



# freedom

1 Corinthians 8-11

SCPC term 3 2008

**sunday 10th august 2008**

**study 3 FREE FOR ALL 1 Corinthians 9:19-27**

KEY VERSE FOR SERIES: "nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others" 1 **Corinthians 10:24**

For most of us, flexibility is a challenge. And I'm not just talking about the ever-increasing challenge to touch your toes! Over many years we have consolidated patterns of behaviour and lifestyle that "work for us". But do they "work for others"? In particular, do they work to maximize our opportunities to present Christ "so that by all possible means [we] might save some"?

Last week Ryan challenged us with the simple but searching question: "what do you want?" We saw that what Paul wanted MOST OF ALL was to see people come to know salvation in Jesus Christ and so he freely set aside his right to other good things. This week the challenge continues as Paul reveals that the *detail* of what we need to sacrifice will change depending on who we're trying to reach but the *fact* of SELF-sacrifice remains a constant.

## some notes on questions

Q1. Picking up from where we left off last week, Paul uses this enigmatic statement (slavery is not usually self-imposed!) to explain how he uses his freedom for the good of others. Notice that he sees their good as winning them for Christ—that's Paul's constant ultimate goal. Later in the passage (verse 27) Paul returns to the image of self-imposed slavery to drive his point home. It should make us feel uncomfortable really. Do you think he is speaking purely metaphorically?

Q2. Steve says that there are 7 examples of the pattern in verses 19-23. I confess I could only spot 6. A Mintie to anyone who can spot the elusive 7th! This might be a good opportunity to consider what the groups might be in our context(s). Do Paul's groupings still apply?

Q3-4. Paul is a great example of someone who is completely "purpose-driven". Everything he does, he does for a reason. 1 REASON: that people might share in the blessings of Christ—redemption, forgiveness, and a restored relationship with God. Let's be honest—do we want to be like Paul? Why/why not?

Notice that Paul's all-consuming gospel passion doesn't make him boring and monotonous—quite the opposite! Are we guilty of stereotyping gospel work in our minds?

Q5. The contrast between temporary glory and eternal glory is worth exploring a bit. What is the actual prize for Paul?

Q6-9. As always, try to get the group talking personally in response to these questions—i.e. using phrases like "what this means for me..." and "I think I need to..." Encourage the group to think in terms of specific changes in thought or behaviour that they need to make arising from their study of God's word.