

Introduction

- People often feel dissatisfied with their position, appearance, or situation, carrying discontent or inferiority.
 - Example: financial differences, appearance complexes, social status.
- Modern society judges people by visible standards (wealth, position, education).
- The Bible presents a “different standard” and shows us what we should truly care about.

Background of the Corinthian Church

- Corinth: a commercial city with diverse cultures and religions.
- Under strong social pressure, Christians struggled with how to live faithfully.
- Two major issues:
 1. The issue of circumcision (differences between Jews and Gentiles).
 2. The issue of slavery as a social status.

Main Points

1) Walk as you were called (7:17)

- God has given each person a “portion” in life.
- Circumcised, slave, or free → encouraged to accept and walk in that state.
- Parable of the talents (Matthew 25):
 - What matters is not how much was given, but how faithfully it is used.
 - God evaluates not the amount but the faithfulness.
- Christian lifestyle: accept circumstances as “God’s portion” and use them faithfully.

2) Do not focus on outward appearance (7:18–20)

- Circumcision issue:
 - Gentile Christians did not need to be circumcised (Jerusalem Council decision).
 - Circumcised Jews wondered if they should hide it.
- In society, circumcision was despised (restrictions in gymnasiums and baths).
- Modern example: tattoos (cultural prejudice).
- Paul’s emphasis:
 - Circumcision or uncircumcision “is nothing.”
 - What matters is “keeping God’s commandments” = loving God and loving neighbor.

- The world judges by appearance, but Christians are judged by obedience.

3) Do not focus on social status (7:21–22)

- In Roman society, about one-third were slaves.
 - By birth, debt, war, or crime.
- Many in the church were slaves.
- Paul's words:
 - Slaves are "the Lord's freedmen."
 - Free people are "Christ's slaves."
- Essence: regardless of social status, all who are saved belong to Christ.
- Practical advice:
 - If given the opportunity for improvement, use it.
 - But focus on the self-awareness: "My true Master is Christ."

4) Christians belong to God, bought by Christ (7:23)

- "Bought with a price" = redemption at the cross.
 - Through Jesus' blood, our ownership was transferred.
- Therefore, we are not slaves of men, but servants of Christ.
- Warning:
 - Do not be bound by human values or worldly standards.
 - Remember that our true Lord is God.

Conclusion (7:24)

- "Remain with God in the condition in which you were called."
- Summary:
 1. Walk with gratitude for the portion given.
 2. Do not be bound by outward appearance.
 3. Value the identity of "belonging to Christ" more than social status.
 4. Live for the Lord's will as those redeemed by Christ.

Questions for Reflection

- How do you receive your "given portion"?
- Are you overly concerned with appearance or people's opinions?
- Are you living as "the Lord's servant" in your current situation?
- Are you daily conscious that you belong to Christ?