

Marriage & Singleness | 1 Corinthians 7:17-40

- Church Family let's open God's Word to 1 Corinthians 7.
 - As we do can we welcome those in Men's & Women's Correctional Facilities all over the nation that are watching this whenever God brought it into their lives. Honored to open the Word with you!
 - I have heard from many of you that think I may have conscientiously decided to have the surgery on my arm when I did so that Ben would have to preach the passages he did last week not I.
 - I can say that with fully transparency that I didn't plan that personally. Yet I do smile at God's Sovereignty. Hallejuah.
 - Didn't he do a great job in God's Word?
- Today we'll lean into that speak yet again to singleness, marriage and other situations in life many will resonate with. And in many ways, I feel like the Holy Spirit through Paul is rounding out that conversation with even greater clarity around what puts all these things in perspective. Let's dive in.
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1 Corinthians 7:17-19(NIV)

¹⁷ Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you. This is my rule for all the churches.¹⁸ For instance, a man who was circumcised before he became a believer should not try to reverse it. And the man who was uncircumcised when he became a believer should not be circumcised now. ¹⁹ For it makes no difference whether or not a man has been circumcised. The important thing is to keep God's commandments.

- Paul covers a whole lot in verses 17-28 as we will see.
 - Paints a very broad-brush picture of where people may find themselves physically, relationally, situationally.
 - And His aim is proper perspective.
- Some men that had come to know Jesus Christ and are a part of the church in Corinth were circumcised & some were not.

- And obviously they wondered in light of many being from a Jewish background did that physical reminder impact their spiritual standing one way or another.
- In many ways Paul was saying...whoa, whoa, whoa. Don't respond to what the world will tell you. Don't respond to what religion will tell you. In this case physically.
- Instead remember what the Gospel of Jesus means for us.

OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST ISN'T SITUATIONAL, IT'S SECURE

- If you're a follower of Jesus Christ, you don't have to do anything to earn your place in God's family.
 - Man's looks on the outside. God looks on the heart.
- Then Paul doubles down in addressing those that are Slaves, Bondservants in that region. Meaning they had a master.

1 Corinthians 7:20-24

²⁰ Yes, each of you should remain as you were when God called you. ²¹ Are you a slave? Don't let that worry you—but if you get a chance to be free, take it. ²² And remember, if you were a slave when the Lord called you, you are now free in the Lord. And if you were free when the Lord called you, you are now a slave of Christ. ²³ God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world. ²⁴ Each of you, dear brothers and sisters, should remain as you were when God first called you.

- Contextually this would have most likely been different than our understanding of slavery. Because we think of the atrocity that happened in our own country so long ago.
- In that era many families would willingly become someone's bondservants to come under the protection, provision of a family and provide work services in exchange.
- What Paul says...wait. You don't have to change that situation now that your Master is Jesus Christ.
 - If you can become free and desire to by all means, go for it. But if that isn't a possibility now... God knew that when He saved you.
 - You may be exactly where God wants you already to bring about the most change in this world.

- God doesn't always plan to change our situation on the other side of us getting serious about following Him. Meaning it's not always completely removing you from that family, that job, that relationship. Instead, he may want to bring about change through us in that situation. Instead of just moving us to another one.
- God saved you where you are, saw you in the place you were, knows the situations you may face and thought.... I can give her, him what they need to make a difference right there.
 - I need my kingdom to advance right there, among those people and now I have one of my kids there.
 - It may not always be ideal, but it can be impactful.

WHEN OUR IDENTITY IS SECURE, WE KNOW OUR PLACEMENT IS ON PURPOSE

1 Corinthians 7:25-28

²⁵ Now regarding your question about the young women who are not yet married. I do not have a command from the Lord for them. But the Lord in his mercy has given me wisdom that can be trusted, and I will share it with you. ²⁶ Because of the present crisis, I think it is best to remain as you are. ²⁷ If you have a wife, do not seek to end the marriage. If you do not have a wife, do not seek to get married. ²⁸ But if you do get married, it is not a sin. And if a young woman gets married, it is not a sin. However, those who get married at this time will have troubles, and I am trying to spare you those problems. Then Paul addresses people's relational status.

- Starting with young women and then moves to the men.
- And in many ways.... you can hear the voice of God the Father speaking to us right now with almost a.....
- Calm Down, don't get feverish or rash in regard to your decisions around your relational status.
- If you're single...in this season of your life...embrace it. It has great advantages for the sake of the kingdom.
 - Don't waste this season of singleness being only consumed with the question...should or will I ever get married.
 - Nothing wrong, actually something right about that desire but only when in its proper place.

- If you're married, it has great meaning. It matters, so don't try to find a way to get out of it.

LET YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST GIVE YOU PEACE ABOUT YOUR RELATIONAL STATUS IN LIFE

- Paul is answering questions, making observation, addressing specific situations. Then I believe in these next couple verses the Lord calls us some much higher than any situation, status, standing in this world.

1 Corinthians 7:29

²⁹ But let me say this, dear brothers and sisters: The time that remains is very short. So, from now on, those with wives should not focus only on their marriage.

- Man, I love this rendering...But let me say this, my brothers and sisters. You can feel it from Paul...It's his...give me your eyes moments.
- I want to put all this back in proper perspective.
 - In light of all that he's addressed recently. Just think through our last couple weeks for us.
 - Sexual Immorality, addiction, idolatry, the meaning of marriage, the understanding of singleness, situations in life.
 - All this real stuff. Things that are broken, things that are beautiful. Then he says.... the time that remains is very short.
- This is an often-referenced reminder across the whole bible. Let me give you 3 complimentary passages...

Psalm 39:4-5 (ESV)

⁴“O Lord, make me know my end
and what is the measure of my days;
let me know how fleeting I am!

⁵ Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths,
and my lifetime is as nothing before you.
Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath!

- When God shows us, shares with us passages like this...It isn't to make us afraid. It's help make us alive!
- To not waste our time solely focused on situations, relational status, even stuff that really matters.

- But to make up our mind...to really live for what will forever matter! Another verse in that vein.

James 4:14

What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

- Our situational is momentary, our relational status in the big scheme is momentary.
 - So, make it matter!
 - People love this kind of statements. It's the Capre Diem...Seize the Day mindset.
 - When in reality those are just cheapened copies of the clarity God's Word gives us.
 - Because the word gives us not just the clarity to know that life is short but also introduces us to the God that make us ready through Christ for the afterlife and give us the Spirit's power to really seize everyday life.
 - The bible doesn't call us to white-knuckle life. Hold on for dear life. It empowers us to live it. By the Spirit's power, full of meaning and significance. Die and enter into the eternal reward!
 - One more verse.

Ephesians 5:15-16

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

*Two little lines I heard one day, traveling along life's busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart, And from my mind would not depart;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Only one life, yes only one, Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet, And stand before His Judgment seat;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Only one life, the still small voice, Gently pleads for a better choice
Bidding me selfish aims to leave, And to God's holy will to cleave;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Only one life, a few brief years, Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;
Each with its days I must fulfill, living for self or in His will;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*When this bright world would tempt me sore, When Satan would a victory
score; When self would seek to have its way, Then help me Lord with joy to say;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Give me Father, a purpose deep, In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;
Faithful and true what e'er the strife, Pleasing Thee in my daily life;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Oh let my love with fervor burn, And from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone, Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Only one life, yes only one, Now let me say, "Thy will be done";
And when at last I'll hear the call, I know I'll say 'twas worth it all";
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*

C.T. Studd

- **What C.T. Studd had come to know, what Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit was referencing in 1 Cor.7 when he said...the time is short...call us to something greater. That with greater clarity, conviction and the Spirit's power....**

LIVE WITH A GREATER URGENCY

- **Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.**
- **In light of that truth Paul lands with perspective that will help any marriage healthy. Honestly will help anyone walk through their singleness healthy.**

1 Corinthians 7:29

²⁹ But let me say this, dear brothers and sisters: The time that remains is very short. So, from now on, those with wives should not focus only on their marriage.

- Paul never says anything that diminishes the importance of marriage in these passages. In all his writing it only becomes clearer how much our marriages matter from God' perspective.
- So, hear me say this first to those of us that are married or will one day be married.
 - You need to be intentionally aware of the state of your marriage, calls for intentional investments into your marriage.
 - If we don't take care of our marriages over time they will crumble. So, hear me. It's so important to take a season to invest in your marriage. Go to Reengage, that we offer as a church this fall for some. Next Spring for others.
 - Go on retreats, do date nights. Yes, yes and yes.
 - But Paul is so right to end this conversation with this statement.
 - Yet...don't focus only on your marriage.
 - Meaning...don't even make your marriage the primary focus of your life. It's one of the most important aspects of your, y'all's life. But it's not the supreme or shouldn't be the ultimate focus of your life.
 - Let me illustrate this.
- *3 Chairs illustration.
 - Most marriages start with....awe...I love you so much. I love you so much more.
 - Move to...I love you. You have something right here on your face. Well, you have something in your nose.
 - Then...love you but the words that are coming out of your mouth are.... let's just say...making me want to bite your face off.
 - Love you to but if you only knew the words, I want to say you.....\$%^\$%
 - And the crazy cycle begins.

- When in reality it was never intended to be just you two...alone.
- Third chair, Jesus Christ.
 - Fall in love with Him more together in good, bad and everything in between.
 - You'll never find in your spouse what you haven't first found in your Savior.
 - Impossible ask of your spouse.
 - When we come to Him first personally and then together. He'll help each of you become the spouse He intended. He'll go to work on YOU. You and Him! Then Y'all together.
 - Paul is encouraging them....

LIVE WITH A GREATER FOCUS

- The greatest gift we can give future generations through our marriage isn't some unrealistic view of marriage.
 - Not perfection in our marriages but pursuit of God together.

Ephesians 5:31-33

³¹ "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

1 Corinthians 7:30-31

³⁰ Those who weep or who rejoice or who buy things should not be absorbed by their weeping or their joy or their possessions. ³¹ Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away.

Let goods and kindred go,
 This mortal life also;
 The body they may kill,
 God's truth abideth still,
 His kingdom is forever.

A Might Fortress

Martin Luther