

1Corinthians 18-06-03b

focus that Paul is emphasizing here in 1st Corinthians chapters 7 through 9 and into chapter 10, the section we're looking at together today. Here's the thing, when Paul says do we not have all of these compelling reasons to do a thing and yet I'm not doing it. Barnabas and I are not doing it and yet look at all of the arguments I could marshal in its favor.

It is balanced by one thing and that is the successful accomplishment of his assigned mission, his calling. It is very helpful to know what your calling is in terms of definition of the mission, right? What is my calling? And you know the younger you are the more confusing a question that can be because it doesn't always emerge early. Some people know from childhood they want to be a fireman or they want to be a missionary, they want to be one thing or another, but we were called in one hope of our calling and what is our call? Our call is to represent the Lord Jesus Christ in his absence on this earth.

Now Lord Jesus did a lot of things. He didn't always preach and he didn't always heal. He didn't always suffer on the cross.

He had a multifaceted presence and existence. In him dwelt the fullness of deity in bodily form. If we have God's Word and keep it, Jesus said, we are the ones who love him and he says if you are that type of person I and my father will come to him and make our home with him.

It is the presence of God, it is the fullness of deity expressed in successfully lived Christian lives and it takes a lot of forms. You do not have to hang your head if you haven't led somebody to the Lord recently. You don't have to hang your head if you thought about maybe going to Africa as a missionary but then realized that you just couldn't see yourself doing that.

I've been in youth rallies when I was a youth. I haven't been in any lately as a youth but there would be legitimate, wonderful presentations of missions opportunities in far-off places and you see young people. There was a girl who was in Child Evangelism Fellowship and we were campers together and then counselors together and she was a really sweet girl and she ended up going to Japan and being a missionary to Japan and you think you know that's that's putting it out there for the Lord.

I mean you're abandoning all. It's like the disciples with Lord we have forsaken all and followed you and so I went to the Lord I said well am I you know should I be going off somewhere and and eat bugs and share the gospel and what it's it's a potential when you're young you know that a lot of times you you've got a great bewildering variety of options but being a missionary in a foreign clime even though I've been to plenty of foreign climes I wasn't there as a missionary I was almost there as the opposite sort of an anti anti-missionary it wasn't my calling I didn't know exactly what my calling was but I was not convinced that that was it and over time it develops and God has to chip off a lot of corners and rough edges and and develop experience and training

and so on things we don't even know have a purpose and then suddenly it gels and and now I see how these things have been woven together I don't think the yarn knows it's going to be a sweater or a shawl until the thing is finished the yarn is just being it says wow I'm being worked by these needles and it isn't until the thing is done have you ever seen somebody making clothing that thing is inside out and shapeless and got rough edges and loose threads and it looks like a train wreck and then I remember when my mother used to make she made my dad a shirt or two and some other things and but they make everything inside out and if it's a print fabric you know the pattern is on the other side and so it's kind of pale and it's it's an ugly thing there's pins and marks and and then when it's finished you flip the thing inside out and wow it's just a beautifully finished garment and a lot of times we don't know what our particular calling is but many times it is not the calling of the person next to us or the person in front of us or the person behind us it is something unique not everybody is called as a slave not everybody is called as a Freeman not everybody is called while married not everybody is called while single Paul says because we're not under law there is no rule that says well you've got two years of compulsory spiritual service and then you can go live the rest of your life you know there are places in Europe where everybody goes into the army for two years which I think is a spectacular idea I wish we could do it here as long as I got to run the army and make sure they didn't turn boot camp into a you know luxury accommodations for the lazy but everybody's relationship with God is personal we are our own priest through our high priest the Lord Jesus and we have to be fully convinced in our own minds and so how do you do that if you don't have quick hard and fast rules what do you live by you live by principles and you figure out well in some cases this principle takes priority in other cases this principle takes priority yes my child has done wrong I should discipline them but there is a principle of love and mercy and flexibility where maybe there's extenuating circumstance maybe it is time to lead in a different way you remember in the Old Testament in Isaiah God says Israel I have beaten you black and blue and you still have not responded I just I'm tired of beating you the beating is not producing a result I'm going to stop the the discipline and judgment and I'm going to lead with mercy for a while and see if my mercy will draw you where my judgment and discipline is not and God changes tack it isn't that there any less sinful or that he's any more or less righteous many more or less loving or merciful but there is a time kind of reminds you of a passage over in Ecclesiastes there is a season there is a time and and it's left foot and then right foot it's it's progress it's try this and then try that it's the warp and then the wolf there's there are alternations and and different things that apply and so in Paul's particular case it isn't that Peter wasn't an effective Apostle because he was married it isn't that Paul was necessarily incapable of exercising an apostolic function if he were married or if he received support and that's what he's going to get into here in this next part of chapter 9 so let's look at it pick up in verse 8 am I just giving you a bunch of human rationalizations I've also got scripture on my side don't muzzle the ox it treads out the grain is he just talking about oxen and this this is our key one of our keys of interpretation here as I mentioned in the first session is we're not just talking about marriage or idolatry we're not just talking about a guy who is an Apostle we're not just talking about oxen God is speaking to all of us in terms of principle and in terms of example and in terms of illustration

and Paul says look when you hear me talking about these things just remember there's a real famous quip where you know somebody was so dull that they thought Moby Dick was just a story about a whale do you get it have you ever read Moby Dick it's not just a story about a whale but it's one of the greatest pieces of literature in the English language because it addresses itself to great questions and human compulsions and the type of situation where we can be driven and fool ourselves and justify things that cause harm to those around us and if you haven't read lately Captain Ahab's pursuit of the great white whale it's it's a worthy read because it's far more than it's than a story about a whale here you shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain is it oxen God is concerned about and this is a little bit of a funny because if God was concerned about oxen how did the whole Levitical sacrifice thing happen you know yes I want you to slaughter them in multitudes on my altar but hey if they're driving around you know trampling out the grain pulling a sledge I'm all about their welfare you know that I can't you know keep them healthy keep them healthy then bring him down and sacrifice it it is not oxen God is concerned about in giving this legislation does he not say it all together for our sakes now did it have a practical application in the days of Israel Paul doesn't say here did he not say it for the Israelites sake these things have been written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages have come and why do we still have the mosaic legislation that says don't muzzle the ox are we worried about oxen now nobody uses oxen for hardly anything in terms of labor we've got we had a great big honking bulldozer here yesterday and the day before it's just a thing of beauty to see it move dirt we don't rely on oxen he says it for our sakes it exists in scripture for our sakes and by the way what we're looking at in 1st Corinthians chapter 7 8 9 and 10 exists for our sake he's not just talking to Corinthians just substitute Corinthians for oxen here he's not just talking to them he's talking to us and we have to figure out okay well does that mean I I shouldn't wear a face mask while I'm working what what does it mean don't muzzle the ox we it takes a little effort to figure it out for our sakes no doubt this is written verse 10 that he who plows should plow in hope and he who threshes in hope should be a partaker of his hope is it a bad thing to expect that in being faithful and in seeking to please God in our lives there is the prospect of blessing and reward it's it's sort of a tricky area isn't it it reminds me in a way of something I heard there was a documentary on PBS earlier this week talking about military service and men and women who have served in Afghanistan and what it was like to serve and what it was like to come back and how being involved in combat changes you and the fraternity that is born in that level of hardship and even your closest family members cannot fully understand what you have experienced it there is no way to fully communicate it but one of the things I really appreciated one of them said and this is a commonplace I've heard it a lot but one of them said you know when someone comes up and says thank you for your service I feel really awkward it it's well-intended it's well-meaning it there's genuine appreciation I am sure but any of you that have been in the service know what I'm talking about when somebody comes up and says thank you for your service it's an awkward moment and and this person continued and and I've had this very same thought am I supposed to say you're welcome it's it's just it's awkward because I went in voluntarily I got paid I appreciated the experience I feel like it it made me who I am in a number of ways and I mean you

could thank a doctor for their service you could thank a dentist for their service you could thank anybody who who does things partly for their own getting along in life and partly because they feel like it's a worthwhile effort everybody ought to be thanked for fulfilling their calling people appreciate evangelists and Billy Graham or Billy Sunday in earlier days and Moody and those guys people appreciate those who founded seminaries or who teach in cemeteries people who appreciate pastors and they appreciate teachers of all sorts where you learn and but many times there there is an awkwardness because there's a part of it that is voluntary and and maybe even sacrificial but there's another part of it that is obligatory you feel like I I kind of needed to do this and I I was under obligation that's where Paul is going here look at it he says do we not have a right to this just hope to receive something back for this thing that we do a sower sows in hope of participating in the in the harvest a person who plows plows in hope and hope of course this is Elpis and you remember our triad of Christian virtues the easiest place to see them all in one one place and get an idea of their function is over in first Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 3 in fact keep your finger here and just turn to that real quickly first Corinthians I'm sorry first Thessalonians we're in first Corinthians chapter 1 verse 3 this is in the introductory portion of Paul's letter to Thessalonica and he's thanking God for the Thessalonians he's remembering them in his prayers and he says in verse 2 we always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers we remember before our God and Father your work of faith your labor of love and your endurance of hope work of faith labor of love and endurance of hope why are those things allocated the way they are why is their work in one place labor in another and endurance in another well it's it really is helpful in this particular case to look at the Greek because you have three different words describing these three Christian virtues first of all it says your work of faith what's the difference in work and labor it's not that clear in English it's very clear in Greek work of faith this is air gone air gone comes from air gods of mine and this is this is production this is this is getting a thing done bulldozer comes and smooths out my driveway that's air gone I've got a smooth driveway now it's what was the means the means was the pushing of the dirt with this with this bulldozer and a guy driving and knowing what he was doing which I really appreciate but it is air gone of faith so faith this is how we live our Christian life this we talked about this before as the means faith is the means of getting things done I want to know how to lay hold of righteousness how to walk the worthy walk it's by faith by faith we understand Hebrews 11 by faith we understand the world's refrained by the Word of God by faith by faith by faith Abraham by faith Noah by faith Moses by faith by faith move mountains got cut in half all of those things in Hebrews 11 by faith that's the means this is how you get the dirt moved this is how you get things done air gone it is the work of faith and Paul says as we pray for you unceasingly this is without without let up we remember your work of faith and the I'm reading this backwards here you know the work of faith and the labor of your love this is this is kapos k-o-p-o-s and it's translated labor but this word means toil and trouble remember bubble bubble toil and trouble this is not look at this fence that got built look at this project that was completed it is regularly translated remember when the lady broke the bottle of ointment over Jesus feet and Judas and others started complaining well this could have been sold and the money given to the poor because he kept the

money bag and Jesus said why do you bother the woman she's preparing me for my burial why do you trouble her the word is kapos why are you giving this woman trouble why do you bother her she's done something that's going to be remembered down through history when you read it Matthew 26 10 and Mark 14 6 in Luke 11 7 when Jesus is giving the parable of the man who is being bothered by his neighbor he's had a visitor come and so he wants to go pester his neighbor for some food the guy says why are you bothering me the doors been shut and my children are already asleep and why are you bothering me it's kapos it's annoyance it's trouble it's causing a an obstacle and a difficulty for someone that's kapos it's used in remember at the end of the letter where Paul says he says see writing with my own hand let no man trouble me for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus that's kapos let no man trouble me I'll give you the reference for that as soon as my screen refreshes in Galatians 6:17 let no man give me kapos give me trouble because I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus Paul talks about in 1st Thessalonians 2:9 is turn a page here in this book brethren our labor and our travail our hardship as doing the apostolic work it's kapos so it's in Revelation chapter 2 verse 2 when the Lord Jesus is talking the letters to the seven churches and he says I've seen your deeds and your toil and your perseverance you've got 1st Thessalonians 1:3 there right and you can still got a finger in 1st Corinthians 9 will now take a third fold in your Bible and go to Revelation chapter 2 verse 2 because this is the this is the book and this is the other part of Thessalonians 1:3 for Thessalonians 1:3 is Revelation 2:2 Jesus says I see those same three things in Ephesus the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand I know your works your labor and your patience your endurance same three things where do their works come from you can say it where does the air gone come from faith where does their travail come from their labor love right love is painful now why is the pain associated with love and not with faith or with hope how do we define love what's our quickie definition sacrificial towards self sacrifice hurts that was my prize bull and I just laid it all on the altar I made a sacrifice it cost me something David says I'm gonna buy the oxen and I'm gonna buy your threshing equipment because I will not offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing where does that willingness to sacrifice reside it is in love love motivates sacrifice why do parents stay up all night why did why do people put themselves out on behalf of others because it is a function of love now that pain gets tiresome and that work is ongoing why would you keep doing it why would you work when you can what's the hymn that says shall I lie on flowery beds of ease am I soldier of the cross you know why not take a vacation on a flowery bed of ease why continue to sacrifice when it just seems endless well hope what comes from hope endurance patience it's the motivation why would I endure why would I be patient because like Paul says and you can flip all the way back to Corinthians now when you thresh and when you plow you have the hope you have an expectation that down the road there is going to be a return and it's legitimate it's okay to want to be in the kingdom of the Lord it's okay to want the biggest mansion you can lay hold of by faith in this life it is okay to anticipate and rejoice in the opportunity to reflect the Lord's glory and even bigger and better ways in the future if I learn and do and persevere now it's okay because it's not a selfish desire if I am a good servant I want to be the best servant there is and I want my master to be pleased it's the master's glory it's the

master's mission it's the master's house that I am a steward in and for and I want that thing running like a well-oiled sewing machine and the better I can do I anticipate his pleasure and his companionship it is okay to endure because of hope in fact it's that's what hope is that's what it's for so the means of living our life and getting the work done is faith the outworking of it the reflection of it the manifestation of it is love love that is sacrificial to self and beneficial toward others yes I have the right to lead about a wife yes I have the right to get a check from you and all of these other churches but I will work with my own hands by the way he's going to go on to talk about something really interesting here in that regard I want to try to get to it so back in chapter 9 now in hope to be partaker of his hope in verse 10 so 9 11 if we have sewn spiritual things for you is it a great thing if we reap your material things makes perfect sense but there are others who partake of this right over you should not we even more nevertheless we have not used this right but we endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ lest we hinder the gospel now how do you hinder the gospel how can you be an impediment to the gospel Paul says in another place I tell you even weeping they are enemies of the cross you can be you know with friends like you the gospel doesn't need enemies what's the problem in the church today and its witness to the world it is hypocritical it is shallow it is self-seeking spend a lot more money on our state-of-the-art multimedia sanctuary then we send to our missionaries you know the air-conditioning bill is bigger than what we send you know to actually get things done we have not used this right lest we hinder do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar even so now get this what did we review in the previous chapters that are guidelines to making proper decisions with respect to our fellow believers self-control submission to authority peace what was the fourth one explicit commands of the Lord remember that the Lord has said no divorce except for pornea what is Paul's site here he says when I was thinking about whether or not I should accept support I've even got scripture on my side that says I should get it even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel the Lord has commanded it but verse 15 now you're gonna not do what scripture says you have a right to do I have used none of these things I have relied on none of these arguments I have obeyed none of these compelling arguments nor have I written these things to shame you into doing it oh shucks we didn't know we were supposed to be supporting the Apostle call the treasurer grab some shekels put them in a bag send a messenger Paul we're so sorry we didn't realize I have not written these things that it should be done so to me it would be better for me to die then now in your Bible there is a grammatical break right here you know every once in a while Paul just breaks off in mid-sentence it happens here and it's been smoothed over in virtually all English translations and even in some of the later Greek manuscripts people said well he just he just ends in mid-sentence but you remember when Moses was pleading before the Lord and he said he said yeah God said Moses stand back I'm gonna wipe out these people and make a new nation out of you and and Moses there's the big black dash where where Moses says Lord you know if not dash and he never even finishes the same thing happens here with Paul it would be better for me to die then and he doesn't even finish he just breaks it off and there is a new sentence that begins after the word

then and it is no one will make my boasting void no one shall make my boasting void it would be better for me to die then and he just leaves off and he says nobody's gonna make my boasting void is gonna make my and and what does this mean boasting I thought boasting was a bad thing Kaukaomai and Kaukema the noun that derives from it the best English translation that I can suggest for this is take pride in because Kaukaomai and Kaukema can be either positive or negative depending on what it's about for by grace are you saved through faith say with me yet that not of yourselves I can't hear you I'm gonna start over for by grace are you saved through faith louder and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast bad boasting right same word boast what did we have earlier in this very book let him who boasts not in Kaifas or Jesus or Paul or Apollos let him who boasts boast in the Lord good boasting so both to me always sounds kind of bad you know but what sounds good is it okay for a grandparent to take pride in a grandchild who's doing things and accomplishing things is it okay to take pride in somebody you love who is really doing something right I take is it okay to take pride in a job well done take pride in your work I was talking to Tony yesterday after he he did this and and we were talking about how whether it's tuning a piano or moving dirt or whatever there's an element of satisfaction when you know you've done a good job you can see where you've been if you run a bulldozer at the end of the day you can see where you've been for better or for worse the things don't I mean even driving it up the road it leaves these big cuts and you can see where you've been and if you do a good job you take pride in your work you can take pride in your military service you can take pride in your domestic service they've sort of addressed the issue of wives you know well what do you do you know you're going around the group and well you know I'm a salesperson for this and I'm a administrative assistant there and I'm a legal clerk here oh I'm just a housewife I just a housewife you can take pride in domestic accomplishment it's a huge thing there's no just in being a housewife it's a huge job try it sometime then so take pride in Calcutta oh my and what does he say it would be better for me to die then and the implication is rely on some of these arguments and make a bad decision no one will deprive me of what I take pride in Paul takes pride in doing the gospel mission his apostolic function at no cost that's what makes sense out of verse 16 for if I preach the gospel I have nothing to take pride in for necessity is laid upon me I thought he just said he was taking pride and now he's saying he's not two different things no one is going to void what I do take pride in he says I don't take pride in preaching the gospel he takes pride in something else if I preach the gospel I have nothing to take pride in for necessity is laid upon me I believe there was a little episode where the Lord struck him blind and said you're gonna be an apostle right he didn't sign up for that necessity was laid upon him woe is me if I do not preach the gospel it's my calling now just as a passing observation what is the pronoun here is it first person or second person what if this was a second person pronoun you know second person pronoun is right it's the person you're talking to necessity is laid upon you yes woe to you if you do not preach the gospel is that what he says he says me I got struck down got struck blind and the Lord commissioned me to be an apostle that's my calling woe to me if I don't fulfill my my calling and my calling is nothing to take pride in if there was any particular calling any particular gift that you could say wow look what God gave me for a

gift wouldn't you think it would be Apostle if an Apostle can't take pride in his gift who can he says I'm not taking pride in my assignment the Lord laid necessity on me for that but if I do this if I do a thing willingly if I do something willingly I have a reward but if against my will it's the exercise of a stewardship if you are asked to go a mile by a Roman soldier and you go that mile you have nothing to take pride in necessity is laid upon you if you go the extra mile that's you doing something voluntarily you were only told to go a mile but you went to it's the second mile you can take pride in it's what you did voluntarily beyond the minimum it's it's the over-and-above it's your expression of faith and hope and love beyond the minimum yes you go a mile go with him twain what I do willingly I have a reward if against my will I've been entrusted with a stewardship so if Paul is preaching the gospel as an Apostle he's not taking pride in it and he doesn't necessarily get a reward for it he's he's a he's a useful servant remember when Jesus said the the field servants come in and before they eat they make the meal for the for the master and they say we're unworthy servants we've done more than no more than what was required of us it's when you push above and beyond so what I do willingly I have a reward if against my will I'm entrusted with a stewardship and it's required in a steward that a man be found faithful and if you are required to show up for formation and you do they don't give you a medal you were required to do that so what is Paul's reward if he's doing something over and above what is his reward his reward is that when he preaches the gospel which is his required calling and duty I could present the gospel of Christ without charge my contribution is I'm not claiming any of the support what I'm doing voluntarily the Lord said you can be supported you can have a wife you can do all these things what Paul is laying on the altar voluntarily Leviticus chapter 1 the whole burnt offering it's voluntary what is he laying on the altar his right to be supported his right to be comforted with a wife and to be accompanied by her and have that companionship he that's the voluntary portion without charge that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel and he doesn't want to make an issue out of himself now you think about this what does this free Paul to do if the Corinthians were supporting him let's say two cities are supporting Paul let's say Philippi and Corinth are sending significant silver to Paul every month as he wants to travel and maybe go to Macedonia or go across the Hellespont he wants to go to Athens he wants to go to Mars Hill he wants to go back to Jerusalem what's the problem there's a couple of churches here that are pretty heavily invested in him and he's got to think about well I owe them they've got a little leverage here because they're the ones supporting me can I shouldn't neglect them you know these it complicates the picture you go back to your decision-making things would they this happens in large churches where you've got significant offering givers and they want the sanctuary painted yellow and somebody else wants it blue well who's gonna win well who's keeping the lights on in here they they've certainly got to say I mean this happens all the time people are influential when they've got the resources and it to try to fight that and try to be balanced and not have it misconstrued you know where's the balance point where you're not being antagonistic or unnecessarily disruptive but you lose peace are you a respecter of persons it just it complicates it and he says you know what because I'll give you a crude example but by not being affiliated with a denomination we as a group can go wherever we think the scripture is leading us I don't have to

worry about somebody playing a recording saying well you know our doctrinal covenant says this and you said that you're affiliated with us you know you've got to sign out front that's got our denominational name on it and we don't believe that we don't hold with that Jesus was crucified on Friday and you said Thursday or whatever to be free means you're answerable to the Lord and Paul says I have sacrificed out of love and with hope in faith this is my I take pride in this I'm happy to do it I think it lets me be even more effective in my calling as an Apostle is what he's saying so notice verse 19 though I am free from all men I have made myself a servant to all that I might win the more and this is what we're going to pick up next time he's going to use the word win five times and what does it mean to win them well the sixth reference is at the end of verse 22 he's going to become to the Jews like a Jew to those under the law like with somebody under the law to those outside the law as though he's outside the law to the weak he becomes weak in order that I might win the weak I become all things to all men that I might by all means and then he changes from win to save and I might by all means say he sacrifices he's a Jew he's a Hebrew the Hebrews he's a former Pharisee he can certainly claim in any context well sorry but I can't eat that meat right there I can't eat that meal right there I can't touch that right there because I'm a Jew and he could have the right to claim that but he says I have put all of that which is actually inconsequential what you eat you know the kingdom of heaven is not eating and drinking but what righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit the kingdom of heaven is not foods foods I do this for the gospel sake verse 23 that I may be partaker of it with you that's his hope in the future when the kingdom comes when the Lord Jesus returns and takes us to himself there is more opportunity more fruit more result well that's where he's heading but what would you say as a what would I say as a summary conclusion here what am I going to say for a summary conclusion can you guess we all have a periphery there are believers around us and what is a spiritual gift what is a spiritual function for what is why do we have it what's it supposed to do when Paul talks about spiritual gifts we'll see a little bit later on in this book he talks about it in Ephesians till we all as a unified body grow up to the standard of a mature man edified built up the body should be built up by that which every joint supplies every different part of the body contributes all of the body builds up whatever assignment we have and the whole body is not a mouth the whole body is not an ear the whole body is not a hand and the whole body is not a foot not everybody can go not everybody can do not everybody can teach not everybody can evangelize as a as a you know main thing we should all be ready to give an answer we should our life ought to be a witness as somebody once put in the lyrics of a great song your life will be your witness and scripture shows the way but we have an assignment gift of helps gift of communication some people are great prayer warriors some people are great examples of faith they have the gift of faith and their example people look at them and say wow I would have never been able to trust God in that circumstance in that way the way that person does and their faith as an example it's something that builds up the rest of the body they're not given faith they're given opportunities to express strong faith in a way that benefits everybody around them they can trust God for things and everybody else is kind of hanging on for the ride somebody's at the wheel saying God's going to get us through this storm they've got the gift of

faith and everybody else is just lashing themselves to the broken mass trying not to fall off the the boat gift of faith there's a lot of different gifts but these are the guidelines for their exercise there is a part of it that's obligatory I have a teaching pastoring function and I don't take pride in that it's it's what it's the card that God dealt to me for whatever reason but like I enjoy doing it under the radar I enjoy not having a large church I enjoy fellowship with you all and with everybody else that's joining us present and future and I don't mind that I don't have a permanent pulpit in a permanent building and an identity and a and an address I can give somebody when they say where's your church and I say well on what day it's but I take great pleasure in that and on having a job and working and it's that's my small little offering it's something I can do and I enjoy doing it and I I appreciate that I have the chance to do something like that but I would have to do this no matter what if I was chained to a pulpit in a big denominational church I would still be doing this I would have to you can't not do what God has given you to do you just you vibrate and shake apart it's like having one of your tires out of balance it faster you go that you for me it's just necessity is laid upon me you just can't not do it but there are parts of it that are voluntary you can do you can try to do over and above spend extra time try to do a better job just look for the voluntary part and exploit that and in the expectation that you're going to participate in the fruit if we can all come to a better understanding of scripture and it it multiplies I used to love this about being an artillery instructor it's one thing to be a good artilleryman and compute firing data and execute very well done missions it's something else to teach a whole room full of lieutenants who are going to go out do that and you multiply your effect you multiply your influence and you think I have a little part in the success of these far-flung artillery batteries in the army and in the Marine Corps a little bit of the of the good stuff that happens there I hope comes from me doing a good job as an instructor and I can take pride in that that I knock myself out trying to be the best instructor I could be make it the most effective and memorable material for these guys that are going to go out and and be abroad I think that's the way Paul felt I think that's the way anybody with any gift can feel when God causes his grace to flow through whatever gifting and opportunities he assigns to me I can the voluntary part the extra that I put into that I have the expectation that God is going to bless it and it's it's good I should expect to participate in that hope it's a good thing it all reflects the glory of the Lord Jesus and vindicates his work on the cross on our behalf so this is what Paul is trying he's trying to elevate the Corinthians out of their petty concerns about circumstances well which Apostle should I listen to who should I marry or not marry or separate from or continue in engagement with should I or should I not eat this meat that comes from the marketplace he says there are certain things I can give you firm guidance on there are other things you've got to figure out using these principles so he's giving us these timeless guidelines and flashlights to find our way through our particular circumstance well we'll pick up here in the middle of 1st Corinthians chapter 9 next time father thank you for the truth of your word thank you for how powerfully it speaks to each one of us it is so compact it is so concise and yet it is so dynamic and multifaceted and capable of informing and revealing your truth and your will in such a wide variety of circumstances we thank you for the Lord Jesus who is at the heart of it all from the first page to the last and we pray that our lives can also reflect his

glory both now and in the ages to come pray these things in Jesus name amen