

1 Corinthians 9:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

Analysis

If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Paul concedes that other teachers in Corinth received support; his own claim is even stronger given that he founded the church. Yet he immediately pivots: **Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.** The Greek *egkopē* (ἐγκοπή, "hindrance, obstacle") was a military term for roadblocks impeding troop movement.

Here is the chapter's climax: Paul refuses his rights to avoid placing any barrier before the gospel. In a culture suspicious of greedy philosophers and charlatan preachers, Paul's self-support disarmed skeptics and demonstrated genuine love. The word "suffer" (*stegō*, στέγω) means to endure, bear up under hardship. Paul chooses poverty and labor over comfort and rights—modeling the very self-limitation he urged in chapter 8. Just as the "strong" should surrender idol-meat freedom for the "weak," Paul surrenders financial support for unbelievers' salvation.

Historical Context

Corinth was rife with sophists who charged exorbitant fees and itinerant preachers who exploited followers. Cynics begged; magicians sold spells; mystery religions demanded initiation payments. In this environment, Paul's refusal of payment was radical and disarming. It removed accusations of greed and demonstrated that his

motive was love, not money. This apologetic strategy was especially important in a commercial city obsessed with wealth and status.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What "hindrances" might financial support have created for Paul's gospel ministry in Corinth?
2. How does Paul model surrendering legitimate rights for the gospel's advance?
3. When might accepting support hinder ministry, and when might refusing it dishonor the church (2 Cor 11:7-9)?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	ἄλλοι	τῆς	ἐξουσίας	ὑμῶν	μετέχουσιν	οὐκ	μᾶλλον
If	others	G3588	of this power	over you	be partakers	are not	rather
G1487	G243		G1849	G5216	G3348	G3756	G3123

ἡμεῖς	ἀλλὰ	οὐκ	ἐχρησάμεθα	τῇ	ἐξουσίᾳ	ταύτῃ
we	Nevertheless	are not	used	G3588	of this power	G3778
G2249	G235	G3756	G5530		G1849	

ἀλλὰ	πάντα	στέγομεν	ἵνα	μὴ	ἐγκοπὴν	τινα	δῶμεν
Nevertheless	all things	suffer	G2443	G3361	hinder	G5100	we should
G235	G3956	G4722			G1464		G1325

τῷ	εὐαγγελίῳ	τοῦ	Χριστοῦ
G3588	the gospel	G3588	of Christ
	G2098		G5547

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 9:15 (Parallel theme): But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

1 Corinthians 9:18 (References Christ): What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

2 Corinthians 11:12 (Parallel theme): But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

Acts 18:3 (Parallel theme): And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

Nehemiah 4:8 (Parallel theme): And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.

Romans 15:22 (Parallel theme): For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

1 Corinthians 9:2 (Parallel theme): If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:7 (Parallel theme): Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

2 Corinthians 6:3 (Parallel theme): Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

2 Corinthians 11:20 (Parallel theme): For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.