

“OUR MODEL of CHRISTIAN LIBERTY”

(1Corinthians 9:1-27)

January 8, 2017

One of the greatest things we have received if we have accepted the gift of Jesus Christ is FREEDOM:

I like to refer to the apostle Paul as “the Apostle of Christian liberty.” Paul MODELED what he wanted his followers to do.

I. PAUL’S Christian Liberty

1. The BASIS of his rights:

-He is an APOSTLE of Christ.

-He has SEEN Christ.

-He has led many TO Christ. Paul had an URGENCY to spread the gospel throughout the known world.

2. The EXTENT of his rights:

-The right of HOSPITALITY – he may be talking about his right to enjoy the same freedoms that all mature Christians have, including freedom FROM the Jewish dietary laws.

-The right of FAMILY – Paul asserts the right of all the apostles to have their wives travel and minister BESIDE them. We can certainly applaud that notion in ministry today.

-The right of financial SUPPORT – Though he supported himself, he did not suggest that be the norm. He actually makes a strong case for ministers to be supported by the CHURCH they serve. He clinches his argument by citing Christ.

3. The USE of his rights:

-What he does NOT do: Paul does not claim the rights he has convinced us he has.

-What he DOES: Paul preaches the gospel, not because he is expecting an earthly reward, but because he is COMPELLED to do so by an inner drive and need. He also gets outside of himself.

He is chameleon -like for a PURPOSE.

-WHY he does it: To advance, the gospel of Christ.

Paul continues by next addressing:

II. OUR Christian Liberty

1. The apostle's CHALLENGE:

Paul felt the Christian race was different in two ways. The crown the runners received was a WREATH, which would soon wilt. But, the reward of a faithful Christian will last FOREVER.

In the games, only ONE person could win, while in the Kingdom of God, EVERY child of God has the potential for success. But he or she MUST:

-Run to WIN the race.

Paul wants every Christian to implement DISCIPLINE in their life so that they may run the Christian life so as to win.

-Fight to WIN the battle.

Paul says that he is not just SHADOW boxing, punching the air. He is in a REAL spiritual battle, as we are:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against authorities, against the power of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. *Ephesians 6:12*

2. The apostle's CONCERN:

-Keep DISCIPLINE in. “Spiritual Disciplines” is simply a term for preparing for the battle against those evil earthly and heavenly forces. We need discipline. We also need to:

-Keep SIN out. Paul began this chapter with a ringing declaration of his freedom in Christ, but he is closing with a sobering reminder that he is also HUMAN.

We would be wise to look at Paul as a great MODEL of Christian life. Dedication, humility, discipline, adaptability and love are all great qualities to EMULATE as we move forward in our Christian lives.