

Small Group Study Guide

The Mind of Christ: Living the Life God Gives You
1 Corinthians 7:17-24

Introduction: After a few weeks off, we are back to our study of 1 Corinthians. We are continuing to take a look at the mind of Christ on various issues that had surfaced in the church in Corinth.

To remind ourselves of the context read 1 Corinthians 7:1-16

1. What has Paul been talking about in the earlier part of this chapter?

Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-24

2. What is the connection between what Paul has been talking about in 7:1-16 and what he talks about here in 7:17-24?
3. What is Paul saying in verse 17? What's the point?
4. Paul gives two examples of living the life God has "assigned" in this passage. What are the two examples? Why do you think he choose those two examples?
5. What does he say to the believer who finds himself in the state of either circumcision or uncircumcision (v. 18-20)? Why?
6. What does he say to the person who came to faith while he or she was a slave (v. 21-24)?

<p>Note on slavery from Steve's sermon: When we hear the term slavery, we think of American slavery in the Deep South. But slavery in the Roman empire of Paul's day was usually quite a bit more humane. Slaves were actually a part of the household and were often treated quite well. Sometimes slaves had positions of responsibility and authority (government officials, teachers, artists, etc.). But the fact remained: they were still slaves; they were not free to live where they wanted and do what they wanted.</p>

7. Paul gives a theological perspective about being a slave or a free person (v. 22-23). How does that theological perspective apply to us?
8. How would you summarize the main point Paul is making in 7:17-24?
9. Is there a verse that best captures his point?
10. Circumcision/uncircumcision or slave/free were two things that God had assigned to many of the believers in the Corinthian church. What kinds of things has God “assigned” to us in our lives?

Steve said:

I suspect that we would all say that we believe in the sovereignty of God: things don't happen without His knowledge and permission. But do you believe in the sovereignty of God in your life – even before you came to faith in Christ? Do you see how God has given you the life that you have – even the things that are incredibly difficult for you?

11. Do you find it hard to believe in the sovereignty of God in terms of the circumstances of your life? Why or why not?

Steve said:

The tendency is to become fixated on the things we wish were different. The tendency is to assume that God wants our circumstances to be **better** – which we all know means having more money, a more prestigious career, less stress, and better looks. What Paul is advocating here is really quite radical. He is saying, “Respect the sovereignty of God in your life – even God’s sovereignty before you came to faith.” The life God has assigned to you, “in this manner let him walk”; don’t reject God’s sovereignty in your life. Live your own life. You are uniquely qualified to live your life and to influence your world for Christ.

12. What kinds of things in your life do you have a tendency to wish were different?
13. Do the truths that Paul teaches here affect how you think about these things? How so?
14. What is the main take-away from this lesson for you?