

**I CORINTHIANS
CHAPTER 9:1-6**

INTRODUCTION:

In this chapter we have the answer to the false teachers at Corinth who had been questioning the apostleship of Paul. We must remember that the devil is always at work to destroy the ministry of God's servant. Those who do not love the truth and live for the Lord are always trying to find something to say against God's man.

Paul had left Corinth, and these false teachers were telling the church members that he was not a true apostle. These **verses 1-6** are given to answer these false accusations concerning his apostleship.

In **verses 1-14** - Paul not only deals with the subject of paying the preacher, but also of paying him sufficiently. I realize whenever this subject is taught there will always be someone who criticizes and says the preacher is trying to get a raise. That is not the point which Paul is making. This chapter is as much inspired as - **John 3:16** and all the rest of the Bible. It is a difficult subject for most pastors because they never want to be looked upon as one who is preaching for the money. Still when a church can pay him a proper salary, God commands to do so. When this teaching is put into practice both the church and the pastor will be better off, and above all the church will be blessed for its obedience.

In **verses 1-6** - Paul defends himself as well as all pastors in this matter of money and income. On two occasions in his writings, he stated that a pastor was not to be - **"greedy of filthy lucre"** - **I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7**. Peter said in - **I Peter 5:2** - **"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind."**

In - **verses 1 - 6** of **I Corinthians**, Paul defends the rights of pastors for such compensation. He says in **verse 3** - **"Mine answer to them that examine me is this."** The word - **"answer"** was a legal term speaking of one's defense against an accusation that had been made. Like a lawyer arguing his client's rights, he defends the right of a pastor to be properly provided for and adequately paid.

He says in **verse 4** - **"Have we not power to eat and drink?"** Paul uses the word - **"power"** six times in this chapter and which means "authority, right." The idea of having the right to eat and drink is that those things be provided for him. He was speaking of the right of a pastor to expect that he will be financially and materially taken care of in his work.

Someone has written: "The pastor teaches, though he must solicit his own classes. He heals, though without pills or knife. He is sometimes a lawyer, often a social worker, something of an editor, a bit of a philosopher and entertainer, a salesman, a decorative piece for public functions, and he supposed to be a scholar. He visits the sick, marries people, buries the dead, labors to console those who sorrow and admonish those who sin and tries to stay sweet when chided for not doing his duty. He plans programs, appoints committees when he can get them and spends considerable time in keeping people out of each other's hair. Between times he prepares a sermon and preaches it on Sunday to those who don't happen to have any other engagement. Then on Monday he smiles when some jovial chap roars, "What a job, one day a week!"

The sad truth is that people often expect a pastor to be everything, but what God expects and commands him to be. Almost everyone has an opinion of what the duties of a pastor are. Oftentimes, people permit their opinion and personal expectations to overrule the teachings of God's Word.

It should be pointed out that a pastor is not in the ministry for the money but when it comes to income, many pastors are paid below the average and far less than the church is capable of paying. Many pastors promote and lead the church to support and provide the needs of missionaries, while the needs of the pastor are neglected.

VERSE 1:

Paul asks 4 questions to establish his point. The first is - **"Am I not an apostle?"** The word - **"apostle"** speaks of someone commissioned by and separated unto the Lord. It is someone sent by God who is a messenger of God.

This puts them in the place to give their own answer, and this question must be settled. The objection that his enemies had was that he had not seen the Lord; therefore he could not be an apostle. Also, he did not live like the other apostles; he was unmarried and earned his own living by working. They were using this as proof that Paul knew he was not an apostle, or he would be like the others. All these questions are answered in this chapter.

"Am I not free?" He was a free man in Christ and from the Jewish ceremonialism and pagan custom. He was free to not have to work but rely on the Christians for support. They were objecting to his claims as an apostle because he did not use these rights.

Apparently there were some in the church that questioned whether or not Paul was an apostle so he asked them - **"have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"** It has been and still is the idea that for any to be an apostle of Jesus Christ they must have been an eye witness of Him - **Acts 1:22-23**. Paul met this qualification also, for on the road to Damascus he saw the Lord - **Acts 9:3-5**. The Bible gives lots of proof that an apostle must have seen the Lord - **Acts 12:14-15; 26:16; I Corinthians 15:8**. Therefore, Paul had met this qualification.

In the latter part of **verse 1**, Paul asked the question - **"are not ye my work in the Lord?"** He defended his rights not only because of who he was but also for what he had done. They had been saved under his preaching and had been taught the Word of God under his ministry. They were the fruit of his ministry.

VERSE 2:

If he was not an apostle and preached the true gospel to them, who did? They were the very - **"seal"** (that which confirms) of his apostleship. He could understand why the false teachers would not accept him, but those who had been saved under his ministry must acknowledge his authority as an apostle. Whatever reason others may have to question his apostleship they certainly can have none for they were the verification (**"seal"**) of his apostleship - **"are ye in the Lord"**.

Paul defended his right in light of the ministry he had among the Corinthians. Their lives had been touched by his life. They owed much to Paul for all he had given to them and done for them. A pastor is one that has been set apart by God and called to shepherd a flock.

When he pours himself into the lives of his people he deserves and even has the right to be adequately paid by those people.

The pastor is not to preach nor go to a church because of the salary and benefits the church gives. His motive must be the glorifying of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the edification of the Saints. But, Paul also said that even though the pastor is not to serve for money, he is worthy of being sufficiently paid for his labor. Paul stated in - ***I Timothy 5:17*** - ***"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."***

The words - ***"double honor"*** literally mean "two-fold." Paul was declaring that a pastor that - ***"rules"*** (stand before, presides) ***"well"***, and especially those who - ***"labour"*** (work hard, fatigued) should not be underpaid, but appropriately compensated by receiving well above the average. In fact, he says that he should receive twice the average salary.

VERSE 3:

That is what proceeds and not follows this context; for the following is not an answer to those who called his apostleship in question. Paul means that when any of his enemies starts to question him as to his apostleship he answered, ***"I have seen the Lord Jesus, and he has set His seal to my commission by the success with which he has crowned my labours?"*** This answer satisfied Peter, James, and John, who gave to Paul the right hand of fellowship seeing he had been committed the apostleship unto the Gentiles - ***Galatians 2:8-9***.

VERSE 4:

Paul's answer to those who were questioning him as an apostle was this: I do have the right, (same word as ***"liberty"*** - ***8:9***) to eat and drink food provided by the folks at Corinth as other apostles. He has not encouraged the church at Corinth to support him since he did not want to hinder the gospel. They had not been taught the things of God and he did not want to burden them with this responsibility yet.

VERSE 5:

He had the right to be married and most believe that Paul was a widower. We know that he was a member of the Sanhedrin before he was saved and no one was allowed without being married. Whether or not he was married we don't know.

The words - ***"a sister a wife"*** refers to a Christian wife, someone that is saved. He had the right to have a companion as any other. He also adds that if he was married, he also had the right to be provided for in such a way that his wife could be a part of his ministry. The phrase - ***"to lead about"*** literally means, "to take along." He specifically mentions Peter in - ***verse 5***. The scripture seems to indicate that Peter was married and his wife traveled with him - ***Matthew 8:14***. His point was that a pastor should be paid in such a way that his wife would not have to work, but be with him in ministry.

Paul had received support from churches, but while he was at Corinth he was working at tent making to maintain a livelihood. These enemies were using it against him to try to prove that he was not a true apostle. The devil will always use anything against God's man to hurt his influence. If the devil can hurt or harm the man of God then the work of the Lord is

hindered. Paul was not afraid to stand up for his rights as an apostle and answer their questions about him.

How sad that so many men of God have been harmed by those who do not love the Lord nor are willing to obey the Word of God. The pastor is a sinner saved by grace, but as a man of God he is God's man.

VERSE 6:

Paul declares that he had as much right as others to make his livelihood from the ministry without having to work on the side. He is defending his rights to be paid adequately for his work as the man of God doing the work of God.

I CORINTHIANS 9:1-6
Study Guide

1. What is the main subject in this chapter?
2. Why did the apostle Paul write this chapter?
3. **Verses 1 – 6** answers what questions?
4. Explain **I Timothy 3:3**
5. Explain **I Peter 5:2**
6. What does the word – **"power"** mean in **verse 4**? _____
7. Give the four questions Paul asked to establish his point. _____

8. What does Paul mean by using the word - **"seal"**?
9. When did Paul see the Lord? _____
10. Had Paul ever been married? Explain your answer! _____
11. Explain the phrase - **"a sister a wife"**!
12. Why had the apostle Paul not taken an income from the church at Corinth?
13. According to the Bible what obligation does the pastor have to the church?
14. According to the Bible what obligation does the church have to the pastor?