

1 Corinthians 9:18 – 10:6

New American Standard Version

1 ¹⁸ What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel,
2 I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full
3 use of my right in the gospel. ¹⁹ For though I am free from
4 all *men*, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win
5 more. ²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win
6 Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law
7 though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win
8 those who are under the Law; ²¹ to those who are without
9 law, as without law, though not being without the law of
10 God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those
11 who are without law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I
12 might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so
13 that I may by all means save some. ²³ I do all things for the
14 sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker
15 of it. ²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all
16 run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that
17 you may win. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games
18 exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to
19 receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.
20 ²⁶ Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in
21 such a way, as not beating the air; ²⁷ but I discipline my
22 body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to
23 others, I myself will not be disqualified. ^{10:1} For I do not
24 want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all
25 under the cloud and all passed through the sea;² and all were
26 baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;³ and all ate
27 the same spiritual food; ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual
28 drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which
29 followed them; and the rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless,
30 with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were
31 laid low in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things happened as
32 examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as
33 they also craved.

Observation (What does it say?):

Underline the positive factors that motivate Paul in this passage.

Circle the negative factors that motivate him.

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What do you think of the competitive language Paul uses (win, run, box, prize, discipline, aim)? How would you describe his attitude?

What might be the difference (or is there) between five uses of “win” (v. 19-22) and the use of “win” in verse 24?

Based on this passage, what is the prize (v. 24) and the disqualification (v. 27) that Paul is concerned about?

What is the point of the extended example from the fathers (10:1-6)? How does the example of the Israelites relate to running and boxing images?

What does it mean to “crave” something (v. 6)?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

What areas of your life lack aim or discipline? What would it look like to “run in such a way that you might win”?

How seriously do you take the concern about being “disqualified” (v. 27)? How does that fit with your understanding of faith, rewards, salvation, etc.?

Can you stop craving something because you are told to, or when you know it is bad for you?

Additional questions for thought and discussion:

- How does Paul's "all things to all men" differ from hypocrisy? Is it the same as pretending to fit in to different groups?
- How certain is Paul about his own salvation as he writes this passage? How confident is he about being ("becoming") a fellow partaker of the gospel (v. 23)? What would it mean for him to be "disqualified" (or "disapproved" [YLT] or "ineligible" [OJB]; *adokimos*, ἀδόκιμος, v. 27)? Is Paul talking about future rewards, or present blessings, or salvation, or something else?
- Is Paul basing his confidence on his ministry? Is there a hint of depending on works in this passage? What other explanations do you think of for Paul's apparent concern?

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)