

Intro:

1. Families that pray together stay together
2. Pray for Grant and GraceAnna

Read 1 Cor 9:1-23 and Pray¹

1. To understand this 9th chapter, we must remember what Paul wrote in the 8th chapter
 - a. In 1 Cor 8:1 it says, “*Now concerning the things offered to idols...*”
2. The believers in Corinth wanted to know if it was okay to eat meat that had been offered to an idol.
 - a. Paul’s answer... Yes and No.
 - b. Let me briefly explain so we can put chapter 9 in its proper context.
3. God the Father created all things; Jesus is Lord over all things.
 - a. Idols don’t exist, therefore they cannot defile what God has created and provided to us.
 - b. So yes, you can eat the meat from the bargain beef cart in the market even though it had originally been offered to an idol.
 - i. Don’t ask where the meat came from, just eat it and enjoy.
4. But, before we eat that meat, or in our case today, perform that activity that is not explicitly prohibited in the bible, we must ask ourselves, “*will my actions stumble another brother or sister in Christ?*”
 - a. We have a tremendous amount of freedom and liberty in Christ, **but** if what we are doing stumbles another brother, then we must avoid that action or activity.
 - b. Remember, 1 Cor 8:12 tells us that we sin against Christ when we use our liberty in such a way that we stumble other believers.
5. Beginning in chapter 9, Paul reaffirms both his position and authority and then uses himself as an example of the principle taught in chapter 8.

¹ Unless otherwise marked, all scriptures taken from the New King James Version. © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

1 Corinthians 9:1-2 ¹ Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? ² If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

1. There were a number of false teachers and leaders that tried to discredit Paul, by saying that he wasn't really an Apostle.
 - a. But Paul reminds the believers that he was a true Apostle; one of the criteria for being one of the original Apostles was that they had seen Jesus both before and after His resurrection.
 - b. As a Pharisee living in Jerusalem, no doubt he had seen Jesus in the temple during His earthly ministry.
 - c. And we know that Paul saw the resurrected Jesus on the road to Damascus.
2. Then Paul says, even if others doubt his apostleship, they, the believers in Corinth should know better for they came to the faith under Paul's ministry.
 - a. Here in Japan, seals are very important. For all legal documents, official dealings, and bank transactions, people who live in Japan are required to have and use their personal seal.
 - i. Last month I stopped by the bank in Hiroshima.
 - ii. I had two different forms of ID, yet they would not allow me to do anything without my seal which happened to be back here in Iwakuni.
 - iii. The seal makes it official.
 - b. Back to what Paul was saying, the fact that there were believers and a church in Corinth is what made Paul's apostleship official.
3. Question: Do Apostles exist today? Yes and No
 - a. No in the strict sense; there were only the 12 original Apostles plus Paul who were given a special commission to help establish the church.
 - i. The activities, teachings, and writings of the original 12 (plus Paul) were foundational to the church.
 - b. Yes in the functional sense. Apostle means one who is sent.

- i. Missionaries today are apostles, ones who are sent by the church to go and declare the good news.
 - ii. I personally am not an advocate for the use of the title Apostle today.
 - iii. We can leave the title with the fathers of the Christian faith, but the function of an apostle should continue for its part of fulfilling our commission to go and make disciples.
- c. Word apostle is used 79 times in the NT and the word was not limited to only the 12 original apostles who were Jesus's disciples. We'll look at this again in 1 Corinthians 12.

1 Corinthians 9:3-5 ³ My defense to those who examine me is this: ⁴ Do we have no right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

1. Evidently there were some who were challenging Paul's rights and privileges.
2. For those who challenged Paul, he had a defense...
 - a. Eating and drinking presumably with the church body.
 - i. I believe he is talking about those who prepared meals for Paul and Barnabas and had them over to the house.
 - b. This is kind of like when Sonya left for the states and I was still here.
 - i. Several of you invited me over for dinner and I thank you for looking out for me.
 - c. Others challenged Paul's right to have a wife come along on missionary endeavors.
 - i. We know that Paul was single at this point, but Paul still defends the right for a minister to bring his wife with him.
 - ii. First of all, what God has joined together, let no man separate.
 - iii. There should never be an expectation that a man should have to leave his wife in order to serve the Lord.

- d. And then Paul uses other apostles who are married and travel with their wives to further illustrate his point.
 - i. His examples include Jesus's brothers, most likely James and Jude, and Cephas – Peter.
- e. BTW, based on this passage I find it hard to believe that Jesus's mother remained a virgin.
 - i. On a number of occasions there are explicit references to Jesus's brothers and sisters.
 - ii. What's more, we see that Peter was married yet some say he was the first pope. If the first pope was married, then why can't subsequent generations of popes get married?

Paul's defense continues in 1 Corinthians 9:6-7 ⁶ Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? ⁷ Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

1. This is a military community, I think you can understand Paul's example here.
 - a. Were any of you asked to provide your own M-16 rifle? How about your own F-18 jet (\$57 million)?
2. In like manner, no farmer or shepherd does their work without enjoying some of the fruits from their labors.

Paul now turns from the natural and obvious to the Law itself as further justification that ministers are eligible for financial support... 1 Corinthians 9:8-10 ⁸ Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰ Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

1. The reason the Silvas moved here in 2005 was by God's grace and enabling to start a church.
 - a. For 3 ½ years I worked on the base while the church was getting established.

- b. My hope all along was that if the Lord allowed that I would be able to quit my base job and go full time in the ministry.
 - c. I understand the hope that Paul speaks of in verse 10.
- 2. By God's grace & provision and through your tithes and offerings, that hope became a reality in Feb 2009 for the Silva family. 16 months ago I was able to go full time here at the church.
 - a. No longer am I a bi-vocational pastor, Praise the Lord!
 - b. Being full time gives me more time to study to be able to faithfully teach God's word.
 - c. Being full time gives me the ability to have time to meet with any one of you who need a little extra prayer, counseling, and encouragement.
 - d. Being full time means that after I'm done doing those things I just mentioned I still have time to spend with Sonya and my kids.
- 3. Paul's telling those who challenge him "don't take away that hope."
 - a. I thank you that you have not taken that hope away from me.
 - b. I thank you because it's by your tithes and offerings that I can draw a salary that puts food on my table, gas in my car, and a roof over our head.

Paul continues... 1 Corinthians 9:11-12 ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? ¹² If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

- 1. Paul should have received support though the ministry especially since the believers in Corinth had already done this for others.
- 2. But, Paul says, that he and his group did not demand or take from them this type of support for the sake of the gospel.
 - a. Paul now uses himself as an example of what he taught in chapter 8 about avoiding something if it stumbles another person.

- b. Evidently, Paul felt that someone would have been stumbled causing the gospel message to be hindered if he received financial gifts from the believers in Corinth.
- c. Paul did receive financial gifts to support his ministry; he just didn't accept them or demand them from the believers in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 9:13-14 ¹³ Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? ¹⁴ Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

1. Speaking of the OT offerings where by various portions of the offerings brought to the temple would be keep by the priests and Levities.
 - a. In other words, the priest and Levites of the OT lived off of what was given to the temple by the people.
 - b. These instructions can be found in the book of Leviticus.
2. The Lord Jesus also taught this principle.
 - a. Matthew 10:5-10 Going out with no provisions.

1 Corinthians 9:15-18 ¹⁵ But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. ¹⁶ For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷ For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. ¹⁸ What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

1. It is important that every church and every minister not abuse their power and position.
 - a. Hurting and lost people can be easily led astray. Paul was sensitive to this.
 - b. The local church should not focus of raising money. There should be no Beg-athons at the local church.

2. Some of you may remember Oral Roberts. In January 1987, during a fundraising drive, Roberts announced to a television audience that unless he raised \$8 million by that March, God would “call him home.”
 - a. In response to that, some sarcastically (or perhaps wisely) came out with bumper stickers that said:
 - i. Send Oral to Heaven in ‘87
 - ii. L.O.R.D. Let Oral Roberts Die
3. I think many tele-evangelists could learn something from Paul’s words and example here.
4. Again, Jesus told his disciples, “*Free you have received, freely give.*” – Matt 10:8
5. Concerning the rewards Paul speaks of, we’ll come back to that next week (Lord willing) when we finish the chapter.

In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 we find the heart and reason for Paul’s actions... ¹⁹ For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; ²⁰ and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; ²¹ to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; ²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. ²³ Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.

1. Paul was not a chameleon who changed his message and methods with each new situation.
 - a. Nor was Paul a compromiser who adjusted his message to please his audience. He was an ambassador, not a politician!
2. Paul and his companions practiced what they preached.
 - a. In Acts 16 we see that Paul had Timothy circumcised in order to more effectively reach the Jews.
 - b. In Acts 21 Paul took the vow of a Jewish Nazirite.
3. Around Jews, Paul was faithful to honor the Jewish traditions.

- a. Around the Greek, or those who are not under the Jewish Law, Paul let go of the “Law”
 - i. Not meaning that he was a law breaker, he just wasn’t following the strict practices of the Jews.
- 4. In other words, Paul did not parade his liberty before the Jews, nor did he impose the Law on the Gentiles.
 - a. Paul and his companions didn’t have to do these things, but they did in order to be able to share the gospel without the presence of obstacles.
- 5. Paul gave up his rights in ministry.
 - a. He blended in with Jews and Gentiles in humility because, rather than be an obstacle that caused people to stumble, Paul chose to be a stone upon which they could step.
- 6. What is the Lord calling you to do today in order to help people around you come to the Lord or grow in the Lord?
 - a. Paul went out of his way to effectively share the gospel.
 - b. His actions were deliberate.
- 7. Will you make Paul’s words the heart of your prayer for this coming week?
 - a. Pray, “Lord, how can I become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some?”