**As we have pointed out several times already, there was a “love problem” at the church in Corinth. These saints valued “knowledge” very highly, and it became a source of arrogant pride among them – they became “puffed up” (Chapter 8 verse 1). This led to disputes and contentions. They argued over which of their teachers was best; they took each other to court; they questioned the value of marriage; they neglected the feelings of their weaker fellow saints in the matter of eating foods dedicated to idol gods. Chapter 9 continues this sad theme – apparently, there were some in Corinth who went so far as to question the apostolic credentials of Paul, the very one who brought the Gospel to them and founded their church!**

**In this chapter, Paul answers them. Note how many times he uses rhetorical questions – questions with an obvious answer, designed to make one think. Note also how many times he refers them to Scripture. In this chapter, Paul illustrates the best way to deal with personal attacks – by patient and loving appeals to reason. In our contentious times, when many choose to “fight fire with fire” (even in the church), Paul’s response stands out as an example of how to de-escalate a potentially explosive situation – fighting the fire of unkind words with the cool, clear water of reason and biblical truth.**

**In this chapter, Paul also lays the scriptural groundwork for the financial support of the ministry, again building on the teachings from the Old Testament. In the last chapter of this great epistle (Chapter 16), Paul instructs the Corinthian church about how this should be accomplished.**

1. **Read verses 1-2. How many questions does Paul ask the Corinthian believers? (v. 1) Why do you suppose he would ask them these questions?**
2. **What evidence did Paul offer as proof to the Corinthians that he was indeed an apostle? (v. 2) Answer: “the of my apostleship are in the Lord.”**
3. **Read verses 3-6. Note that in this passage, the word “power” appears three times. In the Greek, it is exousia, meaning “authority”, “privilege” or “jurisdiction”. What three things did Paul have the authority to do (or NOT do) as an apostle of Jesus Christ? (Note: Cephas is the Greek name for Peter)**
4. **We have just finished Chapter 7 and its discussion about marriage. What does this passage tell us about Peter’s marital status? (v. 5)**
5. **How did Paul and Barnabas finance their ministry? What COULD they have done? (v.6) (See Luke 10:1-9)**
6. **Read verses 7-10. In this short passage of three verses, Paul challenges the Corinthian believers with SEVEN questions! Verse 7 contains three of them. What seems to be the point of these questions? (Hint: see Proverbs 27:18)**
7. **In this matter, is Paul speaking his own mind, or is he basing his teaching on the Scriptures? (v. 8-10) BONUS: find the Scripture that Paul quotes in verse 9 (use a concordance or Google it).**
8. **Read verses 11-14. In this passage the apostle Paul ordains the establishment of ministerial support by a church congregation, using the Old Testament model of the Levitical priesthood (Read Numbers 18:20-24). What had Paul and the other apostles “sown” (invested) into the church? What could they expect to receive in return? (v. 11) Answer: They had sown things and should reap things in return.**
9. **Did Paul exercise this “power” when he was at Corinth? (v. 12) Answer: . If not, why not? Answer: he did not want to the of .**
10. **Verse 13 looks at the Jewish tribe of Levi, who were set apart for service to God through the Temple sacrifices. What two things did Paul say about them? Answer: “They who the of the live of the things of the .” (the Levites). And secondly, “they who the altar are with the .” (the priests). (Read II Chronicles 31:2-10)**
11. **Having looked back to the example of Israel, Paul now looks at the church and states what the Lord has ordained. In your own words, summarize verse 14.**
12. **Read verses 15-23. In this passage, Paul reveals the extent of his zeal for preaching the Gospel, and the measure of his love for those who are lost. Did Paul write “these things” in order to get support from the Corinthian church?**
13. **Why did Paul preach the Gospel? (v. 16) (See Acts 9:1-6, 10-20; see also Jeremiah 20:7-9)**
14. **Why is it better to do God’s will with a willing heart? (v.17) Answer: The Lord will give you a . BONUS: Name one (famous) Old Testament prophet who was UNWILLING to go where God sent him! Answer: .**
15. **What did Paul consider to be his “reward” for preaching? (v. 18)**
16. **What did Paul make himself to everyone, and why? (v. 19) Answer: Paul made himself a to all, so that he might even more to be saved.**
17. **In your own words, summarize the thoughts of Paul in verses 20-23. What does this mean to our church of today, when we try to “reach the masses” through outreach? How can we become more effective?**
18. **Read verses 24-27. This last passage of the chapter contains another of the “Know ye nots” of this letter; apparently, in spite of their great knowledge, there were a number of things that the Corinthians did not yet realize about the Christian life! Paul’s final teaching deals with running “the Christian race”, and the importance of self-discipline. In a competition, “all run”, but how many receive the prize? (v. 24) Answer: . What does Paul tell them about how they should live?**
19. **The person who “strives for the mastery” (wants to win) is in all things (v. 25) Briefly describe the lifestyle of an Olympic competitor.**
20. **What is the hope of every Olympic athlete? What should be the hope of every Christian who is “running the race” in the Name of Jesus? (v. 25) See also II Timothy 4:7-8; James 1:12; I Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2:8-10; Revelation 3:7-11; Revelation 4:4, 10-11**
21. **How does Paul “run the race”? How does he “fight the fight of faith”? (v. 26)**
22. **What does Paul do to his body? (v. 27) Answer: He brings it into . See also Romans 6:11-14, 8:12-13; Colossians 3:1-5**
23. **What could happen if Paul fails to control his fleshly impulses? (v. 27) When he has preached to others, he himself might become a .**