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FELLOWSHIP

1 Corinthians 9:15-18

**Paul Is Focused on Fulfilling His Calling
Boasting Only in the Lord**

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Why Paul's Rights Are Unused

1 Corinthians 9:15 (NET)
But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing these things so that something will be done for me. In fact, it would be better for me to die than—no one will deprive me of my reason for boasting!

- The previously mentioned unused rights did not imply a desired change
- Boasting only in the Lord is key (1:29-31)

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Paul Was Fully Motivated

1 Corinthians 9:16 (NET)
For if I preach the gospel, I have no reason for boasting, because I am compelled to do this. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

- Paul's duty was due to God's call, enablement and constraint
- 'Woe' has eschatological connotations

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Paul Serves for Other Reasons

1 Corinthians 9:17 (NET)
For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward. But if I do it unwillingly, I am entrusted with a responsibility.

- 'Voluntarily' & 'unwillingly' are *eko_n* & *ako_n* Greek—opposites with assonance
- The difference is between a free person and a slave (see vs 19)

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Paul's Reward Is to Preach the Gospel for Free

1 Corinthians 9:18 (NET)
What then is my reward? That when I preach the gospel I may offer the gospel free of charge, and so not make full use of my rights in the gospel.

- Reward is *misthos* (vs 17 also) which in this context means 'divine affirmation for godly conduct'
- The term can also mean 'wages for work'

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Implications and Applications

- Boasting in only the Lord is essential for all Christians
- We must resist elitist patronage which will harm the gospel

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Boast Only in the Lord

1 Corinthians 1:29-31 (NASB)

...so that no man may boast before God. But by **His doing you are in Christ Jesus**, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

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In Danger of Cunning Deception

2 Corinthians 11:1-3 (ESV)

I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But **I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.**

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A Different Gospel

2 Corinthians 11:4-5 (ESV)

For **if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus** than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or **if you accept a different gospel** from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. Indeed, I consider that **I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles.**

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A Church Made Bad Judgments

2 Corinthians 11:6-8 (ESV)

Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things. Or **did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge?** I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.

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