

CHURCH IN CRISIS

A STUDY OF PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ANCIENT CORINTH

PART ONE: "CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?!?"

1 Corinthians, ch

SEX AND THE CITY

OF CORINTH



ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

CHURCH IN CRISIS

A STUDY OF PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ANCIENT CORINTH

PART 3 - 1 COR 7

RELATIONAL
SIMPLEXITY!

SINGLENESSE DIVORCE SEX IN MARRIAGE
MARRIAGE RE-MARRIAGE

A Review from Last Week

1. Is marriage a good thing?

Two Issues:

Is it really good not to marry?

1 Corinthians 7:1-5, 25-38

¹Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry.

Genesis 2:18

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

1 Corinthians 7:1

¹Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry.

**Marriage (or not!) to the
Glory of God**



Ascetism

4. If only I could get married, that would solve my problems! Right?

d. What if I think I have the gift of singleness?

1 Corinthians 7:36-38

³⁶If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. ³⁷But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. ³⁸So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better.

1 Corinthians 7:6-9

⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. ⁷I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

⁸Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. ⁹But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

1 Corinthians 7:6-9

⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. ⁷I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

⁸Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. ⁹But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Singleness (or not) to the Glory of God!

Big Questions

1. What is the gift of singleness?
2. What is the purpose of this gift?
3. How do I know if I have it?
4. What does it mean to “burn with passion?”
5. Can I serve God completely and still have a desire to be married?

Let the experts handle it...

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHO TO MARRY?

You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming. - Alan, age 10

No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. - Kirsten, age 10

WHAT IS THE RIGHT AGE TO GET MARRIED?

Twenty-three is the best age because you know the person FOREVER by then. - Camille, age 10

No age is good to get married at. You got to be a fool to get married. - Freddie, age 6

Let the experts handle it...

WHAT DO MOST PEOPLE DO ON A DATE?

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough. - Lynnette, age 8

IS IT BETTER TO BE SINGLE OR MARRIED?

It's better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them. - Anita, age 9

1 Corinthians 7:6-9

⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. ⁷I wish that all men were as I am.
But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

1 Corinthians 7:6-9

⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. ⁷I wish that all men were as I am.
But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

The concession is to ascetics – Sex within marriage is good!
Temporary abstinence is for the sake of coming together
in prayer, but this is not a command.

Paul transitions to singleness

⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. ⁷I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. ⁸Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. ⁹But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Paul transitions to singleness

⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. ⁷I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. ⁸Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. ⁹But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

What is the “gift of singleness”?

It is a God-given freedom from the desire or need for sexual fulfillment – it is to be celebrated!

BUT,

celibacy is a gift from God, not a requirement for salvation.

What is the gift of singleness?

Matthew 19:10-12

¹⁰The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."

¹¹Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. ¹²For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."

What is the gift of singleness?

Matthew 19:10-12

¹⁰The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."

¹¹Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. ¹²For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."

This is not for everybody...celibacy is for the celibate

Examples: John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul

Why would God give it to somebody?

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

³²I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs — how he can please the Lord. ³³But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world — how he can please his wife — ³⁴and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world — how she can please her husband. ³⁵I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

Why would God give it to somebody?

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

³²I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs — how he can please the Lord. ³³But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world — how he can please his wife — ³⁴and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world — how she can please her husband. ³⁵I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

Paul cherished or preferred his singleness because it put him utterly at the disposal of Jesus.

He was able to be single-minded, and give undivided devotion to God.

Do I have it?

Yes and No...

Gift receipt mentality -

Do I have it?

Yes and No...

Gift receipt mentality -

“If you ask this question with fear or trepidation, this probably means that you do not have the gift.” Andreas Kostenberger

Do I have it?

Yes and No...

Gift receipt mentality -

“If you ask this question with fear or trepidation, this probably means that you do not have the gift.” Andreas Kostenberger

1 Timothy 4:1-3

¹The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. ²Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. ³They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

Stay as you are

1 Corinthians 7:6-9

⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. ⁷I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

⁸Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. ⁹But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Stay as you are

1 Corinthians 7:6-9

⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. ⁷I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

⁸Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. ⁹But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

1. It is wrong to forbid people to marry
2. Paul sees his gift of singleness as an asset to ministry
3. Not everyone has this gift
4. If you are able, you should stay as you are

What does it mean to “burn with passion”?

1 Corinthians 7:6-9

⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. ⁷I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

⁸Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. ⁹But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

What does it mean to “burn with passion”?

1 Corinthians 7:36-38

³⁶If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. ³⁷But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin – this man also does the right thing. ³⁸So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better.

Can I serve God completely and still desire to be married? – Yes!

It's more important to become a certain type of person than it is to find a certain type of person – you are NOT incomplete!

Can I serve God completely and still desire to be married? – Yes!

It's more important to become a certain type of person than it is to find a certain type of person – you are NOT incomplete!

The singleness we see in our culture is not the kind of singleness that Paul is talking about

- Afraid of commitments
- Do my own thing before I “settle down”
- “Get it out of my system”

Don't let marriage or singleness become
your idol!

Don't let marriage or singleness become your idol!

Ask yourself – “Could I be equally useful to the Lord if married, or would it inevitably curtail my usefulness to him? The quantity of time available for Christian involvement may be reduced once we are married, but its quality may be enhanced. At all events, I have no right to marry unless I have honestly faced the question of the impact marriage will have on my Christian life and service.”

- Michael Green

Don't let marriage or singleness become your idol!

Ask yourself - "Could I be equally useful to the Lord if married, or would it inevitably curtail my usefulness to him? The quantity of time available for Christian involvement may be reduced once we are married, but its quality may be enhanced. At all events, I have no right to marry unless I have honestly faced the question of the impact marriage will have on my Christian life and service."

- Michael Green

While you are single, how can you allow God to use your singleness to make you especially effective for him?

Are you bringing God glory by keeping him on the throne of your life or are you worshiping relationships?