

Week of April 27, 2025 - My Reward

Small Group Lesson 20

Connect

What is something you worked hard to earn a reward for, but had to wait long for it? Did you begin to regret the hard work you put into it?

Verses - 1 Corinthians 9:1-18 (CSB)

Read aloud:

1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my
work in the Lord? 2 If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you, because you are
the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. 3 My defense to those who examine me is this: 4
Don't we have the right to eat and drink? 5 Don't we have the right to be accompanied by
a believing wife like the other apostles, the Lord's brothers, and Cephas? 6 Or do only
Barnabas and I have no right to refrain from working? 7 Who serves as a soldier at his
own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit? Or who shepherds a flock
and does not drink the milk from the flock? 8 Am I saying this from a human
perspective? Doesn't the law also say the same thing? 9 For it is written in the law of
Moses, Do not muzzle an ox while it treads out grain. Is God really concerned about
oxen? 10 Isn't he really saying it for our sake? Yes, this is written for our sake, because he
who plows ought to plow in hope, and he who threshes should thresh in hope of sharing
the crop. 11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it too much if we reap material
benefits from you? 12 If others have this right to receive benefits from you, don't we even
more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right; instead, we endure everything so
that we will not hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Don't you know that those who perform
the temple services eat the food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share
in the offerings of the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those
who preach the gospel should earn their living by the gospel. 15 For my part I have used
none of these rights, nor have I written these things that they may be applied in my case.
For it would be better for me to die than for anyone to deprive me of my boast! 16 For if
I preach the gospel, I have no reason to boast, because I am compelled to preach – and
woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward, but
if unwillingly, I am entrusted with a commission. 18 What then is my reward? To preach
the gospel and offer it free of charge and not make full use of my rights in the gospel.

Briefly restate the context. How is it encouraging, challenging, comforting, etc.?

Study

Answer the questions together based on the Bible verses:

1. In verses 1-6, Paul talks about his rights as an apostle. What are some of the things he says he has a right to?

2. Paul uses examples from everyday life (like a soldier, farmer, and shepherd) and the Old Testament law about an ox (verses 7-11). What point is he trying to make with these examples about people who work?

3. In verses 12-18, Paul explains why he has *not* always used his rights. What is his main reason for choosing not to accept full support, and what does he say his "reward" is instead?

Share

Discuss 1:
In the story Pastor Takeshi shared, a person was upset that TBC pastors receive a salary, perhaps thinking our pastors were also "all about money." Based on what we read in the verses, why do you think this person's view is different from what Paul teaches about supporting those who preach the gospel?

Discuss 2:
If Paul were a modern-day missionary, what kind of "rights" do you think people might expect him to have or not have today (like maybe an office, a car, or a house)? How might he choose to or not to use those rights? What would be his guideline?

Minister to one another through sharing specific prayer requests.