

Christ in Every Condition

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

17 Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches.

18 Was any man called when he was already circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised.

19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.

20 Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called.

21 Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather [m]do that.

22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.

23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

24 Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that condition in which he was called.

Passage Summary:

“Paul endeavored to convince his readers that their relation to Christ was compatible with any social relation or position.” New converts to the Christian faith are often of the opinion that the only way to show gratitude to God for the gift of salvation is to become a minister or missionary of the gospel. This is commendable but not necessary. The Lord calls his people in all walks of life to follow him. He wants them to be Christian fathers and mothers,



Christian husbands and wives, Christian employers and employees. Each one should fulfill the role the Lord has assigned to him or her and live (literally, walk) accordingly.”

Kistemaker, Simon J., and William Hendriksen. 1953–2001. Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Vol. 18. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

I. One Principle - Thrice Repeated: “Remain as You Are”

- Paul says, as God has **assigned** to each one. What is the significance of that word “assigned”?
 - Do you view even difficult circumstances in life as unfortunate events or as assignments from God?
 - How will viewing our circumstances as being “assigned by God” change the way we think/live?
 - Twice in v. 17, Paul uses the word **each**. He says “as God has assigned to **each** one” and, “as God has called **each**.” What is the significance of this word, *each*?
What can we learn from it?



- Paul uses two illustrations: circumcision and slavery. Both were big deals in the culture of the day. They represent religious heritage and social status. What are some things like these today that a Christian might feel pressure to change or wish was different?
 - ➡ Is there anything in your life which you feel “self-conscious” about and feel pressure to change? Where/how do we feel pressure to change our circumstances in the church today?

- Paul tells the Corinthians three times not to focus on external circumstance or condition. Why do you think we are so tempted to focus on the external things like circumstance? Why is this a danger for the Christian?
 - ➡ Do *you* find that your focus is on *your* condition and desiring it to change?
 - ➡ How do we shift our focus to serving Christ in our condition?

- Does Scripture forbid *ever* changing our circumstance? Why or why not? What example is given in verse 21?

- Consider the following passage:

2 Corinthians 12:7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! **8** Concerning this



I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. **9** And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. **10** Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

- What was Paul’s “condition” or circumstance?
- Did Paul pray regarding his circumstance? How did he pray about it?
- Does God grant Paul’s request for a change of circumstance?
- What is the reason God gives Paul for allowing him to continue in a “bad condition”?

How is Paul’s “bad condition” made good?

- ➡ How might this also be true of your current circumstances?
- ➡ Should we bring our difficult circumstances to God? If so, who should we pray about them? **Cf. 1 Peter 5:7, Lk 18:1-8, Phil. 4:6**

- Consider another passage:

Philippians 1:12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, **13** so that my imprisonment in *the cause of* Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, **14** and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. **15** Some, to be sure, are



preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; **16** the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; **17** the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. **18** What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice.

- What was Paul's circumstance?
- What were some of the results or outcomes of his circumstance?
- What was Paul's attitude about his condition?

- What are some other examples from Scripture of people who served and glorified God in the midst of a "bad condition" or difficult circumstance?
 - ➡ Who are some other examples you can think of from church history or today?

Prayer Topics:

- Pray that God would help each member of ABC to walk in the manner in which they were called – seeking to bring Him glory in whatever our present circumstance.

