

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:17-24

**Live in light of God's assignment—7:17** (cf. 7:12-16)

- 1) Live according to God's design—7:17a <sup>17</sup> *Only, ... in this manner he must walk.*
  - a) *as God has assigned to each one,*
  - b) *as the Lord has called each one,*
  - c) Whether married or unmarried, whether slave or free. Focus on serving Christ in whatever place or status rather than trying to escape to something "better".
- 2) Paul was being consistent in his teaching—7:17b *And in this manner I direct in all the congregations.* (cf. 4:17; 11:16; 14:33)

**Obeying God is what really matters—7:18-20**

- This refers to the effective call that always results in salvation, as compared to the general call that presents the gospel that may or not be embraced.
- 1) Questions concerning your ETHNIC status—7:18
    - a) Jews should not try to mask their Jewishness—7:18b <sup>18</sup> *Was anyone called while circumcised? He should not become uncircumcised.*
    - b) Gentiles should not try to become cultural Jews—7:18b *Was anyone called in uncircumcision? He should not get circumcised.*
  - 2) Keep your focus on what matters—7:19 <sup>19</sup> *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but (what really matters is) the keeping of God's commandments.*
  - 3) Command—7:20 <sup>20</sup> *Each one should remain in the life situation in which he was called.*

**Serve God where you are—7:21-24**

- 1) Question concerning your SOCIAL status—7:21-22 <sup>21</sup> *Were you called while a bonds slave?*
  - a) Commands—7:21
    - i) Serve Christ while you are a slave—Do not be worried about it; (cf. Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:23; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:1-2)
    - ii) An exception—*but if you are able to become free, rather do that.*
  - b) Reasons—7:22
    - i) <sup>22</sup> *For he who is called in the Lord while a bonds slave is the Lord's freedman.*
      - (1) There were certain obligations of the freedman:
        - (a) He bore the family name of the one providing the freedom
        - (b) He lived in the house of the one providing the freedom
        - (c) He rendered service to the one providing the freedom
        - (d) He received gifts from the one providing the freedom
        - (e) He rendered respect to the one providing the freedom
      - ii) *Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's bonds slave.*
  - 2) Ownership—7:23 <sup>23</sup> *You<sup>pl</sup> were bought [agorazo] with a price; do not become bonds slaves of people. (because you belong to Christ)*
  - 3) Command—7:24 <sup>24</sup> *Brothers, each one should remain before God in this in which he was called.*
    - a) **All** social conditions are capable of being used to glorify God.
    - b) This differs dramatically from the Stoic trust in impersonal Fate.

**Take-home truth:** Changing my situation is not a prerequisite to obeying God