



# THAT MESSED-UP CHURCH

Week of March 10  
1 Corinthians 9:1-18<sup>1</sup>

## Overview

Paul's letter to the Corinthians addresses needs and problems specific to that local church. But for a 2000-year-old letter, many of the topics will ring true to us today as well. Cultural diversity and religious pluralism were obvious in 1<sup>st</sup> Century Corinth and are also rampant in our 21<sup>st</sup> century world. Paul cares deeply about both right living and right thinking for Christians, and so should we. Read the letter with a view toward Paul's primary purposes: the health and "building up" of the body of Christ, and actions which further the gospel. Keeping these themes in mind will help you understand the "why" behind Paul's guidance and admonitions to the Corinthian Christians.

## Group Objectives

***Relationships and Life Transformation are the primary purposes of community groups.***

- Reflect on this past Sunday's message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members...how can you "build one another up" this week?
- Pray for God's call to reach your "one more."

## DNA statement(s) tie-in

- ***We are On Mission to Reach One More.*** Every person matters to God, so every person matters to us. God invites every one of us to join him in his great mission to **reach one more** – one more coworker, neighbor, family member, and friend.
- ***We are All for Jesus.*** Jesus saves us from our past, remakes us to be like him, heals our broken places, and is coming back as our king. Only Jesus is worthy of our allegiance, and worldly division has no place for those who follow him.

## Conversation Starters

- What stood out to you from this week's sermon?
- Where have you sensed your "rights" being threatened? How might relinquishing those rights either hinder or further the gospel of Christ?

## Listening to God

- Where did you experience God last week?
- How were you able to join God on mission?

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion guide was written by Dawn Gentry and edited by Rachel Vaughn. For additional content, see the [sermon online](#) and the reading plan [found here](#).

## Learning from God's Word: Bible Study Discussion

Paul uses the first half of this section to remind the Corinthians (sometimes sarcastically!) of his rights as an apostle. His rhetoric indicates that he's responding to complaints or accusations *about* him *from* the Corinthians. They may have accused him of preaching only for financial gain, but he reminds them that he has not taken advantage of that option. He preaches because he is "compelled to" by the grace of God. His central reason for responding to that call is in verse 12, where he asserts "we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ." For Paul, his rights matter far less than the mission of sharing the gospel.

### **Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-18**

- What stood out to you from these verses as we read them?
- Count the number of questions Paul asks in this text. Why do you think he relies on so many (often rhetorical) questions? How might questions be a more effective teacher than lectures?
- What are some cultural "rights" Paul refers to in this passage? What are some cultural rights you might think of as common today?
- What might Paul have considered his "reward" in verse 17? How might sharing the gospel have its own reward, regardless of financial support?
- How do you sense God calling you to respond to this passage?

### **Reach One More Practice**

- This week, make an intentional choice to give up one of your "rights" for the sake of someone else. If possible, choose to do so with someone who does not know Jesus. Next week, plan to share the experience with your group.
- What are you learning about yourself in this season?
  - What are you learning about God?

### **Prayer Prompts**

- Invite members of the group to share requests.
- Allow time for silent reflection on the following prompts.
  - *Jesus, you temporarily gave up your rights to a throne in heaven to live on earth as a human and serve other people before making the ultimate sacrifice on the cross. Help us to follow your example on earth, giving up our rights for the sake of others and the gospel.*

### **For further study**

- For more about the **Reach One More** initiative, see [www.reachonemore.cccomaha.org](http://www.reachonemore.cccomaha.org).
- For practical ideas you can implement as you reach one more, see <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzdVE7HNsqM-FEzli5Etuzj379W7kUsxO>
- Bible Project Videos: Guide to 1st Corinthians: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/1-corinthians/>
- Right Now Media Series – "Bible Backroads" – great background on Corinth, suitable for families: <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/806863>
- Ben Witherington, *A Week in the Life of Corinth*
- NT Wright, *1 Corinthians* (N. T. Wright *For Everyone* commentary series)
- Anthony Thiselton, *1 Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary*

Some copies of these books may be available at the CCC resource booth to purchase on-site.