

1 Corinthians 9:12b-14

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Paul points to the Levitical priesthood which feeds itself with a portion of the sacrifices brought to the temple. It is right for ministers to be paid for their ministry. But, Paul does not participate in this compensation. For his ministry, it would get in the way.

Paul defends the practice of financially supporting those who minister the gospel, along with their families, but does not accept such support himself. So he will now explain his reasoning. Although he has the right to be financially supported in his work, *Nevertheless, we did not use this right*. As Paul explained earlier in the chapter, he had every right to be supported in the gospel. Further, he fully supported the principle of paid ministers, both from a perspective of common sense and from the Law of God. But Paul has made a cognitive decision *to not use this right*. He will explain why.

Paul states that *we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ*. (Paul will explain later how getting financial support is a hinderance.) First he reiterates that ministers being supported is biblical and appropriate. He asks rhetorically: *Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?* Paul refers here to the Levitical priesthood. The priests who administered the service of God were supported by portion of the offerings brought to be sacrificed.

In 2 Corinthians 11:24-26, Paul listed some of the *things* he has had to *endure* to advance *the gospel of Christ*. This list shows that it is reasonable for Paul to claim that he has had to *endure all things*.

Paul ends his extensive defense that ministers of the gospel have a right to financial support, stating: *So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel*. Perhaps this is an application of the biblical principles just stated. Now that Paul has clarified his support for paid ministry, he will not return the jealousy of the missionaries who are funded by the Corinthians. He has made a deliberate choice not to use this right. He goes on later to explain why.

Biblical Text

Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. ¹³ Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? ¹⁴ So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.