

Intro: Today, Lord willing, we will finish our study in 1 Corinthians 7.

1. On a whole, this chapter deals with Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage as well as serving the Lord as a single saint.
2. But in the middle of this chapter we found two significant spiritual principles that have application far beyond just married or single life.
 - a. In 1 Cor 7:17-24 Paul tell us that Christians should willingly accept the situation into which God has placed them and be content and faithful to serve Him there.
 - b. And in 1 Cor 7:29-31 Paul reminds us that “The Time is Short” and that we must be careful as to not lose our spiritual and eternal priorities.
3. Today we’ll be looking at verses 25-40.

Read 1 Cor 7:25-40 and Pray¹

1. One of the central themes of these verses is Paul’s exhortation for the unmarried person to remain single.

1 Corinthians 7:25 ²⁵ **Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy *has made* trustworthy.**

1. In other words, Paul is not quoting Jesus Christ, but he is providing godly instruction that we are to consider and follow as the Lord leads.
2. Concerning this matter, Paul is trustworthy because he is under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as we’ll see when we get to vs 40.

1 Corinthians 7:26 ²⁶ **I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress— that *it is* good for a man to remain as he is:**

1. Paul speaks of the present distress.
 - a. “distress” in the original Greek is *that which causes trouble or what makes people suffer much*
 - b. What specifically is that distress? We don’t know, but we can assume that the believers in Corinth would understand what he was referring to.

¹ Unless otherwise marked, all scriptures taken from the New King James Version. © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

2. Remember, Paul is responding to questions asked of him by the Christians in Corinth.
 - a. Obviously the people in Corinth were troubled by something which caused them to ask of Paul whether they should get married at all or if those who were married should act as though they were not married for the sake of living for Christ.

3. I wish I could say that distressing times and circumstances were found only in Corinth during Paul's day, but that is not true.
 - a. Even today we find ourselves in distressing situations that if not handled properly can negatively affect our walk and relationship with the Lord and those around us.

4. The first key in properly handling the distresses of life is "for a man to remain as he is"
 - a. That's the heart of verses 17-24
 - b. Vs 17 as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk
 - c. Vs 20 Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called
 - d. Vs 24 let each one remain with God in that *state* in which he was called
 - e. Of course, unless you are walking in sin, you are not to look for a way out of your situation; you are to look for a way to be faithful in that situation.

5. The next key to properly handling the distresses of life is found in verse 27...

1 Corinthians 7:27 ²⁷ **Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.**

1. Remember that there are certain conditions that allows divorce and remarriage to be permissible.
 - a. Matthew 19 – Adultery
 - b. 1 Cor 7:15 – Abandonment
 - c. 1 Cor 7:39 – Death

2. As we discussed in our study of 1 Corinthians 7:10-16, God hates divorce (Malachi 2:15-16);

- a. A believer is called to do everything within their power to try to make the marriage relationship work.
 - b. Even if you are married to an unbeliever.
- 3. So if you are married, don't look for a way out of that relationship; instead look for a way to make that relationship everything that God expects it to be.
 - a. But, if you are not married, whether you have never married or by divorce, in either circumstance, Paul says, "Do not *seek* a wife."
- 4. I believe this is a pattern for all people to follow.
 - a. I believe this because the very first couple recorded in the scriptures model this very principle. Adam and Eve in Genesis 2.
 - b. Of all that God created, in each day it says, "And God saw that it was good." (Gen 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31)
- 5. But there was something that was not good.
 - a. Genesis 2:18 *And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."*
 - b. Note: We see no mention that Adam is aware of this situation. No record of Adam complaining about the situation; not even a mention of Adam asking the Lord to give him a wife.
 - i. Adam was not seeking a wife.
 - c. All we see Adam doing is faithfully following the Lord's instructions.
 - d. He is tending the garden, naming the animals.
 - e. Then God begins to work on Adam's behalf.
 - f. While Adam was asleep, God took a rib from his side and with it He created Eve.
 - i. Of course there is a wonderful symbolism in this very act, of which we won't get into this morning.
 - g. But note that Adam wasn't out searching for a wife; he wasn't complaining about the fact that all the animals seemed to have a mate except him.

- i. All signs and indications are that Adam was faithfully serving and resting in the Lord.
 - ii. It was in these circumstance in which God supernaturally worked to provide a bride for Adam.
- 6. Actually, there's an ancient writing that was found that records a conversation that Adam had with God in the Garden before Eve was created.
 - a. This document records that Adam did in fact ask God for a mate, a helper.
 - b. God responded to Adam's request by telling him, "*Well, it's going to cost you an arm and a leg.*"
 - c. Adam thought about this for a while and said, "*Well what can I get for a rib?*"
 - i. That's not in our bibles for a reason, because that's not how it happened at all.
- 7. Paul is providing us with a great spiritual principle.
 - a. Something you single folks need to understand; something you parents need to be teaching your kids...
 - b. Life's great quest is not to go out and find a husband or wife.
 - c. Don't concern yourself with such matters. Be at rest in the Lord. Serve Him and be faithful to Him.
 - d. And when the timing's right, if it's the Lord's will, He'll bring someone who is just right for you.
 - e. Don't be out searching for your future spouse, but instead, seek first the Kingdom of God.
- 8. Now a majority of the final verses of this chapter are concerning single saints. Those who have never married or are single now because of divorce or death...

1 Corinthians 7:28 ²⁸ **But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.**

- 1. Speaking to those who are single, Paul is telling them that it is not a sin to get married.

- a. Marriage is a wonderful thing... but...
2. Getting married does cause trouble in the flesh.
- a. The word “trouble” in the original Greek means *pressed together, under pressure*.
 - b. That’s exactly what happens in marriage, two sinners are pressed together and are under pressure to make things work. (PLAY DOUGH)
 - c. While marriage is a wonderful joy, it can also be incredibly difficult and frustrating.
 - d. For those of you who are married, I have no doubt that you have felt the pressure of trying to work together and to make things right.
3. The ESV bible puts it this way, “*Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles*”
- a. This translation makes a lot of sense in light of what Paul says in verses 32-35.
 - b. So let’s skip over verse 29-31 for just a moment and look at verses 32-35 in context of what Paul just said in verse 28.

1 Corinthians 7:32-35 ³² But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. ³³ But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please *his* wife. ³⁴ There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please *her* husband. ³⁵ And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.

- 1. Paul says in verse 28, “but I would spare you”. Verse 32 “but I want you to be without care”. Verse 35 “that you may serve the Lord without distraction”
 - a. I believe that Paul is speaking from experience at this point.
 - b. Paul was single at this time, but was most likely previously married, as we discussed before.
 - c. Let me paraphrase what I believe Paul is saying, “*I know the distractions that married life can cause. If you really want to serve the Lord without reservation or restriction, then don’t get married.*”
- 2. God’s timing is always perfect, wouldn’t you agree?

- a. My family left for the U.S. this past Wednesday. They made it in safely.
 - b. Being home alone, well, I don't like it. I miss them!
 - c. But, for the last four days I have been free to do whatever I want.
 - i. For those of you who know Sonya, you know she tries to avoid processed meats; well yesterday I ate 3 corndogs!
 - ii. On Thursday night I stayed up late listening to a message by one of my favorite pastors, Jon Courson.
 - iii. I have been able to make appoints to meet with people without having to check with Sonya to see what's going on.
 - d. I have had a tremendous amount of freedom to **“serve the Lord without distraction”**
 - e. In the event Sonya listens to this podcast, let me say for the record...
 - i. I miss them like crazy and can't wait for them to be home
 - f. But in these last four days I have experienced the freedom that Paul encourages the single believers in Corinth to embrace.
3. Once you get married, no longer are you free to do whatever you want in the name of the Lord for the sake of the Lord.
- a. Now you are responsible to that other person.
 - b. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband – 1 Cor 7:3
 - c. Husband, you are to love your wife like Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her – Eph 5:25
 - d. Wives, you are to submit to your own husband, as to the Lord – Eph 5:22
 - e. As a married couple, we no longer are able to serve the Lord by doing whatever we want; no as a married person we now serve the Lord by doing what your spouse wants and needs.
4. But in fulfilling our roles, we must not forget the important principle that Paul writes of in verses 29-31...

1 Corinthians 7:29-31 ²⁹ But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, ³⁰ those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, ³¹ and those who use this world as not misusing *it*. For the form of this world is passing away.

1. We spent our entire time together last week looking at these 3 verses because they are so important to understand!
2. The Time is Short!!!
 - a. Time is short because life is short
 - i. Did you hear that Former child star Gary Coleman passed away?
 - ii. The wisecracking youngster Arnold on the TV sitcom 'Different Strokes' famous for saying "*Whatchoo talkin' 'bout, Willis?*"
 1. Died on Friday, he was 42.
 - iii. Life is fragile, unpredictable, and short.
 - b. Time is also short because Jesus' return is imminent.
 - i. All of the world's conditions are set for Christ's return.
 - ii. Natural disasters which are increasing in frequency, intensity, and magnitude
 - iii. The reestablishment of the nation of Israel, awaiting Her one King who will rule over them forever (Ezek 37:22-25)
 - iv. Modern media which is capable of translating and broadcasting events around the world for all to see and understand.
 - v. Global Economic troubles which have set the stage for a one-world economy and one-world leader.
 - c. The time is short indeed!
3. Because the time is short, Paul gives us three things to be careful of, three things that can distract us from being Kingdom minded... His Kingdom that is.

Relationships, Emotions, and Possessions

- a. Not even our wife should come before our relationship with Christ.
- b. Emotions can easily carry you away from what God intends for your life so don't let emotions stand in the way of serving and walking with Jesus.
- c. Possessions – this world is passing away, don't become a slave to the things you own.

1 Corinthians 7:36-38 ³⁶ But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry. ³⁷ Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well. ³⁸ So then he who gives *her* in marriage does well, but he who does not give *her* in marriage does better.

1. In the context that there is a present distress (vs 26), that the time is short (vs 29), and that this world is passing away (vs 31)...
 - a. During a time of prearranged marriages
 - b. Paul is saying that fathers do well if they allow their daughters to remain single, for the purposes of serving the Lord without distraction (vs 35).
2. Remember, this is not an issue of doing right or wrong.
 - a. Nor is Paul saying one is correct and the other is incorrect.
3. How can we apply these verses today?
 - a. The application of this is in what we are teaching our own children who will be given the opportunity to choose for themselves if they will marry or remain single.
 - i. What are you teaching your kids, especially your girls about marriage?
 - ii. Teaching them to marry is well and good.
 - iii. But to teach them to keep Jesus First is better, the best way.
 - b. We need to teach our kids the example of Adam, don't seek a wife; serve the Lord and rest in Him and God will bring that someone special into your life if that's His desire for you.

1 Corinthians 7:39-40 ³⁹ A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. ⁴⁰ But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment—and I think I also have the Spirit of God.

1. A widow may remarry; as a matter of fact, Paul wrote to Timothy and said, “I desire that the younger widows marry” (1 Tim 5:14)
2. But, verse 40 says, **she is happier if she remains as she is.**
 - a. Remaining single involves a blessing for that’s what that word happier means in the original Greek.
 - b. As a matter of fact, that same Greek word is used in Matthew chapter 5 at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus said, “blessed...”

Conclusion (Worship team)

1. The central theme of this entire chapter is that we are to keep Christ first.
 - a. Whether single, married, divorced, abandoned, widowed, or otherwise...
 - b. The time is short! We must keep Christ first!
2. What does that mean to keep Christ first?
 - a. We surrender our all to Him!
 - b. Spending time daily in His word and in prayer with Him
 - c. Bringing every thought and action captive and surrendering to God’s will and plan for your life.
 - d. Loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind and loving your neighbor as yourself.
3. Keeping Christ first means doing what Christ would do and Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost. (Luke 19:10)
 - a. Spend time getting to know Jesus personally and intimately and go and be just like Him.