

# Devotion without Distraction

## 1 Corinthians 7:32-38 – Discussion Group Leader Handout

### Bible Passage

<sup>32</sup> But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; <sup>33</sup> but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, <sup>34</sup> and his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. <sup>35</sup> This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

<sup>36</sup> But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry. <sup>37</sup> But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, he will do well. <sup>38</sup> So then both he who gives his own virgin daughter in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.”

### Discussion Questions

**NOTE: For the scenarios, try stay focused on biblical principles and practical, wise counsel.**

#### I. The Concerns of Men (v. 32-34a)

- a. **Married men**, what tensions have you found in pleasing the Lord and your wife? How do you seek to please both the Lord and your wife?
- b. **Case study:** *Consider that many missionaries in church history have dragged their families through terrible hardships and physical distress. We cannot avoid persecution, but these men have practically sought it out in dangerous fields. They have often left their families and sailed to other continents alone, maybe just returning to make babies on furloughs. Why are these things wrong?* Note that Paul advises singleness if you desire to give your all to serving the Lord, and he expects that married men will need to forego some opportunities to live with their wives in an understanding way and to honor them as the weaker vessel. He expects husbands to be devoted to pleasing their wives, not neglecting them.
- c. **Scenario:** *A young man says he is “staying single to serve the Lord,” but you start to observe some laziness and begin to wonder if he is using this as a cover to seek his own desires. How would you challenge him?*

- d. **Scenario:** Consider another young man who stays single to pursue his career rather than to serve the Lord. Is there anything he should consider?
- II. The Concerns of Women (vv. 34b-35)
- a. **Married women**, what tensions have you found in pleasing the Lord and your husband? How do you seek to please the Lord and your husband?
- b. **Scenario:** A couple you know indicates they are using some form of birth control or abstinence to remain childless for “ministry” or “missions.” They want to be “free to serve the Lord.” How would you respond to them?
- c. **Scenario:** A woman has been sexually abused, or possibly even raped. Now she questions whether she can be holy in body and spirit, and she is discouraged about seeking the things of the Lord. How can you help her?
- d. **Scenario:** Imagine you know a woman who has never married and doesn't seem interested. She says she desires to be “free to serve the Lord,” but eventually you learn that she also had a terrible relationship with her father and now is afraid of submitting to a husband. How could you work through those fears with her?
- III. The Concerns of Fathers (v. 36-38)
- a. When might a father rightly choose not to give his daughter in marriage?
- b. How can a young woman benefit from her parents' wisdom?
- c. **Scenario:** A father has not managed his household as well as might be hoped, and he has a daughter interested in marriage. She is strong-willed and not very attentive to his advice. How can he work on this relationship?
- d. **Scenario:** A young father has a little girl, and he is thinking about what it will be like when she grows up and wants to get married. How can he and his wife cultivate his daughter's willingness to submit to their counsel?
- e. **Scenario:** You are discipling a young woman who desires to marry. She comes from a difficult family, and her parents are not very trustworthy. How could you encourage her submit to her parents' authority, while also considering God's will in Scripture and the resources of the church?

## Prayer Requests

- Pray for submissive humility to conform your love life to God's will.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit's help to assess and correct the desires of your heart.
- Pray that God would give you knowledge and wisdom to counsel people accurately.
- Pray for opportunities to share the things that you are learning about marriage.