

The Ultimate Goal of Singleness and Marriage

1 Corinthians 7:10-40

The Pursuit of Reconciliation Is Always the Starting Point in Marital Struggles

- **Certain protections and blessings are given to the household where at least one spouse is faithfully serving the Lord.**
- *“To the married I give this command—not I, but the Lord—a wife is not to leave her husband. 11 But if she does leave, she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband—and a husband is not to divorce his wife. 12 But I (not the Lord) say to the rest: If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13 Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce her husband. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to live in peace. 16 Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:10-16)*
- **A faithful believer’s example may be the very thing that leads their spouse to repentance and turning to the Lord.**
- **“In a spiritually mismatched marriage, all eyes are on you to see how a Christian behaves. Your example will be the clearest evidence that following Jesus is the best way to approach life.” – Lee Strobel**
- **God does not command a believer to stay in a marriage where the other spouse abandons them physically or abandons their God-ordained role.**

Our Highest Calling and Priority is to Serve the Lord Faithfully and Keep His Commands No Matter Our Situation

- *“Let each one live his life in the situation the Lord assigned when God called him. This is what I command in all the churches. 18 Was anyone already circumcised when he was called? He should not undo his circumcision. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? He should not get circumcised. 19 Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not matter. Keeping God’s commands is what matters. 20 Let each of you remain in the situation in which he was called. 21 Were you called while a slave? Don’t let it concern you. But if you can become free, by all means take the opportunity. 22 For he who is called by the Lord as*

a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called as a free man is Christ’s slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of people. 24 Brothers and sisters, each person is to remain with God in the situation in which he was called.” (1 Corinthians 7:17-24)

- **God is more concerned with our faithfulness to who He has called us to be and what He has called us to do than our outward circumstances.**
- *“...be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord’s work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58)*
- **We owe our complete faithfulness and allegiance to the Lord because He bought us with the highest price: The blood of His only begotten Son, Jesus. (vss. 22-23)**

Singleness and Marriage Should Be Taken Seriously and Considered in Light of the Temporary Nature of This World

- *“Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I do give an opinion as one who by the Lord’s mercy is faithful. 26 Because of the present distress, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 However, if you do get married, you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But such people will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you. 29 This is what I mean, brothers and sisters: The time is limited, so from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none, 30 those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they didn’t own anything, 31 and those who use the world as though they did not make full use of it. For this world in its current form is passing away.” (1 Corinthians 7:25-31)*
- **A proper perspective of marriage and singleness leads us to understand that our deepest desire for relationship and fulfillment will come from the Lord.**
- **In light of this world being temporary and passing away, we need to have a sense of urgency and purpose to advance the gospel and make disciples.**

Both Singles in Christ and Those Married in Christ Should Strive to Please the Lord Above Everything Else

- *“I want you to be without concerns. The unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. 33 But the married man is concerned about the things of the*

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world—how he may please his wife— 34 and his interests are divided. The unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but to promote what is proper and so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.

36 If any man thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, if she is getting beyond the usual age for marriage, and he feels he should marry—he can do what he wants. He is not sinning; they can get married. 37 But he who stands firm in his heart (who is under no compulsion, but has control over his own will) and has decided in his heart to keep her as his fiancée, will do well. 38 So, then, he who marries his fiancée does well, but he who does not marry will do better.

39 A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants—only in the Lord. 40 But she is happier if she remains as she is, in my opinion. And I think that I also have the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 7:32-40)

- **“Many people talk about finding a soul-mate, but the Lord wants us to find a spirit-mate.” – Dr. Tony Evans**
- *“Do not be yoked together with those who do not believe. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?”* (2 Corinthians 6:14)
- **God has given His children the liberty to choose singleness or marriage, but settling for a spouse who isn’t a committed follower of Jesus will bring more trouble than fulfillment.**
- **Whatever our calling, single or married, our ultimate goal in all we do should be to glorify and serve the Lord faithfully.**

Observation:

- What reason does Paul give in verses 10-16 for pursuing reconciliation?
- What does Paul mean by the phrase “the situation the Lord assigned when God called him”?
- In verse 15, Paul gives the primary reason we should seek to serve and love the Lord over anything else. What is that reason?
- What does Paul say about the temporary nature of the world in verses 29–31, and how does that shape his counsel on marriage and singleness?

Understanding:

- Why does Paul emphasize reconciliation as the starting point when marriage struggles arise? How does this reflect God’s heart for covenant relationships?
- For those in spiritually mismatched marriages, how might faithful obedience to Christ serve as a witness to an unbelieving spouse? What makes this both difficult and meaningful?
- Paul repeatedly says to remain faithful in the situation God has called you to. Why do we often believe a change in circumstances will solve our spiritual struggles?
- How does remembering that we were “bought at a price” reshape our priorities, decisions, and sense of freedom?
- What distractions—good or bad—most often pull your attention away from devotion to the Lord? How can an eternal perspective help re-center your focus?
- Paul says both singleness and marriage offer unique opportunities to please the Lord. How can believers avoid comparing callings and instead fully embrace their current season?

Loving Outward:

- Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
- Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
- Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?

****Connect Group Discussion On Back****