

# Day 22: Should Everyone Get Married?

*Today's Reading*

*1 Corinthians 7:1-7*

## Devotion

*"Each [one] has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that."*

1 Corinthians 7:7

In answer to the question "Is it better to be single or married?" a nine-year-old girl answered, "It's better for girls to be single, but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them."

Though we might chuckle at this, we know the answer to the question is not quite so simple. In 1 Corinthians 7 the apostle Paul has a lot to say about marriage, singleness, and serving the Lord. Paul explains that each person has his or her own gift from God.

When God said, "It is not good ... to be alone" (Genesis 2:18), he was not speaking of every human being. Some people have the calling to be single, while others are called to be married. In fact, Paul points out that being single can often open doors to special kingdom service that a married person would not be able to fulfil. Within the church of Christ, singles find themselves part of the one family that matters for all eternity.

Whether your singleness is for a short season or a longer period, may it be an opportunity for you to invest wholeheartedly in growing in maturity, serving in ministry, and deepening your relationships with others trusting God that He always has your best in mind.

## Prayer

*Lord, we thank you for the many single people who use their gifts to serve you and others in the family of God. Help us all to build each other up in serving you. Amen.*

# Day 23: Single or Married?

*Today's Reading*

*1 Corinthians 7:8-11*

## Devotion

*"It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."*

1 Corinthians 7:8-9

When it comes to the topic of love and marriage, our culture seems to be rather confused. When you consider the plethora of love songs, romantic comedies and the tens of thousands of dollars that people spend on their weddings, it would seem that to find 'the one' and spend the rest of your lives with them is still very much the goal to aspire towards. However, the age at which people are getting married seems to be getting later and later – if they get married at all. Not to mention the seemingly flippant and casual approach with which many seem to break their vows by getting a divorce.

In today's passage, Paul cuts across both of these views of marriage and outlines for us a godly perspective to it all. Paul reminds those who are unmarried that being single is in fact a gift that should be treasured and appreciated (v 8). However, he holds those who are married to the seriousness of their vows that they have made to one another and to God – that divorce is not part of God's plan or intention.

Are you single? Thank God for the season that you find yourself in and make the most of the freedom that you have. Are you married? Thank God for the spouse that He has blessed you with, and honour the holy promises that you made to each other and to God.

## Prayer

*God, in whatever season I find myself relationally, I thank you for the opportunities that it presents to glorify you, serve you and love others.  
Amen.*

# Day 24: The Witness of a Faithful Spouse

*Today's Reading*

*1 Corinthians 7:12-16*

## Devotion

*"God has called us to live in peace."*

**1 Corinthians 7:15**

There is no doubt about it: marriage is challenging! In 1 Corinthians 7:8 and 7:32, the apostle Paul states his preference for singleness. Yet, he also describes the beauty of marriage as the closest picture we have of God's covenant love for us (Ephesians 5:22-33).

In today's verses Paul gives advice to people who had become Christian and whose spouses were not (yet) believers. Rather than letting that difference be an excuse for divorce, Paul encouraged these Christians to remain married. They had an opportunity to bring holiness into their marriages and possibly lead their spouses to salvation.

Let's pray for peace, patience, and holy faithfulness for Christians whose spouses do not know the Lord. For Christian couples, let's pray for love and submission that mirrors the attitude of Christ.

## Prayer

*Faithful God, thank you for your self-sacrificing love in Jesus. May we reflect your love in all we do. For your glory. Amen.*

# Day 25: Obedience Over Everything

*Today's Reading*

*1 Corinthians 7:17-24*

## Devotion

*“Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing.  
Keeping God's commands is what counts.”*

**1 Corinthians 7:19**

We live in an age of cultural tolerance. We say, “White is beautiful, black is beautiful, brown is beautiful and yellow is beautiful. Therefore, don't try to switch cultures”. Here is what Paul is essentially saying in this passage: “White is nothing, black is nothing, brown is nothing and yellow is nothing – but keeping God's commandments is everything. Therefore, don't try to switch cultures”.

Paul's line of thinking was just as unpopular then as it would be now. He's saying, “stay where you are and obey God. Everything else falls before the priority of God”.

At the same time, Paul is also not placing an absolute prohibition on cultural adaptations. This passage should not be read as a blanket condemnation upon all those who adopt aspects of other cultures or give up aspects of their own. What Paul was trying to do was show that obedience to the commands of God is much more important than any cultural distinctions; that the mere changing of these distinctions should be of no importance whatsoever to the Christian. Instead of making a big deal out of our cultural distinctions, we should make a big deal out of obedience. Then and only then do our cultural distinctions become beautiful as a secondary expression of the obedience of faith in Christ.

## Prayer

*Lord, keep us from fretting or boasting about cultural distinctions. Thank you for reminding us through your Word that they are of little importance to you in comparison to whether we are devoting ourselves – mind, soul and body – to obeying your commands. Amen.*

# Day 26: Remain As You Are

*Today's Reading*

*1 Corinthians 7:25-28*

## Devotion

*"Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is."*

1 Corinthians 7:26

What Paul is saying in this passage is that singleness is better than marriage when Christians face persecution. Paul's advice here is given in the context of a "present crisis" – specifically, there was an attack on Christianity at the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians. Many Christians had been martyred, imprisoned or even killed. Against this backdrop, Paul is saying that persecution is more difficult for married people than single people. In verse 28, he warns about the "many troubles" that come along with married life – including marital adjustment issues, providing for one's family, caring for children – all of which are heightened during times of persecution.

Young people in particular can fall under the misguided notion that once you meet "the one" and tie the knot, all of life's troubles will magically disappear and you can finally live "happily ever after." Whilst we shouldn't downplay the very real blessings of married life, today's passage is a sober reminder from Paul that in our search for a spouse, we should be more expediently minded, always thinking about whether our life decisions (including marriage) will help or hinder our ability to continue following Jesus faithfully in whatever season we may find ourselves in.

## Prayer

*Lord, give us contentment in whatever marital status we presently find ourselves in, taking full advantage of the benefits that are associated with it which better enable us to serve you, love you and worship you. Amen.*

# Day 27: The Time Is Short

*Today's Reading*

*1 Corinthians 7:29-31*

## Devotion

*"Brothers and sisters...the time is short."*

**1 Corinthians 7:29**

Leisure sells in our society. People buy time-saving products so they have more time for recreation and relaxation.

Yet the gospel message has an urgency about it. Paul says bluntly, "The time is short." The advice in this message may sound a bit radical, as if marriage, mourning, and making a living aren't important. Paul's point is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ has ushered in the new kingdom age. "This world in its present form is passing away." So many people today are scared that the world will soon come to an end. What they need to realize is that ever since Jesus' victory, this world has been in transition.

That's why our top priority is to rededicate ourselves to God and his Kingdom. Everything that is only bound to this planet, even family relationships, will fade and eventually disappear. Only efforts that flow from a rededicated life will last for eternity. We must work for God because the time on earth is short. Now is the time to live for God and His Kingdom!

Another thing to consider. No matter what age you are, don't be lulled by a false sense of security. This could be the last year of your life. Cancer, heart disease, accident – all can bring life to an abrupt end. There is no time to waste. Draw near to God as he draws near to you. "The time is short."

## Prayer

*Only one life, it will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. May we live each day as if it were our last, making the most of every opportunity to love you, serve you, and know you better. Amen.*