

## NOTES



## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the freedom we have in Christ. Help us to see that true freedom is not about serving ourselves but about serving others in love. Teach us how to lead like Jesus—through humility, sacrifice, and self-discipline—so that we may run the race of life with eternity in mind. Amen.

## OPENING QUESTION (OPTIONAL)

If you could instantly become skilled at any sport or discipline, which one would you choose—and why?

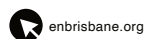


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## WORD

19 For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings. 24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

- 1 Corinthians 9:19–27 (ESV)

Secondary Readings:

**Philippians 2:3–11 (ESV)**

**Mark 10:42–45 (ESV)**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In our culture, success often looks like asserting your rights or rising to the top. How does Paul's example in 1 Corinthians 9 challenge this view?
2. Where do you see the tension between cultural values (self-advancement, personal freedom) and Kingdom values (servant leadership, laying down rights)? How can we navigate this tension faithfully?
3. Think of a time when you had the "right" to do something, but love for others led you to choose differently. What did that teach you about following Jesus?
4. What does it practically look like in Brisbane today to be "all things to all people" without compromising the truth of the Gospel?
5. Paul compares the Christian life to athletic discipline. What are some "training habits" we can build into our lives that help us live with eternity in mind?
6. Jesus says in Mark 10:45 that He came to serve, not to be served. How can we as a LIFE GROUP reflect this heart of service in our local community?

## REFLECTION

Paul's letter to the Corinthians speaks into a messy cultural environment where personal rights and status were highly prized. Instead of demanding his rights, Paul shows the way of Gospel flexibility:

- **Servant Leadership** (vv. 19–23): Paul calls himself a "slave to everyone" for the sake of the Gospel. True leadership isn't about climbing higher but about lowering ourselves to serve others' growth in Christ.
- **Rights vs Love**: Though Paul had the right to receive support as an apostle, he chose to lay down those rights so that nothing would hinder the Gospel. In God's kingdom, love > rights.
- **Cultural Flexibility**: Paul's "all things to all people" posture wasn't compromise—it was strategic adaptability. He flexed methods while holding firmly to truth so the Gospel could reach diverse cultures.
- **Self-Discipline** (vv. 24–27): Like an athlete in training, the Christian life calls for discipline and focus. We don't run aimlessly. We live with eternity in mind, shaping our desires around God's purposes rather than instant gratification.

We see a consistent thread: the counter-cultural church follows Jesus' example—laying down privilege, taking up the posture of a servant, and running with eternal perspective. True freedom isn't about doing whatever we want—it's about being free to live for what God wants. The world says, "Climb higher, take more, assert your rights." The Gospel says, "Go lower, give more, lay down your rights." Paul reminds us that the race is not run for temporary crowns but for an eternal reward.

### Practical Application – Weekly Challenge

- This week, practice **Gospel flexibility** in one of these ways:
- **At work/school**: Instead of asserting your opinion or right to be heard first, take time to listen deeply to someone else and serve their need.
- **At home**: Look for a way to practically show love to your family by serving them.
- **In community**: Ask God to show you one person you can serve unexpectedly this week—and act on it.

Pray daily: "Lord, help me to run this race not for myself, but for You and for others."

### CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You that You showed us what true leadership looks like—not domination, but service; not demanding rights, but laying them down in love. Strengthen us with Your Spirit to run the race with discipline and faithfulness. May our lives reflect Your servant heart and draw others to the freedom only You can give. In Your name we pray, Amen.