

1st 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 ¹⁷ 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 ¹⁸ *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 ¹⁹ *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but (what really matters is) the keeping of God's commandments.*
 - 3) Command—7:20 ²⁰ *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 ²¹ *Were you called while a bondslave?*
 - 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; 1st Timothy 6:1-2)
 - ii) An exception—but if you are able to become free, rather do that.
 - b) Reasons—7:22
 - i) ²² *For he who is called in the Lord while a bondslave 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 bondslave.*
 - 2) Ownership—7:23 ²³ *You^{pl} were bought [agorazo] with a price; do not become bondslaves of people.* (because you belong to Christ)
 - 3) Command—7:24 ²⁴ *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