

# 1 Corinthians 9:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Mine answer to them that do examine me is this,

## Analysis

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**Mine answer to them that do examine me is this**,—Paul introduces his formal apologia (ἀπολογία, "defense") to those who anakrino (ἀνακρίνω, "examine, interrogate") him. This legal term denotes judicial inquiry or cross-examination. Paul is not insecure or defensive; he is providing a reasoned case for his apostolic conduct, particularly his refusal to accept payment.

The terseness of this verse creates dramatic tension. Paul pauses after announcing his defense, then pivots (v. 4) to a series of questions about apostolic rights. The structure mirrors a courtroom: accusation, defense, evidence. But Paul's ultimate goal is not self-justification—it is to model sacrificial ministry that surrenders rights for gospel advance (v. 12, 18-23). This transitions chapter 8's theology (surrender freedom for the weak) into lived practice (Paul surrenders support for the lost).

## Historical Context

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Greek apologia was a technical term for courtroom defense speeches. Socrates delivered his famous *Apology* before Athenian judges. Corinth, as a Roman colony with Greek culture, was steeped in rhetorical and legal traditions. Paul's audience would immediately recognize forensic rhetoric—statement of facts, proof, refutation—standard in Greco-Roman legal proceedings.

## Related Passages

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. Why does Paul frame his ministry explanation as a legal defense rather than simply ignoring critics?
2. How does transparent accountability to the church honor both truth and community?
3. When is it appropriate to defend your ministry, and when is silence more Christlike (Isa 53:7)?

## Interlinear Text

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Ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσιν αὕτη ἐστίν  
G3588      Mine      answer      G3588      me      to them that do examine      this      is  
G1699      G627      G1691      G350      G3778      G2076

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