

The Distracted Christian
1 Corinthians 9:16-27

The Corinthian church of Paul's day was a mess. 1 Cor. 9:16-27 addresses the heart of their problem: getting _____ from our _____ - _____ purpose and mission.

Paul's first concern is the potential distraction of personal _____ and _____ gain. He talks about preaching voluntarily. Paul normally taught that ministers of the gospel should receive their _____ from the gospel, but in Corinth, he knew that accepting their support would create expectations that he served _____ instead of _____. Material gain wasn't going to distract him from his main purpose, effectively selling his independence for it. Paul sets an example for us and challenges us to realize what Jesus famously taught: "You cannot serve both _____ and _____." (**Matt. 6:24**)

The Bible also warns that we can be easily distracted by personal _____ and _____. "To become all things to all people" means that he sacrificed his own preferences and privileges that he might see people _____. Spreading the gospel requires us to set aside personal preferences. But why do we follow Christ...to get our _____? Or is it to spread the gospel?

Finally, Paul speaks about athletic achievements because athletes exemplified how personal _____ and _____ can be a distraction for the follower of Christ. Like a determined athlete, true followers of Christ must bring their desire for physical comfort into _____ to win the most valued prize in heaven, described in **1 Thes. 2:19**: The crown of _____.

What is common to all these distractions? The word, "_____"; making it about _____ life, about _____ will and _____ way. **2 Cor. 9** reminds me of what Jesus warned about: *that whoever would save his life will _____ it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will _____ it.*