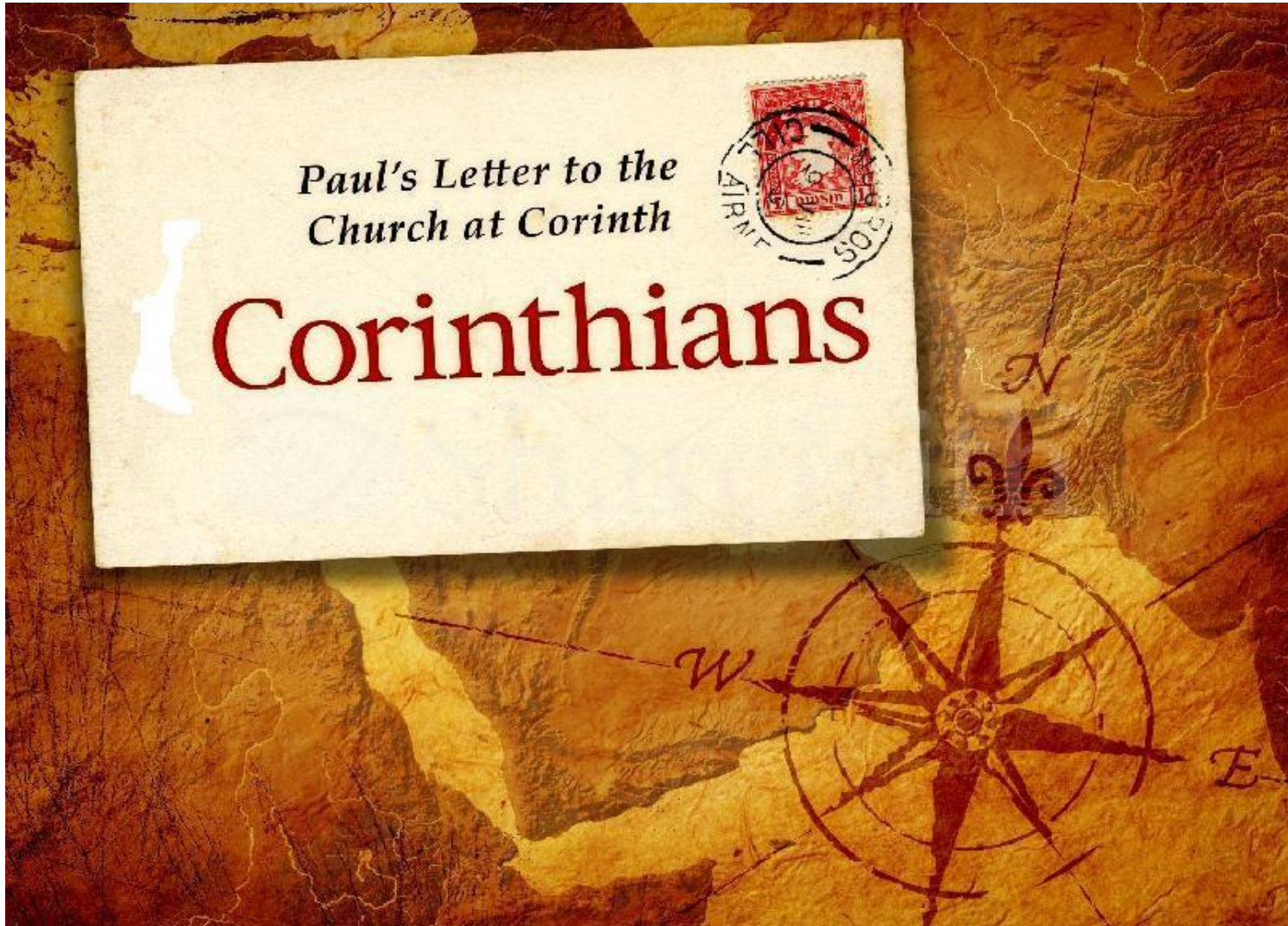


1 Cor.7:17-24 The Stay-As-You-Are Principle



Last Week Reviewed *



Paul's Concession Not Command 7:6

- Paul did not command this separation but allowed it for a time period to address the problem that was ongoing.

Single Life Is a Desirable State 7:7

- Being single is a gift from God! (Paul's desire)
- Being married is a gift from God!

Directed To the Unmarried and Widows 7:8-9

About Staying Single 7:8

- It is good for them if they remain even as I.

About Getting Married 7:9

- But if they do not have self-control, let them marry.

*adapted from McCalley

Last Week Reviewed*



Directed to the Married Believers 7:10-11

The Obedience of Maintaining a Marriage 7:10

- that the wife should not leave her husband
- Matthew 19:6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh.
What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.

The Disobedience of Leaving a Marriage 7:11

- but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband
- now the same instruction for the husband in v:10-11

*adapted from McCalley

Last Week Reviewed*



Directed To the Mixed Marriages 7:12-16

The Mixed Marriage Described 7:12-14

- If any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her.
- It's the same for the woman believer.
- The unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife.
- It's the same for the wife.

The Mixed Marriage Dissolved 7:15-16

- Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave.
- The brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.
- For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? (same for the husband)

*adapted from McCalley

Today's Outline*



The Doctrine of Status Quo 7:17-24

a. The General Understanding Required of the New Believer

Understanding of Earthly Assignment 7:17a

Understanding of Our Heavenly Calling 7:17b

b. The Specific Understanding Required of the New Believer

The “stay as you are” principle 7:18

The Explanation of “stay as you are” 7:19

The Exhortation to “stay as you are” 7:20

The Exception to “stay as you are” 7:21-22

The Clarification of “stay as you are” 7:23

The Reiteration of “stay as you are” 7:24

* adapted from McCalley

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 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.

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.



only in this manner

Paul will now describe how believers are to live in light of their earthly situation.

main verb: let him walk - *peripateō* - signifying the whole round of the activities of the individual life

- Eph 5:2a and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us
- Eph 5:8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light
- Eph 5:15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise



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.

- two prepositional phrases modify “let him walk”

1st as the Lord has assigned to each one

has assigned – *merizō* - means to deal out or to apportion

- This assumes the sovereignty of God over the lot of each believer in life. McCalley
- marriage, circumcised, uncircumcised, slave, freeman

2nd as God has called each

has called - *kaleō* - it is used particularly of the Divine call to partake of the blessings of redemption;
- every believer has been called, this is one of the many riches of God’s grace

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.



There are a number of specific passages* that tell of that to which believers are called.

- we are called to fellowship (I Cor 1:9)
- to inner peace (Col 3:15)
- to the Holy Spirit and truth (2 Thess 2:13-14)
- to eternal life (I Timothy 6:12)
- to His marvelous light (I Peter 2:9)
- to patience when sinned against (I Peter 2:20-21),
- to confer blessing and to inherit blessing (I Peter 3:9)
- to glorification (I Peter 5:10)

* McCalley

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.



Was any man called when he was already circumcised?

- circumcised man = the sign of being Jewish
- this man became a believer from the Jewish people
- Was any certain person divinely summoned when he was in a state of circumcision? Wuest

He is not to become uncircumcised.

- The verb “become uncircumcised” describes a procedure that camouflaged circumcision. McCalley
- A Jewish believer will not be more pleasing to God by trying to eradicate his Jewishness.

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.



Has anyone been called in uncircumcision?

- This would be speaking of Gentile believers.

He is not to be circumcised.

- Paul spends much of his time in Galatians discouraging believers from being circumcised
- Gal 6:13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you (Gentile believers) circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh.
- Be content with where you are at!

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



Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing.

- Circumcision was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham in Gen 17.
- Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

but *what matters is* the keeping of the commandments of God.

- In the age of grace how are we to keep the commandments of God?
- Gal 5:16b --- walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

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



each man – speaking of believers

must remain – lit: must constantly remain

in that condition - *klēsis* - a calling; the condition in which the calling finds one; “situation” in the NIV

in which he was called - *kaleō* - it is used particularly of the Divine call to partake of the blessings of redemption

- So this verse says remain in the situation you were in when you became a Christian.
- The following verses will clarify what Paul means.

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



- now Paul gives an example of the principle in v:20

Were you called while a slave?

Paul's answer is given in two parts:

1st – do not worry about it

- Let not that be a concern to you. Wuest

2nd - but if you are able also to become free, rather do that

- rather take advantage of the opportunity Wuest
- Whatever our condition on earth may be does not handicap us in our relationship to the Lord. McCalley

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.



For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman.

- so Paul speaks to the Corinthians who have trusted Christ as their Savior.
- Paul then reminds them of their freedom in Christ from “the slavery of sin.”
 - John 8:36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.
 - Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.
 - Gal 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free.

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.



likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave

- Now Paul takes the opposite situation where a Corinthian trusts Christ as his Savior and is not a slave.
- Paul then points out that every believer is Christ's slave but this slavery is true freedom.
 - Eph 6:6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.
 - Col 3:24b --- It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.
 - 1 Peter 2:16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.

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



You were bought with a price.

- Paul is speaking of our salvation.
- We were bought out of the marketplace of sin.
- The price required was Christ's death.
 - 1 Cor 6:20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Do not become slaves of men.

- In all earthly service, he is to recognize that his service is to God, not men. McCalley
- Eph 6:6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

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



subject: brethren = each one

verb: is to remain – *menō* – abide, dwell in a state or condition

modifier: with God

- we are to abide by faith in God

John 15:4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

- This is the starting point for our Christian life.

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



in that *condition* in which he was called

in the *sphere* in which he was divinely summoned

Wuest

in the previous verses (starting back in verse 8)

- If unmarried stay unmarried*
- If widowed stay widowed*
- If married to an unbeliever stay married*
- If circumcised stay circumcised
- If uncircumcised stay uncircumcised
- If slave stay a slave*
- If freeman stay freeman

* Paul gave additional instructions

Final Thoughts*



Whatever our condition on earth may be does not handicap us in our relationship to the Lord.

All secular conditions, whether of family life or social caste, may be the vehicles of the expression of Christian character. Earthly condition is irrelevant; Christian character is everything.

* McCalley