

**JUNE 12, 2022**  
**LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**  
**THE BILL OF SURRENDERED RIGHTS**  
**1 CORINTHIANS 9:1-18**  
**SPRING QUARTER WEEK 7 OF 7**

**Getting to Know Each Other Better**

**1. What do you always have in your pockets?**

I always have my car keys, my house and office keys and at least two ball point pens. And of course my cell phone.

How about you?

**Renewed by Grace/Equipped as Disciples**

**Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-18**

A few thoughts before I get to my notes on the questions -

- Verse 12 is the most important verse among the 18 we read. Here it is in the NASB - "Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ."
- We will be talking about rights in the discussion this week, and it will be important for you to help guide the group to think about how keeping or surrendering those rights affects the spread of the gospel. This passage is not about exercising rights that another Christian thinks are wrong (i.e. matters of conscience). This passage is about exercising, or not exercising, rights which will cause the gospel to not go forward. This needs to be kept front and center in the discussion. We are not thinking about yielding rights for the sake of other believers but rather for the sake of unbelievers so that they might come to hear and believe and be saved.
- I have written questions that will lead to discussion on what I believe to be the most important matters that relate to this topic. Feel free, as always, to add, subtract or modify my questions in ways that will best suit your group.
- May God be with you as you lead.

**Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-18 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15**

**2. When you think about the gospel and your rights, what thoughts come to mind? (v. 12)**

- **Can you think of any rights you would be unwilling to surrender if you were clearly shown that holding to that right would absolutely hinder the spread of the gospel?**  
All of the Christians I know would be willing to surrender any right they hold to, even the ones they hold most dearly to, if they could be shown clearly and convincingly how they would hinder the spread of the gospel of Christ if they continued to hold to that right. I believe this to be true of a great majority of those who call Emmanuel Faith home.

The reason I wrote this question is to let the groups discuss and come to the conclusion that each person in the group would make the sacrifices necessary to allow the gospel to go forward. They may struggle to get to that point, but I believe God would get them there and they would make the correct decision. The idea of struggle is behind the next bulleted question.

- **Are there rights you would struggle to surrender (but would in the end surrender) if you were clearly shown that holding to that right would absolutely hinder the spread**

### **of the gospel?**

I hope people will be honest on this one. What are today's issues that might come up in your discussion? Free speech. The right to bear arms. Vaccine mandates. Mask mandates. LGBTQ+ issues. Parent's rights in schools.

The challenge for this question and the one before it is to show how holding to a particular right or yielding it would hinder or help the gospel to go forward. If that connection can't be made, then it doesn't fit the scope of our discussion for this week. I think, too, that the burden of persuasion rests with the people who think that certain rights should be yielded. Whatever the right is, if a person thinks it should be yielded, they have to show how yielding it moves the needle in a positive direction.

- **Do you think American Christians are hindering the gospel as they fight to hold onto certain rights? If so, which ones and why?**
- 3. **It seems many Christians want other Christians to give up the rights they are willing to give up (that is, Christian "A" believes he or she should give up "Right A" and wants all Christians to also give up "Right A" as a sign and signal that they are also "true followers of Christ" like Christian "A" is). How do we live with each other in the family of God, "maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3), when we may share wildly different ideas about what rights we should or should not yield?**

This may be an even bigger issue that hinders the spread of the gospel than the issue of Christians who are unwilling to yield their rights. When Christians are fighting with each other about what rights we should or shouldn't yield, that doesn't make the family of God look very appealing or inviting to someone who is an unbeliever. (When you were a kid, did you really want to go over to your friend's house if all that family ever did was argue and fight? Of course not.)

We are taught in Ephesians 4:3 that we are to be about "maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." We are taught in John 13:35 that "by this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." We are taught in Galatians 5:14-15, "14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another." And there are many other verses we could use. The point is that our infighting certainly hurts our gospel witness.

How do we continue to do a better job at living with each other and with our different understandings of things? That is the purpose of this question.

One of my main answers to this question is - We cannot expect others to yield the rights we are willing to yield and others should not expect us to yield the rights they are willing to yield. If we could just do that, I think it would pretty much solve the problem. But we don't do that. We try to control and shame others for not seeing things our way. That certainly isn't biblical. Rather, if you think you should yield a right in a certain area for the sake of the gospel, then yield it. No one is stopping you. But don't impose your sense of what needs to be yielded onto me. And I won't impose my sense of what needs to be yielded onto you. (One of the things Ryan said today which I really appreciated was that each person has to "pray it out" and arrive at their own conclusions about these matters and what they will do to keep the gospel moving forward.

These are personal decisions. We should trust the Holy Spirit to work in each heart.)

I wonder what your group will say?

**4. How do we continue to grow into a people who want the love of Christ to control us more than we want our rights or to get what we deserve? (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)**

This is a challenging idea that Ryan brought up. We need to keep moving forward and becoming people who want the gospel to expand more than we want to maintain our rights. We need to keep moving forward and becoming a people who are controlled and compelled by the love of Christ and who live for Him alone. ("14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." 2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

How do you think we continue to do that?

- Pray and ask God to change our hearts. He can give us the desires we need to have.

"13 For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."  
Philippians 2:13

"4 Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4

"10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me." Psalm 51:10

- Practice letting the love of Christ control us rather than focusing on getting what we think is our right or what we deserve.

It might not relate to gospel issues right away, but we can practice dying to ourselves and living more of a life that is controlled by the love of Christ (both His love for us and His love for others). We can train ourselves to lay down our rights on lesser things so that when we are asked to do so for the sake of the gospel we can more easily and readily do it.

- Consider following Ryan's three points about how to be a person of influence -
  - Listen to people's stories.
  - Defer to their weakness.
  - Do what's best for them. (The definition of agape love.)
    - Remember Gal. 5:13 and the idea that "You can be a Christian without rights but you cannot be a Christian without love."
- View our lives as a stewardship.
- Realize our ultimate reward is far greater than any joy or utility we would derive from exercising our earthly rights (when given the choice between the two).

**Sent in Love**

5. Is there a right you can give up this week for the sake of the gospel? What is it and why did you choose it?

If there is not, is there a right you can give up as a training exercise?

**A few final thoughts -**

As always there is more here than you have time to cover. Please pray about which questions you should focus on and which ones you should maybe skip. I trust He will lead you.

This is the final set of leaders' notes until the fall. We will be sure to let you know what is going on with the calendar as the summer moves along.

Thank you for an amazing year of loving and leading your group.

You all are the best and I appreciate you very much.