

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"SENSATIONAL SINGLENES" | 1 COR 7:25-40 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of someone being single?

"Be Wise" 1 Corinthians 7: 25-28

Paul reminds people that it isn't a sin to get married, but being single can be very good. A person should be wise as they decide to get married or not. **What gets in the way of people enjoying being single? What are challenges of being married?**

"Be Heavenly Minded" 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Paul explains that the world is passing away so people should live with that in mind. **How does believing this world isn't going to last affect relationships? Other parts of life? How can believers trust God to satisfy them instead of temporary things?**

"Be Devoted to the Lord" 1 Corinthians 7: 32-40

Paul shares that being single makes it simpler for a person to focus on "how to please the Lord". **What does it mean to please the Lord? Why should that be the focus of a Christ-follower?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Christianity was revolutionary for having a positive view of singleness. Being single is a gift, but so is marriage, and neither marrieds nor singles should look down on each other or be jealous of each other. Believers should focus on pleasing God in any situation as this world is passing away. **How have you struggled with having a biblical view of marriage? Singleness? What can you do this week to be more focused on pleasing God? Pray that He make you more heavenly minded in all you do.**

Sensational Singleness

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide1** 2nd Service: **Nora Louise Marie Diaz** - Davin & Monique. **Joaquin/14, Zoe/12, Nolan/9**. Beautiful adoption. **Deut.11:18-20 NLT**
- B. **Slide2** 3rd Service: **Belle Sue Willis** - Logan & Brooke. **Mrk.10:13-16 NLT**
- C. **Slide3** Movie Fellowship: **Tonight** at 6:30pm here in the sanctuary is our church movie night. Showing *Super Mario Bros*. We'll have *popcorn, red vines, and candy*, and you are *welcome to bring any other snacks* you would like. **Hope to see u there.**
- D. **Slide4** FHC: Just a reminder that our next Foster/adopt support group meeting is Wed night, Feb.21st. This support group is for anyone who **is a foster parent or has, or is in the process of**, adopting children.
- E. **Slide5** Missions Prayer: Please join us by praying by for those that are serving cross culturally. **We meet in the Agape Room at 6:30pm on the 4th Sunday of each month.**
- F. **Slide6** Selah: Will meet on Feb 24th at 6pm in the Agape Room. This is a great opportunity for musicians to **meet and connect** w/other musicians. Ages 15 and up.
- G. **Slide7** Presidents' Day Office Closed: Our offices will be closed Mon, Feb.19th in observance of Presidents' Day. ***Scheduled ministries will still be meeting in the evening except counseling class.**
- H. **Slide8** Prayer: **Lord**, when we think of pure **Milk**, not watered down. **Gold** with the dross removed. **Wheat** w/the chaff removed. We think *Integrity and Singleness of Heart*. As opposed to: *duplicity, a double heart, or a divided heart*. **Lord**, may we have/show **undivided Devotion to You**.

II. **Slide9 Intro: Sensational Singleness** [but we'll see why it's important to everyone]

- A. **Not all singles are the same:** Single at age 18, 38, 48, 78 are different. There's also a difference if you've never been married, **or** you've been Divorced, **or** Widowed, **or** are a Single Parent.

1. Not every single *feels the same* about their situation. **Some** are perfectly content, **others**, feel like their in *single purgatory* (same w/marriages - content/challenging).

B. Paul's **big idea** is that ... *Marriage is good but not necessary. Singleness is good and has some advantages.* [less distress (25-28), fewer distractions (29-31), could enjoy greater devotion to the Lord (32-40)]

1. **But we are going to break it up our section: *Be wise. Be Heavenly Minded. Be Devoted to the Lord.***

C. **Christianity** was **the very 1st religion** that held up *single adulthood* as a viable way of life.

1. The greatest person whoever lived was single, **Jesus Christ.**

2. The greatest naturally born person was single, **John The Baptist.**

3. The greatest missionary and theologian that ever lived was single, the **Apostle Paul.** (and many more believers who advanced the church and the great commission).

III. Slide10 **BE WISE (25-28) READ**

A. **The betrothed** - a young woman not married yet. A young woman engaged to be married.

1. Some think what's happening here *might be* from a misguided notion of spirituality. i.e. some Corinthian believers may have advised them w/in the christian community "**not to marry.**" (*if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned*, vs.28).

B. Paul doesn't give an inflexible rule, **but** to **be wise** in this situation.

C. We often think, *if only my status changes then I would be happy.* **Nope.**

1. It's the old proverbial question - *Is the grass greener on the other side?*

2. **Slide11** The temptation for many who are **single** is to compare **the downs of singleness** with **the ups of marriage.** And the temptation for some

married people, to compare ***the downs of marriage*** with ***the ups of singleness***, which is equally dangerous.

- D. Think about every ***Disney-style popular culture narrative***, they're about 2 people finding true love **and then**, once they do, **the story fades out**. It's more about finding romance **than marriage**.
1. We need a biblical view on **marriage**, **but** we also need a biblical view on **singleness**.
 2. Remember, **both** are **a gift** from God, **and** one isn't better than the other, **or** more spiritual than the other.
 3. **Slide12** Timothy Keller shares, ***Singles, do not under-desire nor over-desire marriage, or it will distort your life as a single.***
- E. **Christian Marriage in a Nutshell**: A strong marriage **identifies** each others **strengths** and **weaknesses**, **and** we use them together **to serve the Lord stronger**. **Until ... we can't recognize them** any longer, **and** we start to getting **irritated** by those differences.
- F. (26) **The present distress** - famine? **or** during persecution?
1. **Slide13** During persecution it's hard to be responsible for a whole family. I think the 700,000+ Rohingya fleeing Myanmar back in 2017.
 2. Suffering **alone** is difficult enough, **but** watching a **mate** or **child** suffer ... can be unbearable.
- G. (28) Because Paul is putting such stress on **staying single**, he stops to remind the Corinthian church ... **marriage is not sinful!**
1. Paul seeks to spare the singles of **the worldly troubles**.
 - a) Looking at the number of **divorces** today, it is a neon-sign that marriage **doesn't** always provide **a pleasing pasture of green grass** for everyone.
 2. ***“Marriage yields many rewards, but the process is costly! – It increases our responsibilities; it calls for readjustments to our finances, leisure time, and personal goals.”*** Warren Wiersbe

IV. Slide14 **BE HEAVENLY MINDED (29-31) READ**

- A. (29) **The appointed time has grown very short** - (the time is short).
1. It was also a *summary philosophy of life* for **Paul**, who lived not for the **temporary** but for the **eternal**.
 2. The **times** are troubled. The **Lord** is coming soon. The opportunity for **service** is brief.
- B. **Live as heavenly minded people** - Jesus is coming again, live in light of that reality. Prioritize **eternal realities** over **transient realities** (a word for all, not just singles).
- C. Paul brings up the question of **time** - Is now the best **time** to get married?
1. Maybe we're not dealing with a **famine**, so is **college** the best time for marriage? Is being **in debt** the best time? Do you have an **addiction**? Are you a **new Christian**? (cuz all your categories change). Can you trust God in your **waiting**?
- D. Everything changes when you get married. Time changes. Hobbies change. Finances changes, how you spend it. Your black light *Dogs playing pool picture* gets moved into the garage.
- E. (29b) **This is no excuse to treat your wife bad!** He's saying *marriage, families, pleasures, and possessions* are temporary. Don't be so totally wrapped up in them.
1. Your **ultimate joy** shouldn't be *marriage*. Our **ultimate joy** is in **Christ**. Don't make it the **end all**. **De-idolize marriage**.
- F. (30) **The point is the future**. *The joys in this life and the sorrows of this life will not last forever!*
1. Your **sorrow** has an expiration date. It's not eternal. Ps. 30:5 **Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning**.
 - a) And the **joy** we have is **not** the everlasting Joy we will have in the future. Think about that. *Don't look for **ultimate joy** in the "good things" that **can't bring it**.*

2. **Life is short.** Focus on what matters most. **And remember,** Marriage is a temporary institution. **Remember you cannot keep your goods, nor bring them with you.** Hold them lightly.

G. For the **present form of this world** is passing away - **19 For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are ...**
21 the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. **22 For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.** Rom.8:19,21,22

V. Slide15 **BE DEVOTED TO THE LORD (32-40) READ**

A. "Christians who remain **single**, then, were making the statement that our future is not guaranteed by the **family**, but by **God**." Tim Keller

B. The **married** have more obligations **and** a **single person** may have less **anxiety/** concerns. The married persons interests are divided.

1. Being single Paul has laid out in this section you'll have **Less Distress** (from a hostile world). **Less Duress** (personally). **Less Deterrents** (from spiritual matters). **Less Distractions** (from their relationship with God).

C. **Paul** was free to take more risks. He could **get beat up** all over the Mediterranean world. He could **go somewhere** on a whim. Tony Merida

1. Sometimes **married w/kids** is tough in that **just getting your children to church may feel like an olympic event!**

2. **Singles may deal with** loneliness, sexual temptation, hurt when your best friend gets married, jealous of those who get married.

3. The difference isn't **ease vs hard**, but **simplicity vs complexity**.

Marriage brings a **complexity** to life **and** singleness brings a **simplicity** (not w/o challenges, but is **simpler**).

4. Some of the greatest missionaries were single. More time. More mobile. More singular focus.

- D. (36-38) He who gives her in marriage (or doesn't/the her father). Seems to infer these are daughters of Christian parents.
- E. Note Does well *or* does better (38) - Some things aren't a *sin issue*, but a better/best scenario. [so again Paul is stressing the *blessings* of singleness]
- F. So Paul is leaving this (marriage/single debate) up to wisdom. There is Freedom. Flexibility. *But* here, he's giving us *a positive view of singleness*.
- G. What Paul simply wants for *all of us* is ... *Undivided Devotion to the Lord*.

H. Slide16 WRAP UP:

I. *Is the grass greener on the other side?*

1. We could answer, *Yes, the grass is greener on the other side, but you're going to have to mow it on the other side also!*
2. We could also answer, *Yes, the grass is greener on the other side, but its because there's often more manure on the other side!*
3. We could answer, *Yes, the grass is greener ... where you water it!*
 - a) *Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want, but the realization of how much you already have.*
 - b) *Contentment is understanding that if I am not satisfied with what I have, I will never be satisfied with what I want.*

J. Keywords:

- K. **William Randolph Hearst** invested a fortune collecting **art treasures** from around the world. One day Mr. Hearst read the description of a valuable art item which he sent his agent abroad to find. After months of searching, the agent reported that he had finally found the treasure. To the surprise of Hearst, *the priceless masterpiece was stored in none other than the warehouse of William Randolph Hearst*. The multi-millionaire had been searching all over the world for **a treasure he already possessed**.