

Live As You Were Called

What matters to God?

For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but **keeping the commandments of God**. Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called.”

Keeping his commandments

Ecclesiastes 1:2-3 “Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.
“What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?”

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his
commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God will bring every
deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

If You’re Married, Stay Married. (1 Cor. 7:10-11)

Unless your unbelieving spouse is leaving (1 Cor. 7:15)

Let an unbelieving spouse leave because God has called you to peace (1 Cor. 7:15)
Don’t divorce an unbelieving spouse because you may save your spouse (1 Cor. 7:16)
Don’t divorce an unbelieving spouse because your children are holy (1 Cor. 7:14)

Regarding marital relationships (vss. 1-5)

*“Many things have three owners.” Dr. Dan Doriani
Regarding you and your spouse, there is a three-way ownership. You, God, your spouse.
If you’re going to refrain from intimacy, it better be temporary, and for prayer!*

“Even for couples who, without apparent disagreement, have eliminated sexuality from their relationship, its absence reflects significant limitations in closeness and frequently negative feelings about the self and about the physical body. Unconscious conflicts in one and usually both partners often abound, even when the ejection of sexuality from the relationship has become an unconsciously agreed upon solution to attenuated intimacy and sometimes anxiety in the relationship.” - Richard Zeitner, *Self within Marriage*, (82)

Your children are holy

*The reality of a mixed marriage, between believer and unbeliever, is very common.
Stay together, because your kids are holy.*

If You’re Unmarried, Stay Unmarried. (1 Cor. 7:8)

Unless you burn with passion (1 Cor. 7:9)

Because it’s better to marry than burn with passion (1 Cor. 7:9)

Because those who marry have worldly troubles (1 Cor. 7:28)

Because the unmarried can focus on the Lord (1 Cor. 7:32)

Because of the present distress (vs. 26)

Focusing on God

John Stott: “Looking back, with the benefits of hindsight, I think I know why [God kept me single]. I could never have travelled or written as extensively as I have done with the responsibilities of a wife and family.”

Amy Carmichael: “Blessed are the single-hearted, for they shall enjoy much peace. If you refuse to be hurried and pressed, if you stay your soul on God, nothing can keep you from that clearness of spirit which is life and peace. In that stillness you will know what His will is.”

If You’re a Slave, Stay a Slave. (1 Cor. 7:21)

Unless you can get your freedom! (1 Cor. 7:21)

Because, if free, you become a slave to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:22).

Because you were bought with a price. (1 Cor. 7:23)

Paul gives no reasons to remain a slave, but he unburdens the conscience of someone stuck in slavery.

If You’re Engaged... Stay Engaged(?) (1 Cor. 7:36)

Unless you’re struggling to maintain purity (1 Cor. 7:36-37)

Because it’s not sinful to marry. (1 Cor. 7:38)

The real idea of this last section is not perpetual betrothal, but that there is no rush.

You’re Fine as You Are!

Questions for Personal Study

1. Paul recenters the issue on the importance of obeying God’s commandments. Are you breaking any?
2. If selfish ambition drives you forward, you should relax and focus on obeying God. But if laziness keeps you from stewarding God’s gifts to you, you need to get to work. Which end of this spectrum are you on?
3. What is the difference between our culture’s take on divorce and the Bible’s?
4. What can you do to help create biblical community for singles? Is there anyone to reach out to?