

## *How to Silence a Critic (1 Corinthians 9)*

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**Introduction:** How can you most effectively teach others?

- A. Paul through personal reports and from a direct letter from the Corinthians is addressing things they need to understand and obey. (1 Cor 1:11; 7:1)
  - 1. These brethren had a battle ahead of them to make changes.
  - 2. Paul showed that serving Christ means serving your brethren! Consider the question: "What would you give up for Christ?" (1 Cor 8:1, 13)
- B. Paul now powerfully illustrates the spirit he wants the Corinthians to develop by what they closely observed in Him as he worked there! (1 Cor 11:1)
  - 1. Paul made some decisions to help the church there that made his life more difficult.
  - 2. There were different levels of maturity in the church, including some that began to personally attack Paul. How did he respond to this?

### **I. Answering the critics about the proof and rights of an apostle (9:1-6)**

- A. Satan always seek to target leadership and destroy their influence. (1 Cor 3:3-4; 4:3-5)
  - 1. The judgement of the world is not about truth and justice but pride.
  - 2. Those that are quick to accuse without a righteous process are imitating Satan. This is often done in secret! (Rev 12:10; Jn 7:24)
- B. Jesus taught a righteous process of judgment! (Prov 18:17; Jn 8:44-46)
  - 1. We should welcome honest questions. This must be emphasized.
  - 2. How many critics are willing to reason from principle and then let that same principle be applied to them personally?
- C. Is Paul an apostle and what rights does he have? Five questions to be answered! (1 Cor 9:1-6)
  - 1. Am I not an Apostle? (9:1; 2 Cor 12:12)
    - a. If not, then what did that make of the Corinthians? (9:2)
    - b. Consistency will be a major problem for these critics.
  - 2. Am I not free? (9:1; John 8:32)
    - a. We are free also from the rules and whims of men! (4:3; 1 Pt 4:15)
    - b. Those who intimidate with their tongues are looking for slaves to own.
  - 3. Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?
    - a. This was a requirement to be an apostle. (Acts 1:22, 25-26)
  - 4. Are you not my work in the Lord? (1 Cor 4:15)
    - a. He appeals to their memory and his work with them.
    - b. A righteous critic welcomes reasoning in love. What is the answer?
  - 5. Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?
    - a. Paul chose not to take support from them. (2 Cor 11:7-8)
    - b. In this he showed the heart of his critics. (2 Cor 11:12-13)
- D. Questions about the rights of an apostle and of any Christian!
  - 1. These questions are common to the rights of all Christians! Some in jealousy

- and envy place “standards” to others that they would *never touch*.
2. "Do we have no right to eat and drink?" (9:4)
    - a. Note the critics in the ministry of Christ. (Luke 7:33-35)
  3. “Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?" (9:5)

## ***II. Arguments about the right to receive support and to refuse support (9:6-18)***

- A. Questions about *the support* of an Apostle. (9:6-13)
- (1.) Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?
  - (2.) Who ever goes to war at his own expense?
  - (3.) Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit?
  - (4.) Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?
  - (5.) Do I say these things as a mere man?
  - (6.) Or does not the law say the same also?
  - (7.) 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?
  - (8.) 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.
  - (9.) If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?
  - (10.) 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.
  - (11.) 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?
- B. Paul had a right to refuse support in order to silence his critics! (9:14-18)
1. *Your life* may silence your critics before reasonable men.
  2. Paul wanted his critics to attempt to follow him in terms of sacrifice and service! The carnal man would never do this.
  3. The servant of Christ has no time for pettiness and hyper-critical judging. He is *looking at the Lord*. (2 Cor 11:8-12)
  4. Paul was involved with building men, not personal kingdoms.

## ***III. The Sacrifices of Paul in order to see the Gospel Spread. (9:19-23)***

- A. Many do not have the *all-consuming desire* to see others brought to the Lord in maturity. (Romans 1:14-15; 15:1)
1. What things *did Paul give up* in accomplishing this? Did he regret it?
  2. What are *the limits* of these kinds of compromises? (Acts 16:3; Gal 2:3-5)

## ***IV. The Christian's Race --- A Single-Minded Devotion (9:24-27)***

- A. Do you *want the crown* only God can give? (2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10)
1. Paul poured out *his very life* for others. (Phil 2:17)
  2. This was *a labor of joy!*
- B. Are their things *you need to give up* for the cause of Christ? You will not regret it.
1. Some may need to begin with their hearts and then their tongues. (Jas 3:1-5)
  2. Some need to change their dress, their habits, their hobbies and schedules!

**Conclusion:** The Christian life is a God centered life.