

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians

Grow Where You Were Planted

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

1. **The Emphasizing of the Principle** (vs.17, 20, 24)

In this chapter, Paul is been giving instructions regarding the requirements, obligations, and benefits of various social conditions of marriage (vs.1-6), divorce (vs. 10-16), and singleness (vs.7-9, 25ff). The Corinthians were confused concerning the spiritual ramifications of various physical activities or social covenants. Paul corrects this misunderstanding by repeating the command that people are to remain in the social condition that they were in when they were saved.

2. **The Examples and Exceptions of the Principle** (vs.18-21)

Paul further explains this principle using both ethnic identities, where someone is identified by whether or not one is circumcised (vs.18-19), and economic conditions or social caste (vs.21-22). There is no greater or lesser righteousness intrinsic to any of these realities. A Christian's sanctification is not necessarily benefited because of any societal, ethnic, commercial, or gender distinction (cf. Gal. 3:28). It is good and advantageous for a slave to become free or for an unmarried person to become married when the Lord enables it (v.21b). However, these changes should not be sought after believing them to be necessary for godliness (cf. Gal. 5:2) or as paths of greater faithfulness or usefulness to the Lord.

3. **The Emphasis of the Principle** (vs.22-24)

The Christian is not to regard himself with the value that the worldly system assigns to his station, rather he is to regard himself in relation to Christ (cf. James 1:9-10). The price which Christ paid was not so that you could elevate yourself to a status which has more societal importance or comfort. It was to save you where you were so that you could be a shining example of God's gracious salvation and to show the foolishness of what the worldly systems deem to be superior (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26ff).