# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## BUILT DIFFERENT :

## *"A Disciple Pursues One More"*

**SCRIPTURE |** 1 Corinthians 9:1-27

## MEMORY VERSE

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

## MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT

Built different: disciples surrender rights and preferences so that One More meets Jesus.

## DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM

Share Your Story

## **OBSERVATION:** WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people to discuss the Observation and Interpretation questions.

### OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: PAUL'S FREEDOM AND RIGHTS

Read 1 Corinthians 9:1–6. Make a list of the questions that Paul asks.

*Suggested Response: Paul asks, "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" He says the Corinthians are the result of his work in the Lord and the seal of his apostleship. He also asks whether he and Barnabas have the right to food and drink, the right to take along a believing wife, and the right not to work for a living.*

### OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: PAUL'S RIGHT TO SUPPORT

Read 1 Corinthians 9:7–18. Paul gives a series of examples to explain that gospel workers have a right to support from those they minister to. Did Paul accept support? Why or why not?

*Suggested Response: Paul gives the examples of a soldier, a vineyard worker, and a shepherd. He quotes the law about not muzzling an ox while it is treading out the grain. He also mentions those who serve in the temple and at the altar. Paul says the Lord commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. But Paul also says he did not use this right. He put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ, and he preached the gospel free of charge.*

### OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: PAUL'S MISSION AND DISCIPLINE

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19–27. What does Paul say he becomes for different people? What images does he use to describe a disciplined life?

*Suggested Response: Paul says that though he is free, he has made himself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible. To the Jews he became like a Jew, to those under the law like one under the law, to those not having the law like one not having the law, and to the weak he became weak. He says he became all things to all people so that by all possible means he might save some. Paul then uses the images of a runner and a boxer. He says runners run to get a prize, athletes go into strict training, and he does not run aimlessly or fight like a boxer beating the air.*

## **INTERPRETATION:** WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

### INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: RIGHTS THAT SERVE THE GOSPEL

In 1 Corinthians 9:1–18, instead of taking what his rights allow, what does Paul demonstrate is more important?

*Suggested Response: Paul clearly shows that his rights are real. He has the right to be recognized as an apostle, the right to receive support, and the right to be provided for by the churches he serves. But Paul refuses to treat those rights as ultimate. He willingly lays them down because he does not want anything unnecessary to hinder the gospel. Paul teaches that disciples do not have to use every right they possess. When the mission of Jesus is the greater goal, rights can be surrendered for the sake of One More.*

### INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: FLEXIBILITY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

In 1 Corinthians 9:19–23, why does Paul change his approach and preferences?

*Suggested Response: Paul can change his approach, posture, habits, customs, and personal preferences. He can move toward Jews, Gentiles, and the weak in ways they can understand. But he cannot change the gospel, abandon obedience to Christ, or become dishonest in order to reach people. Paul says he is still "under Christ's law." His flexibility is not compromise. It is love. He removes unnecessary barriers so that different kinds of people can hear the same good news about Jesus.*

### INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: A DISCIPLINED LIFE FOR GOD'S MISSION

In 1 Corinthians 9:24–27, what does Paul's athletic imagery teach about a life arranged around the gospel?

*Suggested Response: Paul compares the Christian life to a runner training for a race and a boxer who does not swing aimlessly. His point is that disciples should not live casually or without direction. Freedom in Christ is not permission to drift. Paul disciplines his body, desires, habits, and preferences because the mission is worth the cost. He is not trying to earn salvation. He is showing that a disciple's life should be intentionally ordered around the gospel so that One More meets Jesus.*

## **APPLICATION:** HOW DO I RESPOND?

**QUESTION 1: In 1 Corinthians 9:1–6, Paul names rights he really had. What is a preference or expectation you tend to protect?**

*Suggested Response: I may quickly protect my comfort, schedule, reputation, money, opinions, personal space, or the way I think something should be done. Paul reminds us that having a real right does not mean I always need to use it. Sometimes love and mission call me to lay something down for the sake of someone else.*

*As your group responds, use follow-up questions to guide below surface-level responses. Encourage transparent responses.*

**QUESTION 2: Paul says he put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:12). What unnecessary barrier might your life place in front of someone hearing the gospel?**

*Suggested Response: An unnecessary barrier could be my tone, my impatience, my political arguments, my lack of hospitality, my unwillingness to listen, or my insistence on doing things only the way I prefer. The gospel itself may offend, but I do not want my pride or preferences to make it harder for someone to hear about Jesus.*

**QUESTION 3: In 1 Corinthians 9:15–18, Paul finds joy in preaching the gospel free of charge. Where might God be calling you to serve without needing recognition, credit, or repayment?**

*Suggested Response: God may be calling me to serve in my home, workplace, church, neighborhood, or group in a way that no one notices. Paul was not driven by applause or personal gain. He was driven by the stewardship God had entrusted to him. I can serve freely because Jesus has already given Himself freely for me.*

**QUESTION 4: Paul says he became all things to all people so that some might be saved (1 Corinthians 9:22). Who is one person you can trying harder to relate with?**

*Suggested Response: It may be a family member, neighbor, coworker, friend, or someone in my everyday routines who does not yet know Jesus. Moving toward them may require listening better, asking better questions, entering their world, adjusting my approach, or giving up the need to be comfortable. I do not change the gospel, but I may need to change how I love and communicate.*

**QUESTION 5: What is one preference you could surrender so that One More person has a clearer path to Jesus?**

*Suggested Response: I may need to surrender a preference about my time, schedule, music, ministry style, comfort zone, social habits, or the kind of people I naturally spend time with. The issue is not preference itself. The issue is whether my preferences have become more important to me than people meeting Jesus.*

**QUESTION 6: In 1 Corinthians 9:24–27, Paul compares his life to an athlete in training. What part of your life needs more discipline for the sake of the mission?**

*Suggested Response: I may need discipline in prayer, Scripture, generosity, hospitality, speech, rest, time management, or courage in spiritual conversations. Paul does not drift through life. He orders his life around the gospel. If One More meeting Jesus matters, then my habits need to be shaped by that mission.*

**QUESTION 7: How can our group help one another pursue One More without turning evangelism into pressure or performance?**

*Suggested Response: Our group can pray for specific people by name, encourage one another to share honestly about Jesus, celebrate small steps of obedience, and help each other remove unnecessary barriers. We do not need to force conversations or manufacture results. We can live with intention, speak with love, and trust God to use our surrendered lives so that One More meets Jesus.*