

When I became a Christ-follower, I understood that the cross of Christ was now empty, that my Savior had been raised from the dead and that the work of salvation was complete.

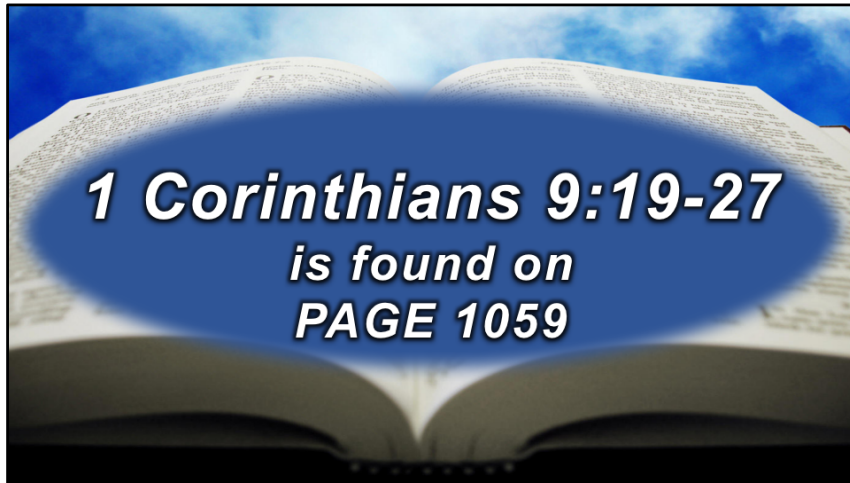
-- But I still left the silver crucifix hanging in my bedroom. It was a reminder to me of what Jesus went through out of love for me.

-- Even today I picture myself coming to the foot of the cross and talking with my Lord about decisions and choices I need to make.

TR: One of the reasons I use my imagination that way is, because I can't imagine saying to Jesus that He can't expect me to actually do "THAT" for Him . . .



- . . . while I look up at THAT which He was doing for me.**
- As we think about our lives and our personal strategic plan, we have to imagine standing next to the Son of God Who willingly came to earth as a human, Who lived and then died among us for our salvation.**
- As we consider all that we will, during our lifetimes, labor for**
- . . .**
- . . . on this Labor Day weekend we need our Savior to help us understand our overall mission as His follower should be.**
- TR: Our text today is . . .**



READ SLIDE

TR: You can look this up in your Bible or today you can . . .

"ALL FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL"
The Ultimate Strategic Plan for Christian
 1 Corinthians 9:20-27 ESV Below—Sermon Notes on Back Inside Cover

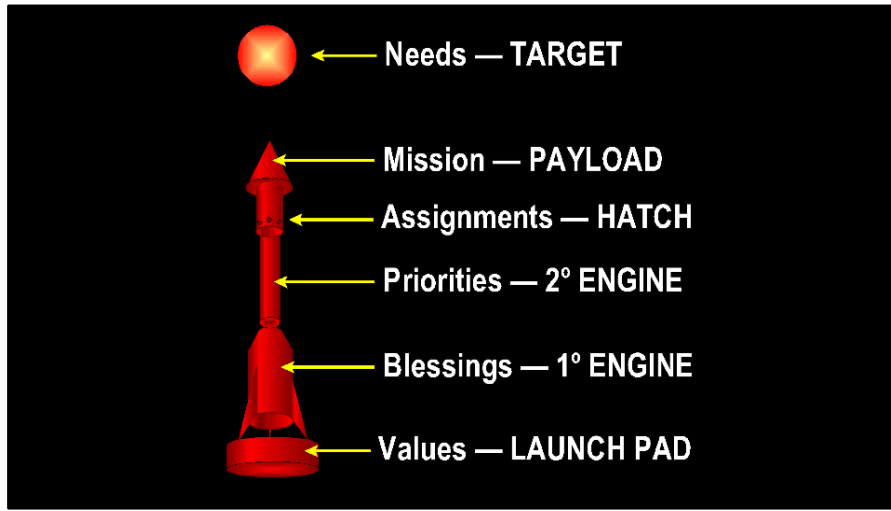
"For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.
 "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews, (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law.
 "To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law.
 "To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak.
 I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.
 "I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.
 "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.
 "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.
 "So I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air, "but I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

1) THE ULTIMATE STRATEGIC RESULT ← PRIORITY:
 • RESULT: share _____ them _____ the blessings of the gospel (20)
 • ← PRIORITY: Do it _____ for the sake of the gospel (23a)

2) CLARIFYING "ALL"
 • in order to "_____ of them" ← we make ourselves servants to ALL (19b-c)
 • in order, "by ALL means," to "_____ we become ALL things to ALL people (22c-d) ← we become who they need us to be (20-23b)
 • That is, without violating who we really are _____ we are free from all (19a), not under the law (20c), not outside the law but under the law of Christ (21a)
 • They may need us to be as a Jew (20a), as one under the law (20c), as one outside the law (21a), as one who is weak (22a).

3) HOW TO BE "_____ " FOR "ALL"
 • Run to _____ the imperishable blessings of the gospel (24-25)
 • _____ ourselves, with self-control in ALL things, so we can run without disqualification (25b, 26-27)

. . . open up your worship flier and see the text connected to the sermon notes, the front and back inside covers.
 TR: Some 15 years ago I tried to make strategic planning accessible to non-planners by designing what I called . . .



. . . the Planning Rocket.

-- Over the years things have changed a bit as I've learned how hard it is to help most folks "gain and sustain focus."

TR: As I've taught the tools related to this system, and complain about having to be rocket scientists . . . I've also learned that you don't have to be educated to be smart.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

RESULT ← PRIORITY

6

After trying to figure out how to help folks write priority statements in the most effective way possible, I ended up using this simple graphic.

-- We write what **RESULT** we are looking for.

-- And then we write what goal we will go after or what problem we will solve to get to that **RESULT**. That is, what will be our **PRIORITY** action that we will undertake to hopefully get us to our result.

-- The ah-ha lesson from a Guyanese pastor who has not had all the educational opportunities I've had was . . . "Isn't all of the Planning Rocket just these two things?"

-- In other words, our mission statement is really what big, overarching action we are going to take to get us to the big, overarching result we are seeking.

TR: In our text today, I believe we have a clear statement of just

that for the apostle Paul . . . and hopefully it can be a model for us as Christ-followers.

I do it all for the sake of the gospel,
that I may share with them in its
blessings.

ESV

1 Corinthians 9:23 . . . READ SLIDE

-- What is the ultimate result Paul is looking for . . . (repeat yellow words)

TR: So what is the result?

1) THE ULTIMATE STRATEGIC RESULT ← PRIORITY

- **RESULT:** Share with them in the blessings of the gospel (23b)

READ SLIDE

-- Note what it does not say: **NOT** just share with them the blessings of the gospel.

-- **BUT**, share with them (those who believe) **IN THE BLESSINGS.**

TR: I think the apostle has a picture in his mind comparable to Revelation 4-5's imagery . . .



. . . when, with the angels and creatures we will be around the throne of the Lamb Who was Slain.

TR: And joining us, those with whom we share with in the blessings of God's good news story will be . . .



**. . . people of every nation, and tribe, and tongue.
TR: With the RESULT in mind of sharing with them in the
gospel's blessings . . .**

**I do it all for the sake of the gospel,
that I may share with them in its
blessings.**

ESV

. . . Paul tells us his overarching priority in life . . . “to do it all for the sake of the gospel.”

TR: Everyone of us, as Christ-followers who kneel at the foot of the cross must include in our personal strategic plan

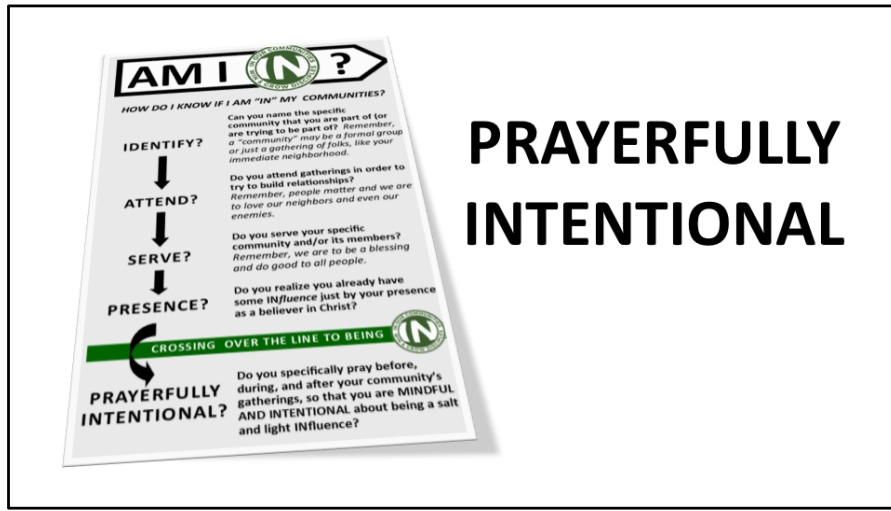
1) THE ULTIMATE STRATEGIC RESULT ← PRIORITY

- **RESULT:** Share with them in the blessings of the gospel (23b)
- ← **PRIORITY:** Do it ALL for the sake of the gospel (23a)

. . . that our priority is to . . . READ SLIDE

-- Not just, "I do this on Sundays, or on mission trips, or during small group meetings."

TR: How does that work out into our daily choices?



PRAYERFULLY INTENTIONAL

A key way is in our being **PRAYERFULLY INTENTIONAL**.

-- In the worship flier is a insert that you've had to pull out to see the text and notes together.

-- The church staff has worked hard to help us know if we are actually sustaining focus toward our three year vision of **MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY IN OUR COMMUNITIES**.

-- Specifically, we asked, "What does it mean to be "IN"?"

-- (Review insert and backside for example prayers)

TR: What was the ultimate strategic priority? It was to "Do it ALL for the sake of the gospel." That leads a thoughtful person to ask . . .

2) CLARIFYING "ALL"

... what do you mean by "ALL?"

TR: Paul gives us part of the answer in verse 19 ...

19For though I am free from all,
I have made myself a servant to all,
that I might win more of them.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Here we are looking at the “**THAT**” statement (or “**SO THAT**” idea) as the **RESULT** and the action he is taking as the **PRIORITY**.

TR: Using our simple **RESULT ← PRIORITY** formula we get . . .

2) CLARIFYING "ALL"

- *In order to* "win more of them"
← we make ourselves servants
to **ALL** (19b-c)

READ SLIDE

-- As we "do it ALL for the sake of the gospel" . . . we make ourselves servants to ALL.

TR: We make ourselves slaves . . .



. . . even as the practice in the Old Testament was when a Hebrew who had served as a slave until the sabbatical year could CHOOSE to continue as a slave, having his ear pierced with an awl into the doorpost.

-- Cf. my gift to a couple I married of an awl. Specifically, to the man who was choosing to be a servant to his wife, a servant-leader.

TR: Paul again clarifies what “ALL” means in the second part of verse 22 . . .

I have become all things to all
people,
that by all means I might save
some.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- What is the **RESULT**, the **SO THAT** statement?

-- And what is the **PRIORITY**, the action that he undertakes to get to that result?

TR: Again, using our little **RESULT ← PRIORITY** formula . .

2) CLARIFYING “ALL”

- *In order to “win more of them”*
 ← we make ourselves servants to **ALL** (19b-c)
- *In order, “by **ALL** means,” to “save some”* ← we become **ALL** things to **ALL** people (22c-d)

. . . Paul clarifies the “ALL” by saying that . . . READ SLIDE

-- So, doing it ALL for the sake of the gospel means making ourselves servants to ALL, becoming ALL things to ALL people so that by ALL means we might save some.

-- In the mystery of God’s sovereignty, salvation is won, beginning-middle-end, by Him,

-- . . . BUT our work for the kingdom is to WIN MORE and SAVE SOME

-- Those are the clarifying results that lead to the ultimate result of sharing with them in the blessings of the gospel

TR: This doesn’t mean . . .



**. . . that to reach a gossip we become a gossip,
-- or to have a ministry to adulterers that we become unfaithful
to our spouse
-- or to reach the addicted we become addicted.
TR: The text, mostly in verses 20-22 helps clarify the ALL,
making ourselves servants of all AND being all things to all
people, by saying . . .**

2) CLARIFYING “ALL”

- ***That is, without violating who we really are in Christ, we become who they need us to be***
(20-22b)

**... we do it ALL, but with this limitation... READ SLIDE
TR: Actually, verse 19 started out with a key limiter to our ALL .**

..

19 For though I am free from all,
I have made myself a servant to all,
that I might win more of them.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Our choosing to become servants doesn't mean we aren't free in Christ.

TR: Now look down at verse 20 . . .

1 Corinthians 9:20

To the Jews I became as a Jew,
in order to win Jews.
To those under the law I became as
one under the law
**(though not being myself under the
law)**
that I might win those under the law.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Our focus is on the first part of the clarifying statement in our notes, “without violating who we really are in Christ”
 - In the yellow we read, “though not being myself under the law.”
 - A Christ-follower is not under the Mosaic Law.
- TR: Verse 21 continues telling us about being all things to all people . . .

1 Corinthians 9:21-22b

To those outside the law I became as
one outside the law
**(not being outside the law of God but
under the law of Christ)**
that I might win those outside the law.

²²To the weak I became weak,
that I might win the weak.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Again, in the yellow we read a restriction or limitation to
the ALL things to ALL . . . READ SLIDE

-- Literally this means not without law, but under the law of
Christ, what Jesus taught us.

TR: So, who are we really in Christ?

2) CLARIFYING “ALL”

- *That is*, without violating who we really are in Christ, we become who they need us to be (20-22b)

❖ In Christ we are . . .

- free from all (19a),
- not under the law (20c),
- not outside the law but under the law of Christ (21b)

In Christ . . . READ SLIDE

-- We are not under the old covenant but under Christ's new covenant made through His blood.

-- We are not “bound” by what others think or judge about us. Our righteousness comes through Christ alone.

TR: So, “ALL” means, without violating our position of true freedom in Christ that was bought by the blood of the Lamb . . .

2) CLARIFYING "ALL"

- *That is, without violating who we really are in Christ, we become who they need us to be*
(20-22b)

... we can ... READ SLIDE
TR: Look at verses 20-22 again ...

1 Corinthians 9:20

To **the Jews** I became as a Jew,
in order to win Jews.
To **those under the law** I became as
one under the law
(though not being myself under the
law)
that I might win those under the law.

ESV

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To the Jews, which is probably the same group as “those under the law”

TR: In verse 21 . . .

1 Corinthians 9:21-22b

To those **outside the law** I became as
one outside the law
(not being outside the law of God but
under the law of Christ)
that I might win those outside the law.

²²To **the weak** I became weak,
that I might win the weak.

ESV

“To those outside the law” (Gentiles)

-- He could be kosher with some folks and enjoy a pork loin with others.

-- He could have Timothy circumcised to not offend the Jews but not allow Titus to be circumcised so that the Gospel message not be confused with being under the law.

-- “To the weak” = in context those who have scruples that go beyond the law of Christ because of their cultural heritage and upbringing.

TR: Paul is able to be incredibly flexible . . .

2) CLARIFYING “ALL”

- *That is, without violating who we really are in Christ, we become who they need us to be (20-22b)*

❖ They may need us to be . . .

- as a Jew (20a),
- as one under the law (20c),
- as one outside the law (21a),
- as one who is weak (22a).

. . . adjusting his lifestyle to be like . . . READ SLIDE

-- We can keep kosher, we can cover our heads with scarves, we can adapt to the needs of those we are seeking to reach.

-- Cf. talking through a missionary’s personal strategic plan . . . and their not wanting to be called a missionary because of the historical negatives of being just a westernizing, even colonizing influence around the world. When we have done the hard work on knowing what really is an essential and what is not, we can be as flexible as Paul while remaining as Gospel orthodox as he was.

TR: As Paul sought to live by the mission statement of “All for the sake of the gospel” he wanted to make sure that the only stumbling block for Jews or Gentiles was . . .



. . . the cross of Christ.

-- As 1 Cor. 1:18 says, “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

-- Christ crucified is a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles . . . but to those who are called, Christ the power of God and wisdom of God (1:23-24).

TR: If “All for the sake of the Gospel” is the heart of the mission statement of every Christ-follower, or at least it should be, how do we actually do that, when we are not all called to do exactly what the Apostle Paul was called to?

3) HOW TO BE "ALL-IN" for "ALL"

The question is . . . READ SLIDE
TR: Again, here I think of strategic planning.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

RESULT ← PRIORITY

**GAIN & SUSTAIN
FOCUS**

32

I've learned that we need clarity on Result ← Priority, both the ultimate one for our mission statement but also the shorter range ones for this coming year, coming month, and even coming day.

-- But that clarity needs the frequent coaching to help us gain and sustain focus on that which God has given to us with clarity.

TR: I think that is exactly what Paul gives us in verses 24-27

Do you not know that in a race all
the runners run,
but only one receives the prize?
So run that you may obtain it.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- This is not a few random verses thrown in to appease the runners among us.

-- They are the coaching challenge to those who have adopted Paul's personal mission statement as their own.

TR: Verse 25 . . .

1 Corinthians 9:25

Every athlete exercises self-control
in all things.

**They do it to receive a perishable
wreath,
but we an imperishable.**

ESV

34

READ SLIDE

TR: If we are going to be ALL IN for ALL we must . . .

3) HOW TO BE “ALL-IN” for “ALL”

- Run to win the imperishable blessings of the gospel (24-25)

READ SLIDE

- We are not just told to run . . . but to run to win.
 - Cf. the games in Corinth that would have been second only to the Olympics.
 - Keep your eye on the prize . . . an imperishable prize . . . I think this / these are the BLESSINGS OF GOSPEL (v. 23)
- TR: We are told to . . .



. . . READ SLIDE

-- I don't think this is about rewards nor certainly about earning our salvation,

-- **BUT** rather about giving evidence that we ourselves have been saved.

-- Can we picture ourselves at the foot of the cross, looking in the eyes of Jesus, and saying, "I think I'll walk the rest of the way"?

-- Can we imagine hearing His belabored breathing and ourselves saying, "I know this is just for me, but I deserve it, don't I, Jesus?"

-- I don't think a true Christ-follower could do that.

TR: How are we going to be ALL IN for ALL?

Every athlete **exercises self-control
in all things.**

They do it to receive a perishable
wreath,
but we an imperishable.

ESV

Verse 25 hinted at the answer given in the closing verses of the chapter . . .

-- “Every athlete exercise self-control in all things.”

TR: Look to verse 26 . . .

1 Corinthians 9:26-27

So I do not run aimlessly;
I do not box as one beating the air.
²⁷But I discipline my body
and keep it under control,
lest after preaching to others
I myself should be disqualified.

ESV

READ SLIDE

**TR: How can we make Paul's ultimate strategic result ←
priority our own mission statement and not have it just be a
SLOGAN?**

3) HOW TO BE “ALL-IN” for “ALL”

- Run to win the imperishable blessings of the gospel (24-25)
- Discipline ourselves, with self-control in ALL things, so we can run without disqualification (25b, 26-27)

We must . . . READ SLIDE

- If we do NOT set our minds on things above, we will find ourselves thinking that the ultimate strategic result we want in our lives is to be happy or content or respected or . . .
- The greatest result is to share in the blessings with people of every tongue, tribe and nation, worshipping around the throne of the Lamb of God . . .
- and NOT finding ourselves calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (Revelation 6:16).
- What does it mean to run and be disqualified? It means to tell others the facts about Jesus while not believing them ourselves.
- How sad to think of athletes who in years past loved these

verses and claimed them as their own, but who have now denied Christ and been disqualified, at least so far.

-- To understand the gospel means to understand that we have become so united with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, that as He served, we must serve. To do less is to deny Christ.

TR: This personal strategic plan for a Christ follower must stir us as we go into the harvest season of Fall . . .



. . . for night is coming when no one can work.

-- Jesus said this referring to the time when He would leave this earth but it certainly applies to us . . . we must, with a focused urgency, run to win.

-- We must exercise self-control, disciplining our bodies.

-- We must do the hard thinking about what is negotiable and what is non-negotiable so that we know how we can be all things to all people without violating who we really are in Christ.

TR: If I sat with those who know you best, probing them with questions, would they honestly be able to come up with something akin to this as your personal mission statement . . .



, , , “All for the sake of the Gospel”?

-- Can we tell each other how our job, our hobbies, our travels, our retirement, our career choice, our time commitments, our vacation, our days off . . . our ALL . . . is subservient to this mission statement?

-- If I asked you about your major . . . and then asked you why you chose that . . . would your answer be good enough to tell Jesus hanging from the cross?

-- If I asked you why you were planning to take a day off or a vacation . . . what would be your mission-focused answer?

-- If there are companies who will dock your pay if you don't take your vacation because they know without rest you work suffers . . . ought not Christ followers be able to answer wisely, in light of the mission?

TR: The truth is that many, if not all of us, face the constant

temptation to . . .



. . . compartmentalize our lives. Like some of my parts drawers racks, we want to be able to give God some big drawers, but we just don't imagine how it would work for Him to have all the drawers for His glory . . . and all of them for the sake of the Gospel.

-- Yet, we are to lead peaceful and quiet lives that are godly and dignified in every way (1 Timothy 2:2).

-- Today, God is asking us to say to Him . . . I give you ALL the drawers . . . again!

TR: To worship God by giving Him all the drawers . . .



all
FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

To worship God even as an introvert. I need study and alone time with God. Not because I don't love people, but so that when I'm with people I am fully present with them.

-- The Guyanese pastor was right, the big Result ← Priority is what should control all the Result ← Priorities underneath it.

-- This sort of gospel focus is harder than what any Olympic level athlete has to do. It requires more self-control than that needed to become a professional athlete.

-- BUT when we stand at the foot of the cross, does anything less than ALL IN for ALL make sense?

--What is your mission statement?

TR: And for all of us who right now feel so overwhelmingly guilty and inadequate, remember we are standing at the foot of the cross . . .

And God is **able** *abound*
 to make **ALL** *to you* grace
 so that in **ALL** things
 at **ALL** times
 having **ALL** you need,
 you will **ABOUND**
 in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

- . . . we must speak the gospel to ourselves . . . we are not saved by our works but by the work of Christ alone.
- We are not able, but God is more than able.
- And . . . READ SLIDE
- We can't do this without Christ . . . and we can do no less than this for Christ.