

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-27. When it came to the preaching of the gospel, the apostle Paul understood the difference between surrendering truth and surrendering personal rights. In this section of his letter to the Corinthians Paul explains that although he was free, he willingly made himself a servant to others for the sake of the gospel. He adapted himself to different people, not because the truth he proclaimed changed from situation to situation, but because he sought connection with people that needed Jesus. To the Jew, he respected customs. To the Gentile, he did not insist on unnecessary traditions. To the weak, he exercised restraint. Yet through every adjustment one thing remained fixed: Paul stayed firmly under the law of Christ. His flexibility never became compromise.

This passage is sometimes misunderstood. To become “all things to all people” does not mean participating in sinful behavior in order to gain acceptance or appear relatable. Jesus ate with sinners, but He never joined them in sin. Neither does it mean rushing carelessly into situations that expose us to temptation, imagining that good intentions will protect us. Paul elsewhere warns believers to restore others gently while watching themselves lest they too be tempted (*Galatians 6:1*). Christian ministry is not about recklessly diving into darkness. Rather, it is wise, Spirit-led engagement that brings the light of Christ into places where people need hope.

What Paul describes is something much harder than “fitting in.” What he describes is righteous humility. To become all things to all people means voluntarily laying aside preferences, comforts, and rights when doing so opens a door for the gospel. It means listening before speaking. It means learning another person’s story, respecting cultural differences where conscience allows, and refusing to let our personal habits become barriers to someone hearing about Jesus. This is not weakness, it is Christ-likeness. Jesus Himself had every right to remain enthroned in glory, yet emptied Himself and took the form of a servant for our salvation. Paul followed that same pattern, and he calls us to do the same.

Paul closes this section with the image of an athlete training for a prize. Just as runners exercise discipline for a temporary crown, Christians willingly order their lives for an eternal one. Evangelizing and faithful living require self-control and intentional sacrifice. Not because we are earning salvation, but because we treasure the gospel and long to share in its blessings. The question is not, “What am I allowed to do?” but rather, “What will I joyfully lay down if it helps someone move one step closer to Christ?”

Prayerfully consider the following this week: Are there personal preferences, habits, or freedoms that I may need to set aside in order to better serve and connect with others? How can I engage people who think differently from me without compromising God’s truth or placing myself in unnecessary temptation? In what ways can I practice the humble, self-giving mindset of Christ in my relationships this week?

Weekly Memory Verse:

“For though I am free from all people, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may gain more.”

1 Corinthians 9:19

Weekly Affirmation:

**I WILL LIVE TODAY FOR THE
SAKE OF THE GOSPEL!**

JUNE 2026 GROWTH GOALS

- ☐ Read the Book of 1 Corinthians
- ☐ Watch the Bible Project video on 1 Corinthians (*available on the website*).
- ☐ Memorize one of the weekly memory verses.
- ☐ “Plant a seed” with a friend, family member, and/or stranger by sharing a scripture or prayer for them in person.