



1 CORINTHIANS 7

Community Group Study Guide Week of June 9, 2019

This week, we looked at 1 Corinthians 7 where Paul talks about singleness and marriage. We live in a world that tends to idolize both singleness and marriage, and at the same time treat them like a curse. Scripture is honest about the difficulty of life in a fallen world. Singleness and marriage both come with many challenges and difficulties, but Paul reminds us they are, nevertheless, both gifts from God. When properly used, each gift can point to Jesus and the Gospel in a unique way.

Singleness points us to Jesus by reminding us that the deepest longings of our souls will not be satisfied by anything on this side of eternity. These longings can only be satisfied in Jesus, and will not be totally satisfied until he returns for his Bride, the Church. At that time, the temporary signposts of singleness and marriage will be obsolete and give way to the true substance they were pointing us to. Christianity gives purpose and dignity to singleness in ways that no other religion or worldview can. Christians who faithfully remain celibate in their singleness have a unique opportunity to identify with the celibacy of Jesus during his first coming, but also a unique opportunity to testify that their ultimate hope is not in earthly marriage, but in the consummation of all things that will take place when Christ returns.

Marriage also points us to Jesus by giving us a scale model relationship that has been intentionally designed to reflect that of Christ and His Church. Just as Christ is the head of the Church, the Christian husband is called to cherish his wife and to lead her with sacrificial love. Just as the church is called to honor and obey Christ, the Christian wife is called to submit to her husband with a confident humility. Christian marriage functions as a foreshadowing and earthly example of a much greater spiritual reality. Because of this, Christians must treat marriage with the utmost respect, and not enter into a marriage covenant flippantly. While scripture talks about a few things that would give a Christian grounds for divorce, the vision for marriage is one of an unbreakable covenant. Just as Christ would never forsake his Church, a husband and wife should never forsake one another.

Singleness and marriage are both wonderful gifts from God. The reality of living in a fallen and sinful world, however, means they are both severely challenging. To live faithfully as a celibate follower of Jesus will be hard. To marry a fellow sinner and, Lord willing, raise a family of little sinners will be hard as well. Both require a lot of grace, and the Spirit's power to faithfully endure. The promise and hope of scripture is that while they may be hard, they will also be good. By faith, we can be single or married for the glory of God and find joy in being faithful with whatever gift He gives us. We can also combat the worldly lies that singleness is either a wretched curse, or the ultimate freedom for our selfish indulgence. We can also combat the worldly lies that marriage will fix all our problems, or be the ultimate "ball and chain." Jesus' teaching proves the goodness and purpose of marriage, and his life proves the goodness and purpose of celibacy. Both are good, but neither are ultimate. With this eternal perspective we can find joy in either gift as we use them for their intended purposes.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To see how singleness and marriage are both hard, but also good gifts from God.

Heart

To trust that the deepest longings of our souls can only be met in Jesus, and will ultimately be met in eternity.

Hands

To discern the calling and gifting God has given us to either pursue celibacy or a godly marriage.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership or Baptism:

Contact

admin@mosaicboston.com to sign up for our next membership class or learn more about baptism.

Mosaic JP:

Please keep Mosaic JP and other faithful Boston church plants in your prayers. If your CG would like to serve Mosaic JP together on a Sunday please contact andy@mosaicboston.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read 1 Corinthians 7

- Christianity uniquely presents both fidelity in marriage, and celibacy in singleness as gifts to be used for the glory of God. How does this stand in sharp contrast to the way our culture views singleness and marriage?
- How can celibacy/singleness display the Gospel in unique ways that marriage does not?
- How can marriage display the Gospel in unique ways that singleness does not?
- How could the gifts of singleness and marriage both be wasted if we don't view or use them properly?
- How does the local church give us the right context to live out these gifts and callings together?
- Why is it helpful to understand that both marriage and singleness can be very hard, but they can also be good?
- How might this passage encourage us when we're feeling dissatisfied or frustrated in marriage or in singleness?

Read Matthew 19:1-12

- How do we see the difficulties of both marriage and singleness in this passage? How does Jesus give his disciples hope for both as well?