

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

## "JOYFUL SELF-DENIAL" | 1 COR 9: 1-18 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

### WARM-UP QUESTION:

Who is an example of someone who sacrifices financially for their faith?

### *"Paul Defends His Rights" 1 Corinthians 9: 1-12*

Both in ancient times and in our culture today, religious teachers received money for their services, and Paul defends that right.

**Why would some have a hard time with giving money to preachers? Why does God's word say religious leaders should be financially supported?**

### *"Paul Lays Down His Rights" 1 Corinthians 9: 12-18*

Even though Paul had the right to be paid, he laid down that right to remove obstacles to believing in the gospel. **What are some things that Christians do that are obstacles to others believing the gospel? How has the gospel crossed boundaries between so many different people and cultures despite obstacles?**

Paul was able to lay down his rights because he found joy in sacrificing for the gospel. **What gives someone like Paul joy in sacrificing? What are rights God is asking you to lay down so you can serve Him and others?**

### REFLECTION QUESTION:

Jesus' sacrifice sets people free from sin and death so we can live fully in relationship to Him. When we focus on that, any of our sacrifices are a natural response and in the long run aren't a big deal when we look at what Christ gives us in return. **How hard is it for you to sacrifice your time, money or other possessions? How does having examples like Jesus or Paul impact your view on sacrificing your rights? Pray that God would give you the strength to follow through on sacrifices He's calling you to make.**

## Joyful Self-Denial

### I. Announce:

- A. **Slide1 Sunday Night Prayer:** Join us TONIGHT at 6:30pm in the Agape Room, as we pray for our community around us and for each other.
- B. **Slide2 Rohingya Night:** For our next 2 Wed night services we will be exploring Calvary Murrieta's *unique approach to missions* by learning more about our 2 **unreached people groups**. This Wed we will highlight the **Rohingya** through a panel format that will explore **why** we chose the Rohingya, the **history** of the Rohingya, why they are considered the most persecuted people group, **and** the challenges we have encountered while seeking to reach 2 Rohingya settlements in Nepal. You will have an opportunity to **ask questions** while we explore topics that include: **why Nepal** serves as a focal point for Calvary Murrieta, the Rohingya **genocide**, **gender and economic principles' impact** on our outreach efforts, **and the importance of native tongue Bible Translations**. Come join us at 7pm **THIS** Wed night.
- C. **Slide3 Scripture & Prayer:** Prosperity gospel/timing. 1 Cor.3:21-23 *For everything belongs to you whether Paul or Apollos or Peter, or the world, or life and death, or the present and the future. Everything belongs to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.*

### II. Slide4a Intro: Joyful Self-Denial

- A. Have you heard of or seen the famous couple **Jackie and Shadow**? They are **bald eagle mates** who share a nest up in a pine tree w/a view of Big Bear Lake.
1. In January during the **"hatch watch"** they were viewed by **20,000 viewers** who were tuned in to **their YouTube livestream**.
  2. The bald eagle parents have braved **wind, rain and snow** to protect their three precious eggs. At 1 point, Jackie stayed atop the eggs w/o a break for just under 62 hours. **I think they can teach us a lot about Joyful Self-Denial.**

- B. **Slide4b Main Idea:** Our life should be marked by *joyful self-denial*, in knowing when to **defend our rights** and when to **lay down our rights**, in regards to **the gospel** w/unbelievers, and in regards to **our walk** with *other* believers.
- C. Paul the *master illustrator* uses **15 examples** in this chapter:
1. He'll liken **Christian Ministry to:** a Soldier (7a). a Winegrower (7b). Shepherd (7c). Oxen (8,9). Farmer (10). OT Priest (13). Preacher (14-16). Steward (17). [next week] Servant (19). Jew (20a). 1 under the law (20b). those w/o the Law (21), Weak (22), Runners (24,25), the Fighter (26,27).
- D. **Let's remember:** Pastor Paul planted the church in Corinth. He had worked there for 18 months w/no salary.
1. **So** Paul has planted the church (not easy). Led all of them to Christ. Labored intensely over them. You'd think he'd receive *thanks, respect, maybe at least a stipend?* **Nope.** No thanks, only *disrespect* by some.
- E. **Remember**, ch.'s 8-10 same theme re: *Christian Liberty*. Last chapter 8: *Christian decision-making is filtered through Love*. Love, Knowledge, Conscience. *Love builds up*. Now in ch.9 Paul **illustrates** *how he has given up a right to take financial compensation for his ministry*. What he's asking them to do is something he's not unwilling to do.
- F. **Outline:** Paul *Defends* His Rights. Paul *Lays Down* His Rights.

### III. **Slide5 PAUL DEFENDS HIS RIGHTS (1-12a)**

A. **PAUL'S APOSTOLIC CREDENTIALS (1-3) READ**

B. (1,2) Rhetorical questions.

1. **Is Paul really an apostle?** He never takes \$ like everyone else.

C. (3) **My defense/ἀπολογία/apologia.** (a reply to an accusation)

D. **Slide6a PAUL'S ARGUMENTS FOR HIS RIGHTS (4-14) READ**

E. **Slide6b** Warren Wiersbe said, "*We do not have the right to give up **our freedom**, for that was purchased by Christ (Gal.5:1); **but we do have the freedom to give up **our rights**.***"

F. Slide6c (4) Their rights to **hospitality**.

1. Important point, he actually argues their case all the way up to verse 12. Yes you're right you should support itinerate pastors. I'm the anomaly.

G. (5) Their rights to **travel w/family**.

H. (6-14) Their rights to **financial support**. [yet Paul & Barnabas *pursued none of these*]

1. Slide7a It's the Practice of **Other Apostles** (4,5)

- a) Paul's not like *the wisdom teachers* who would drop a few pearls of wisdom with their rhetoric. But then share with the rich people if you want the next class it'll cost more money. The problem being, only the wealthy would get access & gain this philosophical or religious wisdom, and the poor would be left out.

2. Slide7b It's the Experience of **Everyday Life** (7)

- a) A **Soldier** is paid for his services. A **Winegrower** eats from the grapes he harvests. A **Shepherd** drinks from the milk of his flock.

3. Slide7c It's the Commands of **Scripture** (8-10)

- a) **Now** he backs it up *Scripturally*.

4. The command *not to muzzle an ox while it is treading grain* in Deut.25:4 (it treads grain on a threshing floor, to *break up the grain-stalks for winnowing*).

- a) This stressed **kindness & fairness** to the animals that helped a person earn his daily bread. A domesticated animal was not to be overworked & deprived of food.

5. Paul uses this vs in 1 Tim.5:17,18 to support his point that church leadership/elders should be paid, and certain ones double, *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", & "The laborer deserves his wages."*

- a) **Cute old Story** about **3 small boys** were bragging about their **Dads** ...

(1) The 1st boy said: *"My dad writes a few short lines on paper, calls it a poem, sends away, and gets \$100 for it."*

(2) "My dad," said the 2nd, "makes dots on paper, calls it a song, sends it away, and gets \$200 for it."

(3) "That's nothing," declared the third boy. "My father writes a sermon on a sheet of paper, gets up in the pulpit and reads it, and it takes 4 men to bring in the money!"

b) Many in ministry have taken advantage of vs.11.

6. Slide7d It's the Pattern of **Levites** (employed in temple service) & **Priests** (serve at the altar) (13)

a) **The Levites** were to work full time down at the tabernacle & **thus the tithes** brought in were **to take care of** he & his family.

7. Slide7e It's because **Jesus Said So** (14) [eg. In the sending out of the 12, & 72]

a) Luke 10:7 (to the 72) **for the laborer deserves his wages. Don't go house to house.**

#### IV. Slide8a **PAUL LAYS DOWN HIS RIGHTS (12b-18)**

A. **PAUL LAYS DOWN HIS RIGHTS TO REMOVE OBSTACLES** (12b-14) **READ**

B. Paul *gave up his rights*, to **win souls**.

C. **Obstacles to the gospel?** - *something cut down lying in a persons way.*

1. **Those obstacles might look like** ... one's Christian liberties, sin & moral issues, relational conflict within the church, unforgiveness, anger.

2. **How are you a tripping hazard/obstacle to others? Your unforgiveness?** That hinders the gospel. **Your anger?** Mine has altered the progress of the gospel. **How about your desire for comfort?** (comfort isn't inherently bad, **but** what about when we've chosen comfort, over *gospel advance*?)  
**How about your desire for security?**

D. **The Gospel** (7x's) - Paul was defining a gospel that **didn't** match a particular **culture** or **ethnicity**, nor line up with any political ideology.

1. (think) **How does the gospel break through preferences and cultures?**

2. **How does it knit people of so many differences, together?**

3. Slide8b Timothy Keller, *The operating principle of religion is, 'I obey, therefore, I am accepted by God.'* Whereas, the operating principle of the gospel is, 'I am accepted by God, therefore, I obey.'

E. Slide9a PAUL LAYS DOWN HIS RIGHTS FOR A **GREATER JOY** (15-18) **READ**

F. (15,16) **Boasting** - Paul's boasting is not to glory in himself, nor to boast in himself. **But** instead it is an *ecstatic rejoicing* over **Christ and** what **He's done**. *Paul says ...*

1. Do you know how worthy Christ is? I will pay my own way to do this work.
2. The exclamation of Paul's life is ... *Can you believe how good Jesus is! How good He's been to me.* So to 'lay down my salary' is nothing at all.
3. **But Paul, how do you do it?** Joyful-self-denial, that's how we do it.

G. (17) **A Steward** - was one who was given much to oversee, **but owned nothing himself**.

H. (18) Paul's asks/answers *What then is my Reward?* Preaching the gospel was reward enough.

1. Paul is **not** talking about *eternal rewards* here, it's the **rewards** that he receives in *the laying down of his rights*.
2. **Free of charge** – another reason why we don't *pass the plate* ... so people don't feel like they have to **pay to be here**. **Once you're a believer you know God's call to be a cheerful generous giver.** (boxes in the foyer)

I. Do you want to **boast**, or tend to boast, about **your** sacrifices? What **you've** given up for Christ? Peter did.

1. All of our boast should be, in *what Jesus has done or sacrificed for us*.

J. Slide9b (18) In **Mt.19:27-30** Peter was thinking about his own sacrifice for Christ, *look what we've given up to follow you*. How thankful we are to Peter for all his questions.

1. *Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have left everything and followed you. **What then will we have?**" 28 Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has **left** houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or*



*children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.* 30 *But many who are first will be last, and the last first.*

2. (after hearing about the rich young ruler/easier for a camel to go thru needle, than rich man enter kingdom) Peter w/quick thinking, ok I got this, it's not the **rich**, so it must be the **poor**. Hey, we're poor ... What up? - We did what the Rich Young Ruler wouldn't do - I gave up my, Sport Fishing & Glass-Bottom-Boat Business. What do I get?

K. Ok, it's kind of a **commercial** view of Christianity, but Jesus seems to overlook any *self-congratulation* here, but instead points to His own faithfulness.

1. Peter changes **later** to say, *Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you.* – He moved from, What do I get? to What can I give?

L. Any sacrifice will be more than repaid. Which seems to make ANY & EVERY sacrifice ... only a **temporary** sacrifice.

1. If I say, give me \$10. And I turn around & give you \$100 now, and \$1000 later. Then, is your \$10 really a sacrifice? Or just a **great investment?** :)
2. Earthly increase is **promised**, Heavenly blessings **assured**.

M. The disciples left all – not much, but **all** to them.

1. Remember, God's store includes even **widows mites**.

N. (29) The one who gives himself completely to Christ, *lock, stock & barrel*, finds 100 houses **open** to him; innumerable brethren & sisters & moms & dads *in the Lord*; & many spiritual children (converts).

1. When you follow Christ...you simply can't lose.

O. To *the general public* the **Rich Ruler** stood **first** & the **poor disciples** stood **last**.  
[God looking from eternity watched the **1st** become **last** & the **last** become **1st**]

P. Prayer: Savior, how precious, how Good, how worthy you are. All glory and honor and praise belong to YOU.

Q. Communion:

R. Keywords: rights, gospel, obstacle.