



Revived Relationships Pt 3_Singles that Impact the Kingdom!

February 16, 2020

Text: 1 Corinthians 7:32-40

In this Text, we find apostolic principles given by the apostle Paul for those who are married and unmarried. There are a few contextual and exegetical things we must account for:

1. Paul was writing in response to the Corinthians' questions about marriage. (v1)
2. He established that marriage is good, and is only between one man and one woman. (v2)
3. He also established that marriage has responsibilities. (vv3-5).
4. Let us clear up the confusion that surrounds verse 6, and while we are at it, verses 10-12 and 25 as well: Paul IS NOT invalidating the **INSPIRED** nature of what he is communicating

1 Corinthians 7:6 (KJV) *But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.*

1 Corinthians 7:10-12 (KJV) *And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: **11** But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. **12** But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.*

1 Corinthians 7:25 (KJV) *Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.*

- The phrase "I, not the Lord" in verse 12 does NOT mean this statement is any less inspired, inerrant, infallible, or sufficient. Paul is simply saying that the Lord spoke specifically about divorce, but didn't about the specific case of an unequally yoked marriage.
- Again, Paul IS NOT invalidating the INSPIRED nature of what he is communicating! "I, not the Lord" or "I have no commandment of the Lord" essentially mean, "These are new precepts." He goes on to say...

1 Corinthians 7:40 (KJV) *But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.*

- Peter considered Paul's writings to be Scripture:

2 Peter 3:15-16 (KJV) *And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; **16** As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

- And lest we forget: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." (2Ti 3:16-17 ESV)

5. Paul lifts up the state of singleness in verses 7-16. Some things we can learn there:

- Singleness can be a gift (v7)

- There is nothing wrong or ungodly about being “unmarried” or “widowed.” (v8)
- It is better to marry than to burn. (v9)
- Paul affirms Jesus’ stance of divorce and remarriage (vv10-11)
- In an “unequally yoked” case, the couple should stay married. If the unbeliever abandons he marriage, the believer is not bound. (vv12-16)
- Staying married is always best however. A marriage with believing spouse has a sanctifying influence on both the other spouse and the children.

6. In verses 17-24, Paul lays out the principle of Christian Situational **Contentment**:

- Live the life God has called you to with joy and without envy. (v17)

1 Corinthians 7:17 (NLT) *Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you. This is my rule for all the churches.*

(All the churches: 1 Cor 1:2, 4:17, 11:16, 14:33)

- Don’t be ashamed of your ethnic background before you came to Christ. (vv18-19)

Paul deals with the subject of racial ties in verses 18 and 19. If a man was a Jew at the time of his conversion, and bore in his body the mark of circumcision, he need not take a violent revulsion at this and seek to obliterate all physical marks of his former way of life. Likewise, if a man were a heathen at the time of his new birth, he does not have to seek to hide his heathen background by taking on the marks of a Jew. - MacDonald

- Remain as you are and be ok in it! (vv20-24) This doesn’t mean we shouldn’t attempt to grow or seek advancement. It means that God can and will use you wherever you start from!

1 Corinthians 7:20-24 (NLT) *Yes, each of you should remain as you were when God called you. **21** Are you a slave? Don’t let that worry you—but if you get a chance to be free, take it. **22** And remember, if you were a slave when the Lord called you, you are now free in the Lord. And if you were free when the Lord called you, you are now a slave of Christ. **23** God paid a high price for you, so don’t be enslaved by the world. **24** Each of you, dear brothers and sisters, should remain as you were when God first called you.*

7. Verses 25-31 exhorts every believer, regardless of relational state, towards a thoroughly biblical mindset: have **joy** where you are!

- Again, Paul’s judgment is still inspired. (v25)
- “This present distress” (v26) may have been something local (like the persecution of the church in his day) but nevertheless has application. Have you seen society right now? :)

For those seeking to be married in 2020:

1. Pray!
 2. Vet! Ask lots of questions (faith, finances, family, Facebook)
 3. Take your time (courtship)
 4. Get wise counsel (parents, church elders)
 5. Count the cost. (Divorce rates, family courts, personal sacrifices, etc.)
- Be content in your state! (v27) The key to this verse is the word “seek.” Desiring a spouse is just fine, but the Christian to seek the kingdom of God! (Matt 6:33)
 - Marriage is lawful and wonderful, but comes with responsibilities! (v28) He goes on to discuss this again in verses 32-25.
 - Although verses 29-31 tend to confuse people, they are actually quite simple. Paul isn't saying ignore everything he said concerning how to treat and love your spouse; he is saying married people have the additional burden of being fully devoted both to the LORD AND to their spouse. In other words, being married is no excuse for slack prayer and worship and service!

Our Text: Singles that Impact the Kingdom

1 Corinthians 7:32-40 (KJV)

32 *But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33* *But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.*

- “Carefulness” means “concerns” or “anxieties.” Marriage, by definition, creates a set of concerns apart from one’s self. It is a **covenant** wherein one’s entire world is joined to another’s and a joint vision of how to live must be carved out.
- Married people cannot simply “do what they want when they want!” Everything is shared; everything must be considered in light of another; everything is “us” not “me.”
- A single man can fully devote himself to the LORD without distraction. He can pray, fast, travel, serve, and give with much less consideration on how such things will affect his wife.
- He can be as Paul, working enough to survive and giving every other moment to Christ, even unto the spending of his life. (2 Cor 12:15)
- For the unmarried man, particularly if he is fine with being unmarried, ministry comes before **money**. He can live on little and spend his time discipling and serving.
- For the married man (or the man preparing for marriage), **money** comes before ministry practically speaking! He feels the pressure of providing for his wife and children and will often make financial decisions before ministry decisions; his household must come first!
- This is the power of singleness rightly understood. It is also NOT a common understanding! Can you imagine what might happen if single men thought and lived this way?

34 *There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.*

- Similarly, the unmarried woman can devote herself to the LORD without **distraction**!

- *In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband. (1 Cor 7:34b, NLT)*
- Like the widow and prophetess Anna who “*departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day*” (Luke 2:37), the unmarried woman can spend her life in our LORD’s service.
- And the need is so great! Indeed, can you imagine unmarried women who are building a 1 Timothy 5:9-10 resume while passionately serving the **church**?
 1. Faithful in her relational state
 2. Known for good works
 3. Faithful to the children in her life
 4. Given to hospitality
 5. Serves the church
 6. Help the poor
 7. Committed to Scripture (every good work)

Revival!

35 *And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.*

- *“I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible.” (1 Cor 7:35, NLT)*
- Paul isn’t trying to hurt; he’s out to help!
- **Who can single-mindedly, whole-heartedly, give the LORD their all day and night, drastically impacting the Kingdom of God?**
- **The unmarried person! The “single” person!**

Selah: Let us note some Biblical Assumptions

1. In our day, we acknowledge that single-parenthood with young children affects this life of service. Please understand that in Bible days, this situation was much less common. In fact, it is a **category** one would be hard pressed to make consistent note of in Scripture.
2. The biblical assumptions are either married w/o children, married with children, unmarried with no-children or widowed with older children.
3. Consequently, most believers, without judgment or condescension, attempt to minister with love and grace to our unmarried brothers and sisters raising children.
4. Family (and church family) is really important here. Pray about how you can help.
5. Finally, it should be noted that the unmarried woman in Bible times often remained under her father’s (or family’s) roof until married. She wasn’t burdened with providing for herself.

36 *But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.* **37** *Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.*

- There are at least three interpretations here: a father towards his daughter, a man towards his betrothed, and a person and his/her own virginity.

- The first two views are common; the latter view is favored by Matthew Henry and William MacDonald, essentially saying, If “*we take it as meaning that if a man has come to full manhood, and if he does not feel that he has the gift of continence, he does not sin in marrying. He feels that the need requires him to do so, and so he should do what he wishes in this case, that is, get married.*” -MacDonald
- Regardless of which view is correct, the point is clear: Being married is not a **sin**; being unmarried is also not a **sin**!

Matthew 19:11-12 (KJV) *But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. 12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.*

38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. 39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. 40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

- Again, both states are honorable before the LORD.
- Married people are “bound by law.” There are **jurisdictional** responsibilities; the first priority is “inside” instead of “outside” ministry.
- Paul’s final statement, given under the unction of the “Spirit of God,” is astonishing: for some widows, the unmarried state is the happier one! This does not sound like a God who looks down on single people!

The Bottom Line

- The biblical norm is marriage: one husband and one wife being fruitful and multiplying and filling the earth.
- However, the LORD calls some people to **saved singleness** for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God!
- Biblically speaking, to be contentedly unmarried and be a Christian gives one magnificent opportunities!
- Married folks must obviously serve the LORD too, and with great passion. But no married person can be as single-minded and devoted with their time, gifts, and resources as a maturing single person who loves the LORD. The greatest **volunteers** should be singles!
- One of the great tragedies of our day is a single man hooked on video games instead of helping others have victory in Jesus or a single woman more concerned about Instagram than Irresistible Grace!
- Indeed, the joyful service of unmarried people is a huge untapped resource in many (if not most!) churches!
- Let us begin to rectify that this morning here at CRCC:

To the unmarried I say: Your relational calling/state is not inferior. It may not be normative, but it is NOT abnormal! There is a reason that you are who and where you are. The Kingdom of God needs you and the church needs you!

Amen!