

I Corinthians 7:17-28

As a Christian what can I expect will change?

- **What do you think?**
 - "God helps those who help themselves." **Must I be instrumental in all changes in my life and world?**
 - "God help me to change what I can and accept what I can't." **How can I know what I can change?**
 - "What are you doing under the circumstances?" **Can I escape all negative circumstances?**
 - "The most important question to ask a counselor is, - What is your theology of change?" **What really is the key to a changed life?**
- **What can we realistically expect to change as a result of coming to Christ?**
 1. Our Behavior
 2. Our feelings
 3. Our minds
 4. Our hearts
 5. **Our circumstances**
- **What is God's responsibility and what is ours? Two extremes**
 1. "Let Go and Let God" - faith, Prayer, Promises
 2. "God helps those who help themselves" - Ethics, Warnings, Exhortations
 3. Phil.2:13 "For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."
- **Sometimes faith enables us to -**
 - - remove mountains
 - - climb mountains
 - - endure the mountain falling on us

A. Circumcision - Some religious and cultural traditions need not change before we can follow Christ.

"¹⁷ Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the churches. ¹⁸ Was any man called {already} circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. ¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but {what matters is} the keeping of the commandments of God."

- **Much of our place in life may be a function of God's unique calling for our lives.**
- **Paul's teaching on this subject is not restricted to Corinth but is universal.**
- **The New Covenant commandments of God supersede the old.**

B. Slavery - Some class, social, and economic issues need not change before we can follow Christ.

"²⁰ Let each man 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, let each man remain with God in that {condition} in which he was called.”

- The term “condition” is literally “calling.”
- Our social political circumstances may be beyond our ability to change but this does not mean that we need be victims.
- God wants to work with us in our real circumstances not our ideal world.
- Seeking to change unjust circumstances is desirable but not necessary.

C. Marriage - Some marital issues need not change before we can follow Christ.

“25 Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. 26 I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But if you should marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.”

- Three issues that need not change for me to follow Jesus - culture, class, family.
- The present spiritual climate may influence our wisdom in changing our circumstances.
- Changing our circumstances is not sinful but it may be unnecessary and unwise.
- We must decide what kind of trouble we want to deal with.

D. The point of this text -

***How we live is more important
than where we do it.***

E. How can I know what to change and what to accept?

- Follow the burden of your heart. **II Cor.12:1-10**
- Stare with a commitment to learn and worship before you commit to change your circumstances. **Phil.4:10-13**
- Refine your priorities. **Rom.12:1-2**

F. What will change in the Kingdom?

- My appearance or how I see myself?
- My gifts, role, place or how they fit?
- My environment or how I use it?
- My situation or how I respond to it?
- My neighbors or my love for them?

“You can change more than you think

but it may take longer
and be harder than you imagine.”