

We need to deny ourselves 1 Corinthians 9: 1-19

Historical background of Corinth and Greece in general:
Corinth was next door to Athens (centre of Education in the region)
It is said that it was Intellectually alert, morally corrupt
People value competition: Self centered life.

Why would Paul deny himself of things that everybody else in Corinth is pursuing?

1- Paul cares for others

12b Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

Preaching the Gospel free of charge wasn't a norm in Corinth

2- It takes discernment.

Paul took time to understand his local context. What can I do to make a difference in my local community? In response he has chosen to give up some of his rights.

He resolved that he could live without those rights.

3- It takes faith and discipline

12b Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

He wasn't pursuing self-gratification. All his effort and giving up is to add value to other people – Example of people giving up to add value to our lives (Jonathan and Michaela)

4- It takes courage.

3 This is my defense to those who would examine me.

It means going against the norm. Attracting all sort of comment. Facing all sort of pressure to be like anyone else.

It takes wisdom.

Paul is not combating the social norms of Corinth

He is rather acting in the opposite spirit. He is creating and introducing norms by his lifestyle.

5- Ultimately it is a sacrifice he is willing to make.

15 But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. 16 For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

What Paul is living for is what these statements make us realize. His life doesn't make sense if it doesn't contribute the Gospel.

The culture around us is a celebrity driven one.

Lots of adverts of how to become this or that

How to achieve this or that....

Paul took his stand to be abnormal in Corinthian Culture.