**Abide In That Calling**

Some Christians use I Corinthians 7:20 to teach sinners can stay in whatever marriage they find themselves in when they are converted, even an unscriptural marriage. After all the text does read “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called,” and the context is talking about marriage.

But notice the two example callings Paul suggest those being converted stay in: verse 18 – circumcision or uncircumcision, and verse 21 – servant or free. So really Paul is not suggesting people can abide in **sinful** situations when they are converted. Whether one is circumcised or uncircumcised or whether someone is a servant or free is not a matter of right and wrong. What Paul is trying to illustrate with these two example callings is his inspired recommendation that (because of the “present distress”) folks should stay single if they are single and stay married if they are married (26-27). Neither of those choices is sinful in and of itself.

Paul is not saying it okay to continue in sin. For example, can a Christian abide in the following callings?:

• Thief - Can a man keep on stealing? Can he keep everything he has stolen?

• Polygamist - Can a man keep on practicing polygamy? Can he keep all four of his wives?

• Homosexual - Can a man keep on practicing homosexuality? Can he keep his homosexual partner?

The obvious answers are no, right? Then why do so many think one can remain in an adulterous marriage when they are converted? Can he keep on practicing adultery? Can he keep his adulterous marriage (wife)?

Conclusion: The point of I Corinthians 7:17-24 then is that when one becomes a Christian, he/she is to abide in non sinful callings (specifically single or scriptural marriage), not sinful ones. The meaning of “repent” applied to Acts 2:38 and 3:19 would tell us that.