

BLOOM WHERE YOU 'RE PLANTED

-MESSY (BUT BEAUTIFUL) CHRISTIANITY, WEEK 24-

1 Corinthians 7:17-24 (NIV)



¹⁷ Nevertheless,

A₁ each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them.

This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.

¹⁸ Was a man already circumcised when he was called?

He should not become uncircumcised.

B₁ Was a man uncircumcised when he was called?

He should not be circumcised.

¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing.

Keeping God's commands is what counts.

C ²⁰ Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

²¹ Were you a slave when you were called?

Don't let it trouble you—

although if you can gain your freedom, do so.

B₂ ²² For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ's slave.

²³ You were bought at a price;

do not become slaves of human beings.

²⁴ Brothers and sisters,

A₂ each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Live _____ for _____ regardless of your
_____, _____, or _____ status

...by _____ you _____ and must _____.

...by _____ that _____ is essentially meaningless.

...by _____ the _____ God has for _____ your _____.

How would you describe the unique place you have been “planted?”?

How can you “bloom” for Christ in this situation?

What is one step you can take this week to move toward this goal?

“Paul’s intent is not to lay down a rule that one may *not* change; rather, by thus hallowing one’s station in life, he is trying to help the Corinthian believers see that their social status is ultimately irrelevant as such, in the sense that they can live out their Christian life in any of the various options; therefore their desire to change is equally irrelevant—because it has nothing to do with genuine spirituality as their slogan would apparently infer [7:1].”

“Paul’s point, then, is not that one must stay in the situation that one was in when called. Rather it is precisely as the imperative in [v. 21] implies: Whatever your situation was at the time of your call, don’t let that become a concern to you. One’s calling in Christ raises one above that urgency. In the context, after all, Paul is still addressing those who feel compelled to dissolve their marriages. Change may occur, but one’s calling in Christ means that change is unnecessary, and certainly not to be a compulsion.”

“In an exceedingly mobile culture, in which upward mobility is almost a sacred duty, a passage like this does not get an easy hearing. On the one hand, there are those who think so poorly of their status that they find difficult seeing it as a place in which to live out their calling as believers. The standard formula begins, “Oh, I’m just a” On the other hand, the tendency of most is to see status as significant, and change as necessary. The two points Paul makes need to be heard anew. (1) In terms of one’s relationship with God, status of any kind is totally irrelevant. A person is simply no better off one way or another. That does not mean that in a culture that provides opportunity one should not seek ‘to better oneself.’ But it does mean that one whose life has been determined by God’s call should not put any stock in doing so. (2) Precisely because our lives are determined by God’s call, not by our situation, we need to learn to continue there as those who are ‘before God.’ Paul’s concern is not with change as such, one way or the other, but with ‘living out one’s calling’ in whatever situation one is found. There let one serve the Lord, and let the call of God sanctify to oneself the situation, whether it be mixed marriage, singleness, blue- or white-collar work, or socioeconomic condition” (Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 344, 352, 356).