

## ABIDING IN THE SAME CALLING

“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called” (1 Corinthians 7:20 and verses 17-24).

### Change is Necessarily Involved in Being a Christian

Becoming a child of God changes and requires change in many things regarding the “old man” one used to be and the new man who must now “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4-6).

He has been changed so that he may now enjoy:

- \* Freedom from his sins
- \* A new relationship with God, Christ, and other believers
- \* Assembling on the first day with fellow-Christians

He must also change (1 Cor. 6:11):

- \* Immoral traits such as fornication and adultery
- \* Personal habits which need to be controlled such as temper, foul speech, and drinking to excess
- \* Involvements which would harmfully reflect upon Christ or His church
  - ~ Working as a bartender
  - ~ Selling dope
  - ~ Operating a night-club

### But the Christian May Remain in Some Things as He Was

There are situations wherein a Christian may “ABIDE in the same calling.” Since the old Law does not now apply (Heb. 10:9), there are some things which are not now required. Circumcision is one of those things. It is not necessary that a circumcised Christian seek to become uncircumcised -- he may simply remain as he is since circumcision does not violate Christian principles. In accord with Paul’s judgment, Timotheus was circumcised (Acts 16:1-3), Titus was not (Gal.2:2-5), and Paul submitted to those who would have been offended had he not agreed with circumcision (Acts 21:21-26). While it is not required by God, if one chooses to refrain from eating pork he may continue this personal preference and “abide” in the preference which was his at his calling. If he wishes to refrain from eating ANY flesh, that is his decision, for eating flesh is not required by God (Rom. 14:1-3).

### But Some Things May be Changed

There are some things, however, which do not require change but which could be changed if opportunity were presented.

One of those things is that of being a “servant” or slave (1 Cor. 7:21-23). Of this situation Paul wrote, “Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide

with God” (1 Cor. 7:24). But he also provided, “If thou mayest be free, use it rather” (verse 22). This provision could include anything not contrary to the principles of Christianity.

### As It Concerns Marriage

These comments were made in regard to the matter of marriage. In that context he wrote, “But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches” (verse 17). As in many other passages, examples are used to illustrate the truth under consideration and to show its proper application. Peter referred to the flood in speaking

of baptism (1 Pet. 3:20-21), Jesus used “the lilies of the field” in showing God’s concern for His people (Mt. 6:28-

30), and Paul in teaching about tongues spoke of the trumpet giving “an uncertain sound” (1 Cor. 14:8). These conditions regarding circumcision and being a servant serve to illustrate the various positions in which we may find ourselves when called by the gospel.

Should one’s marriage status be improper and not in accord with God’s will, then he must cease that relationship. Should one’s marriage relationship be approved of God, even though it be to an unbeliever, then he must “seek not to be loosed” (verse 27). If one is unmarried, then he must not consider it necessary to be married (27), for under certain conditions (verse 26) it might be best that one remain single (verse 26). But under no circumstance is Paul suggesting that one remain in an IMPROPER marriage relationship! If this was what Paul was saying, then, for example, a Moslem with four wives (permitted under Islamic law) could maintain that same condition and retain his four wives when he converted to Christianity. This passage DOES NOT teach nor does it allow one to continue in an unscriptural marriage relationship -- regardless of what may be fashionable in the society among whom we live.

Paul is simply saying that becoming a Christian does not require a change in matters which are already in accord with the will of God. Those matters which are not acceptable to God must, of course, be changed.

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