

# 1 Corinthians 9:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

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**What is my reward then?** If preaching under compulsion yields no reward (v. 16-17), how can Paul have a *misthos* (μισθός, "wage, reward")? **Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge,** Paul's reward is the joy of offering the gospel *adapantos* (ἀδάπανος, "without expense, free of charge"). He glories in removing financial barriers, making salvation accessible to the poorest slave or beggar.

**That I abuse not my power in the gospel.** The Greek *katachraomai* (καταχράομαι, "use to the full, exploit") can mean either "make full use of" or "abuse." Paul chooses not to exhaust his apostolic rights, preserving them unused like a benefactor who gives without taking. This free offering mirrors God's grace—the gospel is a gift, not a commodity. By refusing payment, Paul embodies the message: salvation is free, grace is unearned, and God's love cannot be purchased. His lifestyle preaches before he opens his mouth.

## Historical Context

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Ancient religions often involved transaction: sacrifices purchased divine favor, mystery initiations required fees, and philosophers charged for wisdom. Against this backdrop, Paul's free gospel was revolutionary. It declared that God's favor cannot be bought, that grace is gift, not transaction. This embodied the gospel's essence and disarmed critics who accused Christians of greed.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does preaching "without charge" make Paul's reward greater than accepting payment?
2. In what ways does free gospel preaching mirror the nature of grace itself?
3. How can ministers today balance accepting legitimate support (v. 14) with Paul's concern to avoid hindering the gospel (v. 12)?

## Interlinear Text

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τίς	οὖν	μοί	ἐστιν	ὁ	μισθός	ἵνα	εὐαγγελιζόμενος
What	then	my	is	G3588	reward	Verily that	when I preach the gospel
G5101	G3767	G3427	G2076		G3408	G2443	G2097
ἀδάπανον	θήσω	τὸ	εὐαγγελίῳ	τοῦ	Χριστοῦ,	εἰς	τὸ
without charge	I may make	G3588	the gospel	G3588	of Christ	that	G3588
G77	G5087		G2098		G5547	G1519	
μὴ	καταχρήσασθαι	τῇ	ἐξουσίᾳ	μου	ἐν	τῷ	εὐαγγελίῳ
not	I abuse	G3588	power	my	in	G3588	the gospel
G3361	G2710		G1849	G3450	G1722		G2098

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Thessalonians 2:6** (References Christ): Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

**1 Corinthians 10:33** (Parallel theme): Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

**1 Corinthians 8:9** (Parallel theme): But take heed lest by any means this liberty of your's become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

**2 Corinthians 4:5** (References Christ): For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

**1 Corinthians 7:31** (Parallel theme): And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.