes us less susceptible to bad arguments and more responsive to good ones.There's a mountain of research from psychologists connecting experiences of awesomeness with a substantial decline in depression.

If we're going to have a lasting, countercultural effect on a society that has fallen for the cult of self-worship... we must recenter our lives on the ultimate awesome One...we are not here on this earth to become the center of the universe!...

I don't know who Ethan the Ezrahite was... but it's apparent he was having a moment of awesomeness!.... listen to a few verses of Psalm 89:

**5 The heavens praise your wonders, Lord,
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.**

**6 For who in the skies above can compare with the Lord?
Who is like the Lord among the heavenly beings?**

**7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared;
he is more awesome than all who surround him.**

8 Who is like you, Lord God Almighty?

You, Lord, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you.

Why am I here?... the reason is far bigger than me... let me give you four answers to that question... Why am I here?... this is directed to the believer in Jesus Christ... it would make no sense to anyone else.... And these are prerequisites to live out the Christian life that the apostle Paul is calling us to live out.

1. Why am I here?...Ultimately to glorify God... God created us for His glory... so our purpose is to glorify Him...In Revelation 4:8-11... John peers into heaven and writes what he sees...

8 And the four living creatures (cherubim/angels), each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.”

9 And when the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and they will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they [c]existed, and were created.”

We are here to glorify our AWESOME God now as we will throughout eternity.

2. Why am I here?...To be reconciled to God... all mankind is at enmity with God and has been since Adam’s sin... All of us have sinned and still sins falling short of the glory of God... the glory that we are created to give Him is squelched because of our sin...

Luke writes in Acts 17:30...**God is now proclaiming to mankind that all people everywhere are to repent,**

Jesus died in our place... taking the punishment for our sins upon Himself...Romans 5:6-8

6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous person; though perhaps for the good person someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ... He conquered sin and death and made it possible for us to have a relationship with God, thus restoring the relationship that was fractured at the fall of mankind...SO...By repentance and faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection, we are set free from

sin. The Bible describes God as “**not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance**” (2 Peter 3:9).

Why am I here?... To take my eyes off of me... to be able to see the AWSOMENESS of Almighty God...to glorify Him in my life... what I do.. what I think... How I act... how I love... I am here on this earth, given a chance to be made right with God for my sins.... I am to be reconciled to Him....through His Son, My Savior... Jesus Christ...in full repentance for my sin.

3. Why am I here?... I am here to serve HIM!...to obey Him... It's Old Testament so it's a truth that's been around for a long time...Ecclesiastes 12:13... **The conclusion, when everything has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.**

I like the NIV on this... **Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind.**

4. Why am I here?... I am here to prepare for eternity...If you don't understand this point... you may get the goal of life wrong... the goal of life for the Christian is NOT to pursue pleasure... or wealth... of fame...

Hebrews 9:27 is a sobering verse... **Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment...**you're going to die ONE TIME... in other words... you only live ONCE... when you die... **YOU WILL BE JUDGED FOR HOW YOU LIVED THAT ONE LIFE!**

Jesus gave us something to think about when He asked...**What good is it for someone to gain the whole world yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?** (Mark 8:36-37)

It's your soul that lives on forever... to gain the whole world but reject Christ is to lose one's soul to hell...BUT... **to give up everything this world offers for the sake of following Him is to gain eternal riches!**

Did you catch how many of those answers were not about ME?... each of those are essential in understanding what the apostle Paul is revealing to us in 1st Corinthians... our purpose in life... the answer to “*Why am I here?*” transcends the self and, and focuses outside of the self... 1. To our awesome God... His awesome Son... and now that we have secured our eternity with the Trinity for eternity...**2. our focus is to be on others. We're designed for this!**

So when Paul tells the church at Corinth that they have liberty... they have great freedom in Christ...you are no longer bound by the Law as to what you can eat and what you cannot eat... because of Jesus Christ, HE is our Sabbath rest so we are no longer under the law regarding days and feasts.... We are free.....

BUT... if that freedom... that liberty might cause a brother to stumble in his walk with the Lord... if that freedom “to do” causes another to be spiritually “ruined” as he said in chapter 8... we should not indulge in that freedom.... Love for others is superior to love for ourselves....

Chapters 8, 9 and 10 are all about this... The apostle Paul does more than tell us how to live... he’s not a “*do as I say*” guy... He is a “*do as I do*” guy... Not only does he tell us... but he shows us our liberty in Christ and how we have a responsibility to others in exercising that liberty...

last week the issue was directed to a specific situation in the Corinthian church in the 1st century.... *Are we free to eat meat offered to idols?*

To bring the situation up to date... “in that the Bible does not prohibit the drinking of alcohol... only getting drunk on alcohol... am I free to drink alcohol?... you’re free... BUT if your drinking alcohol makes a brother stumble... [we differentiated between just offending someone and making them stumble spiritually]... you need to search your soul and conscience and ask who and what is more important..... my freedom to drink? Or my brother’s spiritual condition

We should consider Paul’s example concerning meat offered to idols...(13) **If food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again—ever so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.**

IF SOMETHING I DO.... Causes a brother to stumble... derails his spiritual life... affects his walk with the Lord... prevents him coming to the Lord... I WILL NEVER DO THAT SOMETHING AGAIN!

Do you see underneath that statement?... Paul is saying “*it isn’t all about me*”... there is something bigger and more important than ME... clash of world views!...well... that thought is continued in his argument in chapter nine...and will continue through chapter 10... a few words about the first 19 or so verses will set us up for a very important message next week which will finish chapter nine and into chapter ten.

Please open your Bibles to chapter 9

If you understand chapter nine to be a continuation of the liberty and freedom to eat meat argument... you will not get hung up on me preaching on a passage that appears to be about paying me a nice paycheck.

Taken out of context... chapter nine has been used to guilt congregations into paying their pastors nice salaries...that is definitely NOT the message this morning... Chapter nine is a more extreme example of Christian liberty than eating meat sacrificed to idols in chapter 8.

Paul connects the two chapters by asking a set of rhetorical questions...”yes” is the assumed answer for all of them... in verse 1...**Am I not free?... am I not at liberty in Christ?...** he

assumes the answer to be “*of course!*”.... *Of course you are free in Christ*....YES Paul...you are free.

Paul is free... but his freedom is affected by how he answers that question “*Why am I here?*”... “*IF I am here on this earth to be comfortable, to enjoy all my freedoms... to eat drink and be merry... then listen up because I’m going to tell you my “rights” as an apostle*... which he will do for the next 14 verses.

BUT... that is NOT why Paul is here... which we will see after we look at all his liberties...his “rights” being an apostle...(1) **Am I not free? Am I not an apostle?**...He begins by giving us his credentials... Paul is “free” and he is an apostle... with being an apostle... he has some “rights” and some “liberties”...

Paul is “free” as all Christians are “free”... Romans 10:4 says **For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes**...The Old Covenant Law has “passed away” with the coming of Jesus Christ...Paul... and all Christians are free.

Am I not an apostle?... Paul is an apostle ONLY because Jesus Himself appeared to him on the road to Damascus...read about it in Acts 9... Paul a persecutor of Christians was on his way to persecute Christians when he has a supernatural meeting with the resurrected Jesus Christ.

The word apostle means “***one who is sent out.***” In the New Testament, there are two primary usages of the word apostle. The first is in specifically referring to the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ... We could say “the office of apostle”.... The second is in ***generically*** referring to other individuals who are sent out to be messengers/ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

But when we speak of “an apostle of Jesus Christ”...the office of apostle... specifically...it is a very limited, well defined group of men...they only existed in the very 1st century... there were specific qualifications to be an apostle:

(1) to have been a witness of the resurrected Christ (1 Corinthians 9:1), (2) to have been explicitly chosen by the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:15)...Paul was chosen by Jesus Himself and (3) to have the ability to perform signs and wonders (Acts 2:43; 2 Corinthians 12:12). The responsibility of the twelve apostles (by the way there eventually were more than 12... Paul was number 13...) ***laying the foundation of the church***, would also argue for their uniqueness. Two thousand years later, we are not still working on the foundation.

The reason we reject the idea of modern day “apostles” is mainly because a true apostle was one who witnessed the resurrected Christ... For Paul...it was the resurrected Christ who called him to the office of apostle...

(1) **Are you not my work in the Lord?... (read verse 2)** = “did I not lay the foundation for the church at Corinth?”... So Paul supports his claim that he is an apostle... so that he can lay claim

on the liberty and rights he is about to describe...*so in light of my office of apostle... let me share with you my RIGHTS.*

1. Read verse 4

We looked at that right last week in chapter 8... *I an apostle has the RIGHT to eat and drink*

2. Read verse 5

Hey... when I'm going around the countryside "apostleing...don't I have the RIGHT to take along a believing wife?...all the apostles seem to have that right...he even names, names... the brothers of Jesus and who?... Peter!

Don't go telling any of your Roman Catholic friends that their first pope was married!... *Don't I have the RIGHT to take along my wife?... that I don't have?..."Yes of course Paul"...*

3. Read verse 6

Now we're getting to the real issue... *the other apostles don't have to work in jobs outside of the church... they are taken care of by the church.... Don't I (and Barnabas) have a RIGHT to be like them?...apparently Paul and Barnabas were the only other apostles who continued to support themselves by working outside of the church.... Paul a tentmaker.*

This is where Paul is wanting to take us all... to put it in another rhetorical question.... ***Don't I (and Barnabas) have a RIGHT to be financially supported by the church?... don't I have a RIGHT to collect a paycheck from you—church?***

To help us out as we work that question through... Paul tosses out at us some questions:

Does a soldier serve as a soldier paying for all his expenses?(7)... Does the vine grower work all day in his vineyard and not get to eat any of his own grapes? ...Does the guy who spends all day shepherding his sheep in the fields not allowed to drink a little bit of his own sheep's milk?

If you are still wondering about the answer to those questions... let me throw some law at you... so Paul digs out the Old Testament and writes down an example from Deuteronomy 25....don't just listen to me... an apostle... listen to what God has to say:

Read verses 9-10

You shall muzzle an ox while it is threshing?...

The picture is this...to separate the grain from the chaff and to grind the wheat into flour... they would tie an ox to a pole on a circular floor.... Threshing floor.... the ox would go in circles pressing out the grain from the chaff.... the chaff would blow away by the wind... and what would be left on the floor was the grain... the ox... while laboring long hours... would get hungry... if not muzzled... nothing covering his mouth... he could eat a little of the grain when

hungry... of course if muzzled... he would not get to eat... and then not have the energy to do his job well...

*Shouldn't the ox be rewarded with eating the grain so he can do his job well?...muzzle the ox and he will eventually die!...**is God concerned about the ox?**... YES!.... are you church concerned about your apostle?*

As the plowman and the thresher (ox) eat what their fields produce for others...they have an expectation that they have the right to do this...the same thing should be true for those who labor for the gospel....

Read verse 11

Paul hammers away his defense for his RIGHTS!.... if other apostles have this right to reap the benefit of financial support for their ministry...this is God's provision!.. DON'T I HAVE THE SAME.... RIGHT?

He Pulls out the big guns in his argument...God's Law.... (**READ 13**) even in the Old Testament temple... THEY TOOK CARE OF THEIR PRIESTS!... they got to eat a portion of the delicious meats sacrificed to God...

He spent 14 verses arguing for his RIGHT to get paid for his ministry.... 14 verses arguing for a paycheck...IT'S HIS right...GOD'S PROVISION.... And then.... Says... BUT I DON'T WANT ONE... I DON'T WANT TO USE MY RIGHT FOR COMPENSATION.

Read verses 12 & 15

1st Corinthians is NOT a fund raising letter asking for support... in fact... he is so very adamant about NOT TAKING A DIME FOR HIS MINISTRY that he says he'd rather die than do so!... I think Paul's emotions have peaked here...

Read verse 16

Paul COULD BOAST about his not taking any pay for his preaching... He could become boastful BECAUSE of his preaching...*My preaching is so good, so important you need to pay me big bucks!.. or... look at me... declining money for my preaching... I'm so wonderful!*

NONE OF THAT!... ***woe to me if I don't preach!...WOE TO ME IF I DON'T PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL!**... this is the work that Jesus Himself specifically told me to do when He grabbed me on that road to Damascus... My preaching the gospel... why I preach the gospel... how I preach the gospel has NOTHING to do with money!*

My preaching the gospel is not a choice... it's a command by God Himself!...

Read verse 17

I have a stewardship entrusted to me.... stewardship = *the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care....* In Acts 9 Jesus described Paul... immediately after his conversion to be **a chosen instrument of mine...to bear MY name before the Gentiles and kings and sons of Israel....** [Everybody! But specifically the gentiles.]

Paul's motivation was not dollar signs!... Jesus Himself entrusted the preaching of the gospel to Him!

WHAT ALL THIS IS NOT:

1. This is not Paul telling churches to stop paying their pastors!... this is not an across the board argument for bi-vocational ministry.... If you think so you've missed his point.
2. It is not revealing some "martyr syndrome" in the apostle Paul.... "Woe is me doing all this preaching for free... *"no...no...really... I don't want your money... I'll die like a muzzled ox.*

WHAT THIS IS:

1. Paul shows one of the greatest sacrifices for the good of others...this is more than giving up the freedom to eat meat offered to idols!... this is far greater than abstaining from having a glass of wine with a brother who might stumble from your drinking of alcohol.... This is giving up his entire lifestyle!.... his income!...why?.... for the good of others....*so that my brother won't stumble.*

2. Before Paul looked at his own needs... his own comfort, pleasure, desires... he evaluated the true needs of others... He saw that in his immediate situation... this Corinthian church... he could be far more affective in sharing the gospel if he denied his RIGHT to be compensated.

If the Corinthian church had been made up of converted Jews?.... He would have probably doubled his salary!... Money....compensation for ministry would be second nature to the Jew... they've been taking care of their priests for a thousand years...

But this is a gentile church... a church formed out of the world... the marketplace... *he's doing this for the money!*...I mean really... Paul pulls these heathens out of the marketplace and puts them in church and preaches the gospel to them... then says.... *I need some money!*...and he passes the offering plate.... A couple of times!

- Our offering plates *churches always talk about money.....*
- My preaching on money and giving... NEVER!... unless....if the church is financially hurting we may bring that to the *members* attention... but you won't hear me preach on it!
- We want NO ONE to accuse this church of being out for money

We *know* there were times.... I'm sure after much thought and consideration... that Paul DID take advantage of his RIGHT to be compensated... we know that the church at Philippi gave Paul a support check and he took it... the Philippian church was composed of mature believers...

He accepted support for some of the churches of Macedonia... WHY?... only because it furthered his ministry.... What was Paul's motivation in all this?... what could we say was Paul's purpose in life?

To retire in a beach front condo on the Mediterranean?...

Read verse 18

Now get this... here it is...

Read verse 19

SO THAT I MAY WIN MORE....