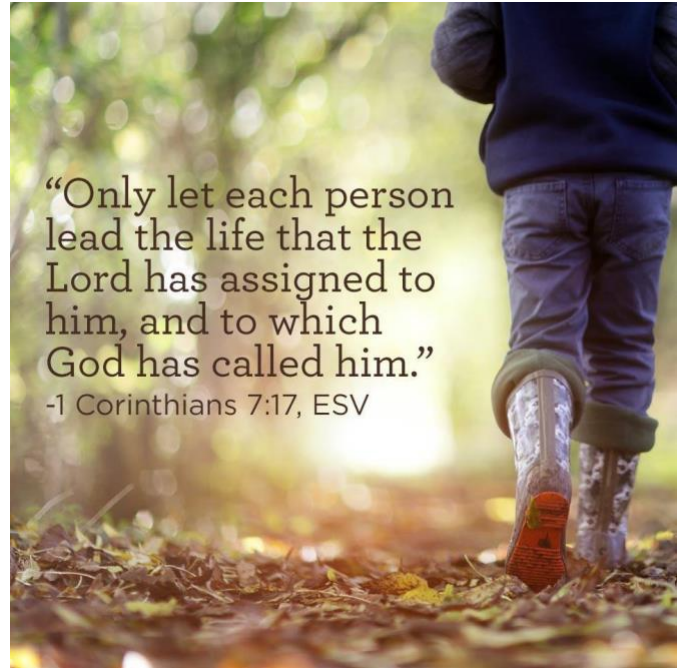


## 1 Corinthians, Chapter 7 (Part 2)

*Heavenly Father, grant Your mercy and grace to Your people in their many and various callings. Give them patience, and strengthen them in their Christian vocation of witness to the world and of service to their neighbor in Christ's name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

**Read: 1 Corinthians 7:17-40.**

1. St. Paul writes of vocation in verses 17 and 24. What do these verses contribute to your understanding about your own place in life?
2. St. Paul refers to circumcision (vv. 18-20). Circumcision was commanded for Jews in the Old Testament as a sign of the covenant God had made with them to bring the Savior into the world through them.
  - a. Read: Galatians 5:2-6. Why does Paul say that someone who insists on being circumcised for spiritual reasons has fallen away from grace?
  - b. Circumcision brought a Jewish boy into God's covenant as an eight-day-old infant. Read Colossians 2:11-12. How does Baptism bring us into the new covenant God has made with us in Christ?
3. The second instance Paul cites concerning a Christian's calling is in the matter of slavery (1 Cor. 7:21-24). In Paul's day, slavery was a legal practice.
  - a. How would 1 Cor. 7:22 help a slave be untroubled about his or her situation in life?
  - b. Paul's counsel to slaves does not mean that Paul (or the Lord) approved of slavery itself. Note what Paul says to slaves who have an opportunity to gain their freedom in verses 21-23. What assessment of slavery do you find revealed in this passage?
  - c. Note the dual positions of Christians in verse 22. What implications does this dual position have for the way you live your daily life?
4. St. Paul picks up another issue with the expression "now about." He repeats the advice given to the unmarried and widows in verse 8 but has no command from the Lord he could cite here as he had in verse 10. Instead, Paul offers his own counsel, which remains Paul's own non-inspired personal counsel even when the Holy Spirit inspires Paul to write the content of that personal counsel in Scripture. What considerations would cause you to give special thought to counsel given to you by your pastor?



5. In verse 26, 28b, and 32-34, Paul states several reasons it would be good for the betrothed and unmarried women (Greek: virgins) of Corinth at that time not to marry. (The “present distress” to which Paul refers in verse 26 may refer to the hostile environment in which the Corinthian Christians were then living.) Under what circumstances do you think these reasons would be as valid today as they were for the Corinthians in the time of Paul?
  
6. Consider thoughtfully Paul’s comments in verses 29-31. What should be a Christian’s attitude toward life in this world that Paul is expressing?
  
7. In Paul’s day, a prospective husband had more control over the decision to marry than did a prospective wife. In our culture, the decision is mutual. Notice in verse 37 how Paul refers to a prospective bridegroom whose reasoning, rather than his feelings, determines whether to marry. What advice might you give to enable a young person to make a thoughtful choice about marriage?
  
8. Although Paul strongly advises the Corinthians, he does not lay guilt on them if they choose to a different decision (vv. 36-38). How do you think a parent, while providing counsel, can avoid laying inappropriate guilt on a child – even if the parent feels strongly about it?

**Closing Prayer: (from LSB 822 – Alleluia! Let Praises Ring)**

2 Alleluia! Let praises ring!  
 Unto the Lamb of God we sing,  
 In whom we are elected.  
 He bought His Church with His own blood,  
 He cleansed her in that blessed flood,  
 And as His bride selected.  
 Holy, holy  
 Is our union  
 And communion.  
 His befriending  
 Gives us joy and peace unending. Amen.

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Sources: God’s Word for Today: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 1997), LifeLight: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2007), Luther’s Works (CPH, Fortress), Concordia Commentary: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2000)