

Being content in the position that God has placed you

We all think in terms of good and bad. When we come to the Lord we need to repent of the bad but can retain the good in our lives. But is keeping the good always the best for us in serving the purposes of God in our lives?

1 Corinthians 7: 17 – 40

1) Our position in society (vs. 17 – 24)

- Too often we fight against the position in society that we find ourselves. When we are always fighting against our societal position we are focused on ourselves and not on what God can do through us in our position.
- Everyone wants to fit in and be accepted we need to know that society is fickle. It will accept us if we conform but will reject us if we don't conform to it. We need to believe that God loves and accepts us as we are. He made us and his acceptance of us does not depend on our position in society.
- Paul could write openly about this as he wrote many of his letters from prison. Never once did he complain about being unjustly imprisoned but resigned himself to serving the Lord in whatever circumstance he found himself.
- When Paul was in chains he took the opportunity that God opened to preach the Gospel to kings. He spoke with confidence even though he was in chains before kings.
- The Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?” Paul replied, “Short time or long – I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.” (Acts 26: 28 – 29)
- Jesus was regarded as a heretic and a criminal by the religious establishment of his day. However this did not deter him from serving God's purposes.
- Paul uses the example of Christians being Jews or Gentiles, slave of free.
- In the Lord a Jew is not above a Gentile and vice versa nor is a free person above a slave and vice versa.
- We are to be content in our position in society but if we can change it to improve our position then we should do so. But if we can't we need to rest in the position that God has placed us.
- Paul used the fact that he was a Roman citizen to get himself out of tight situations at times. (Acts 22: 27)
- What positions do you find yourself in?
 - Poverty
 - Oppressed
 - Sickness
 - Refugee
 - Struggling relationship

2) Our marital status (vs. 25 – 28; 32 – 40)

- Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. (v. 27)
- Are you unmarried do not seek a wife? (v. 27)
- The main purpose of Paul writing this is the issue of “undivided devotion to the Lord” (v. 35)
- An unmarried person is concerned about the Lord's affairs whereas a married person is concerned about how he/she can please his/her spouse.
- Once you are married and decide that you have made a mistake then it is too late. Do not seek a divorce. Be content in your marriage and make the most of it.
- If a single person has committed his/her life to celibacy to serve the Lord and decides to get married he/she has not sinned.
- Both marriage and celibacy are equally good but not equally good for everyone. Each are good for the person to which God has given it to be.

3) Our status in this world (vs. 29 – 31)

- Paul always writes as if he were in the last times and thus material goods and the affairs of this world were not important or should be held onto lightly.
- The reason that he writes about this is that this world in its present form is passing away.
- He is by no means telling the believers to ignore their God given responsibilities towards their spouses, or to ignore their God given emotions, or treat material possessions with such disdain that we are careless with what belongs to God instead of being good stewards.
- He is putting temporary issues in the correct light in which the Lord would have us treat them. None of these things are going to last forever.
- We are pilgrims in this world, not settlers.
- Our devotion is to the Lord – to what is eternal – not to the things that will pass away.
- Thus we should not be competing for high worldly status as the world competes for it. We should be content with what we have in this world and not seek more.
- Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6: 21)

What do you treasure? We will only be content when we have what we treasure, but do we treasure the things of this world or the things of the Kingdom of God? The temporary or the eternal? The temporary will give temporary contentment but the eternal will give eternal contentment.