

1 Corinthians Chapter 7 Continued

1 Corinthians 7:18 "Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised."

With Judaizers demanding all Gentile believers in Christ to be circumcised (Gal. 5:1-6), and with some Christian Jews wanting to disassociate with Judaism and thus having a surgery to become uncircumcised (as addressed in rabbinic literature), Paul needed to clarify the issue by saying that neither was necessary.

Figuratively, the idea is that when a Jew became a Christian, he was not to give up his racial and cultural identity in order to appear like a Gentile.

Likewise, a Gentile was not to become culturally like a Jew.

Culture, social order and external ceremony have no bearing on spiritual life.

What matters is faith and obedience.

1 Corinthians 7:19 "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God."

This is just explaining that it is not the doctrine of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ to keep the law of Moses.

If a person is not circumcised, then let him stay that way.

If he was acceptable to God, then why should the people put extra restrictions on him?

Of course, if a person is already circumcised before he receives the Lord, that is alright too.

Accept them the way the Lord accepted them.

Circumcision was part of the law which Jesus fulfilled on the cross.

Sacrificing of any kind after the crucifixion of Jesus would have been saying that Jesus' sacrifice was not enough.

You can see why all this sacrificing was stopped.

1 Corinthians 7:20 "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called."

Paul is stressing the fact that if the Lord approved you, who was man to question.

1 Corinthians 7:21 "Art thou called [being] a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use [it] rather."

Servant means slave (the word servant in olden Greek means “doulos”, or slave).

Paul was not approving all slavery, but is teaching that a person who is a slave is still able to obey and honor Christ.

“Care not for it”:

Meaning in modern society, this seems an insensitive command to those who wrongly assume that freedom is some God given right, rather than a preferable option.

1 Corinthians 7:22 "For he that is called in the Lord, [being] a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, [being] free, is Christ's servant."

“The Lord’s freeman”:

In the ways that truly count, no man is freer than a Christian.

No bondage is as terrible as that of sin, from which Christ frees the believer.

“Christ’s servant or slave”:

Those who are not slaves, but free in the social sense, are in the spiritual sense made slaves of Christ in salvation (Rom. 6:22).

1 Corinthians 7:23 "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

The blood of Christ was the price that was paid.

“Servants of men”:

This is referring to sinful slavery, i.e., becoming slaves to the ways of men, the ways of the world, and of the flesh.

This is the slavery about which to be concerned.

1 Corinthians 7:24 "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

Your position in society is of little importance to the Lord.

Every job that we are called to do should be done unto the Lord.

"Abide":

This means continually dwell.

We must not seek to be changed, or moved, until the Lord moves us.

In verses 25-40

Having already established that both marriage and being single is good and right before the Lord, and for the person who has the gift of singleness, that state has many practical advantages.

Paul continued to answer the questions about which the Corinthians had written him.

Paul gives 6 reasons for never marrying, in relationship to the downside of marriage, but remaining single (virgins).

- (1) Pressure from the system (verses 25-27);
- (2) Problems of the flesh (verse 28);
- (3) Passing of the world (verses 29-31);
- (4) Preoccupations of marriage (verses 32-35);
- (5) Promises from fathers (verses 36-38); and
- (6) Permanency of marriage (verses 39-40).

1 Corinthians 7:25 "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 Lord Jesus did not deal directly with this subject, and Paul is just giving his judgment (opinion) here.

We know that all, whether virgins or not, should be faithful to the Lord.

This is probably speaking of male virgins, as well as female.

The conviction given here is not a command, but is thoroughly dependable and sound advice to remain a virgin, which is counsel, included by the inspiration of the Spirit from a trustworthy male person.

1 Corinthians 7:26 "I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, [I say], that [it is] good for a man so to be."

Paul is saying, because of all the distress and problems surrounding being a servant of the Lord Jesus at this time, it would probably be better to remain a virgin.

Notice that Paul says for a man to be so.

This means man or woman.

“The present distress”:

An unspecified, current calamity.

Perhaps Paul anticipated the imminent Roman persecutions which began within 10 years after this epistle was written.

Persecution is difficult enough for a single person to endure, but problems and pain are multiplied for those who are married, especially if they have children.

1 Corinthians 7:27 "Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife."

The benefits of singleness notwithstanding, married people must remain married.

“Loosed”:

This means that divorce is in view.

1 Corinthians 7:28 "But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you."

“Marry, thou hast not sinned”:

Marriage is a fully legitimate and godly option for both the divorced (on biblical grounds), and virgins.

“Trouble in the flesh”:

Trouble means literally, “pressed together” or under pressure.

Marriage can involve conflicts, demands, difficulties, and adjustments that singleness does not, because it presses two fallen people into intimate life that leads to inevitable “trouble”.

The troubles of singleness may be exceeded by the conflicts of marriage.

1 Corinthians 7:29 "But this I say, brethren, the time [is] short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;"

Paul is encouraging them to use all their time for the Lord.

Paul is not saying that marriage is no longer binding or shouldn't be treated with seriousness, nor should there be any physical deprivation.

But Paul is teaching that marriage should not at all reduce one's devotion to the Lord and service to Him.

He means to keep the eternal priority.

1 Corinthians 7:30 "And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;"

Paul is saying, these things are a temporary situation.

They will pass so quickly away.

Do not be caught up in the things of the world which pass away so quickly.

The mature Christian does not get so swept up in the emotion of this life, to lose motivation, hope and purpose.

1 Corinthians 7:31 "And they that use this world, as not abusing [it]: for the fashion of this world passeth away."

Paul is trying to impress them that the world, and the things connected with it, are but for a moment in time.

They will not always be.

Christians are living in this world, but their home is in heaven.

Someday we will not be in this world, in fact, someday there will not be a world as we currently know now.

He is saying, you must live here, but don't get too attached.

1 Corinthians 7:32-33 "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:" "But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please [his] wife."

Paul again, is showing the difference in working for the Lord as a single person, and working for the Lord as a married person.

The single person can devote all his time to the Lord without distractions and is free from concern about the earthly needs of a spouse and therefore potentially better able to set himself apart exclusively for the Lord's work.

1 Corinthians 7:34 "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."

This is the very same statement as above, except the other was speaking of the man, and this is speaking of the woman.

Women do like to please their husbands, and that is not a sin.

In fact, if they are married, that is what God expects them to do.

The married woman can be dedicated to God, but again, may have less time to fulfill the things of God.

1 Corinthians 7:35 "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."

Again, we must remember that these are Paul's thoughts on the subject.

We do know that it would be somewhat of a distraction to be married and in the service of God.

All things are possible with God.

We must fulfill the job that God has for us to do in whatever circumstances we are in at the time He called us.

He knows the problems we face, and will help us with the problems. Our part is to be totally obedient to His call.

1 Corinthians 7:36 "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."

This is a man's daughter.

Apparently in Corinth some of the fathers intending devotion to the Lord, had dedicated their young daughters to the Lord as permanent virgins.

"Pass the flower of her age":

Meaning fully matured as a woman capable of child bearing.

"Need so require":

When daughters became of marriageable age and insisted on being married, their fathers were free to break the vow and let them marry.

1 Corinthians 7:37 "Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast 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."

“No necessity”:

This means the father who has kept his daughter a virgin and is not under constraint by the daughter to change his mind, does well to fulfill his desire for her to be singularity devoted to the Lord (verse 34).

As with those who remain single (verse 28), the choice was not between right and wrong.

1 Corinthians 7:38 "So then he that giveth [her] in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth [her] not in marriage doeth better."

Paul is saying that either thing you decide is perfectly alright.

You have not sinned either way.

Some serve the Lord while they are single, others serve the Lord married.

Either way, they are pleasing unto the Lord.

1 Corinthians 7:39 "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."

“Bound by the law”:

God’s law designed marriage for life.

It is so permanent that the disciples thought it may be better not to marry.

“Only in the Lord”: That is, free to marry a believer only.

This is true for all believers who marry or remarry (see 2 Cor. 6:14-16).

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

Paul is saying (in his judgment) that she is usually happier with the memory of her first love, than trying to start over again and find a new mate.

She will have more time to serve the Lord, if she does not remarry.

Perhaps with a touch of sarcasm, thus Paul has affirmed that this sound advice was given by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians Chapter 7 Continued Questions

1. What is verse 18 explaining?
2. Let every man _____ in the same calling wherein he was called.
3. If you were a slave when you received the Lord, did that stop you from being a servant?
4. He that is the called in the Lord, is the Lord's _____.
5. Regardless of the circumstance we find our self in, what are we to do?
6. What was the price we were bought with?
7. What does "abide" mean?
8. In verse 25, Paul said he had no command of God, but gave his _____.
9. Who are the virgins in verse 25?
10. Why did Paul say that it was good to stay single, if you already were?
11. Art thou bound unto a wife, seek _____ to be _____.
12. If a virgin marries, has she sinned?
13. What was Paul trying to spare them?
14. What is meant by verse 29?
15. Verse 30 is explaining that all these things are _____.
16. And they that use this world, as not _____ it.
17. The fashion of this world _____.
18. We must live in the earth, but we should not _____.
19. He that is married careth for the things of the _____.
20. What is the difference in working for the Lord as a single person, and working for Him as a married person?
21. What is the difference in a married woman and a virgin working for God?
22. Verse 35 reminds us that these are whose thoughts?

23. How long is the wife bound by the law?

24. A widow is usually happier, if they remain _____.