

Summit Woods Baptist Church
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class
1 Corinthians 7:17-24

❖ Day 1

Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-24.

For these lessons, the sermon text is provided in a format that visually helps display the structure of the paragraph or section of text. The verbs are underlined. The main clauses remain to the left, and the supporting clauses are either directly underneath when they have equal priority to what comes before, or are tabbed to the right when the clause supports, develops or explains previous clauses. Suggested themes in the text are provided in the box on the left. As the class progresses, you will have the opportunity to learn how to do this yourself.

*Remain as you were called

Example 1: Circumcision

- a. Circumcision or not does not matter
- b. Keeping God's commands matters

*Remain as you were called

Example 2: Indentured Servitude

- a. The slave is free in Christ
- b. The free man is slave to Christ

*So, remain as you were called
(Except perhaps to gain your earthly freedom
(or to marry))

¹⁷Only

let each person lead the life
that the Lord has assigned to him,
and to which God has called him.

This is my rule in all the churches.

¹⁸Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised?

Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision.

Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised?

Let him not seek circumcision.

¹⁹For neither circumcision counts for anything
nor uncircumcision,
but keeping the commandments of God.

²⁰Each one should remain

in the condition in which he was called.

²¹Were you a bondservant when called?

Do not be concerned about it.

(But if you can gain your freedom,
avail yourself of the opportunity.)

²²For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord.

Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ.

²³You were bought with a price;

do not become bondservants of men.

²⁴So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called,
there let him remain with God.

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1. Grammatically, what is the function of “only” (“nevertheless” in some translations) at the beginning of this paragraph?

2. What is the primary instruction of the passage?
 - a. Where in the passage do you see this instruction repeated?

3. Is this instruction *only* a response to the Corinthians’ letter to Paul? What in the passage informs your answer?

4. To demonstrate that he is presenting a bigger-picture concept than just relating to one’s marital status, what two examples does Paul use for illustration?

5. List some possible things that might motivate a believer who was uncircumcised at the time of salvation to “seek circumcision.”

6. List some possible things that might motivate a believer who was circumcised prior to salvation to want to “remove the marks of circumcision.”

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7. What might a Jew say to Paul about circumcision and “keeping the commandments of God”? (See Genesis 17:10-14)

8. How might Paul respond? (See Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 2:25-29; Galatians 5:1-6; Hebrews 7:12, 18-19)

❖ Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 again.

9. How does Paul tell the believer who is a bondservant to view his servitude?

10. Does being a bondservant prevent one from being a faithful Christian? Why or why not?

11. What impact should Paul’s mention of the Lord assigning and calling have on a person’s perspective on his/her life circumstances?

12. What does Paul say in this passage that indicates that the admonition to remain as you were at your calling is not to be applied legalistically?

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13. How does Paul say the one who is a bondservant to men should view himself in relation to Christ?

14. How does he say the one who is free should view himself in relation to Christ?

15. In what ways does union with Christ make all believers freedmen of the Lord?

16. In what ways does union with Christ make all believers bondservants of Christ?

❖ Day 3

Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 again.

17. What common heart issues can you see Paul addressing in all four of the people in his examples (circumcised, uncircumcised, bondservant, free)?

18. Where else in this letter has Paul used the phrase “you were bought with a price”?

a. What did he say they were to do as a result (in 6:20)?

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b. How does that relate to this passage?

19. What circumstance in your own life (that is not an active sin) do you think hinders your ability to serve Christ faithfully?

a. What impact does this passage have on your perspective?

20. Paul puts this instruction in the middle of his teaching about marriage and singleness. How do you think he expects them to apply it to marriage and singleness?

21. Summarize the passage in one or two sentences.

In preparation for Sunday, pray that we would be content in and trust the Lord with our circumstances. Pray that we would be willing to remain in our current circumstances, whatever they may be. Pray that we would be alert to the ministry opportunities those circumstances provide and that we would serve the Lord faithfully where we are. Pray that we would not discount or over inflate the potential ministry impact of any believer based on his or her social or economic circumstances.