

Biblical Principles of Marriage (Part 4) – 1 Cor 7:25-40

1 Cor 7:25-40; This is the 4th message in our *Biblical Principles of Marriage* series, and we've found thus far, that . . .

Principle #1 – Single doesn't mean second class (Gal 3:28)

Principle #2 – If you're single, don't settle (Ps 15)

Principle #3 – Marriage is for most, but not all (Gen 2:18; 1 Cor 7:6-9)

Some actually have the *gift* of being single; 3 principles for a house built to last

➤ Which brings us to Principle #4 from v25-40, where Paul basically says . . .

Principle #4 – Being single has its advantages

It's something that's lost on many, and squandered by most; True

Most people think being single is a huge *disadvantage* in life; Especially when compared to being married; And nothing could be further from the truth

Especially with all the difficulty and distress in our world; V25

➤ *Now concerning the betrothed* [someone promised to another or already engaged], *I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.*

IOW he has no *direct* teaching from Jesus, but he does have some trustworthy *counsel* – judgment, guidance

Things he has picked up over the years by implication and experience, as a result of God's merciful hand on his life

Which makes what follows, no less inspired than anything else in Scripture

And here it is; Here's his counsel, his *judgment*; V26

I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. [27] Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free [don't get a divorce]. Are you free from a wife [single]? Do not seek a wife.

➤ Given the context of the previous paragraph, he's most likely speaking to those who have just come to Christ

Saying that just b/c you're a child of God now, or just b/c you're unequally yoked, doesn't mean you should get a divorce; *Nor* does it mean that you should get married

Salvation doesn't necessitate marriage, any more than it does divorce

In fact, it's good to remain as you *are* he says in v26

Especially in view of the *present distress* (26) – which was probably the general breakdown of their society due to sin and debauchery; Not much different than ours

No need to *add* to that Paul says; No need to *compound* the problem with *two* wrongs;

Like getting married just b/c, or getting a divorce when you shouldn't

Remain as you are he says

➤ [28] *But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that.*

And therein lies the first advantage of being single

There's less trouble (v25-28)

There's less trouble being single than there is being married; Look at v28 again

Zeroing in on singles, he says if you *do* get married, it's not a sin; It's okay

But realize, that hardship awaits; There *will be* trouble

Those who marry will have worldly troubles (28b); No exceptions

They will have stresses and strains they wouldn't *normally* have, if they were single

➤ Which is *painfully* obvious for those who are married

People who married are well aware of the fact that when you put two people together, from 2 different backgrounds and 2 different perspectives . . .

With 2 different temperaments and 2 different opinions – there's going to be trouble

With a capital T, that rhymes with P, that stands for Problems; Am I right?

You can't mix oil and water and expect pure bliss every day

Sometimes the oil gets hot and the water boils

➤ I mean, what man can understand the mind of a woman? Even if she's *in* her right mind

I lived with 4 of them for 20 years; That's 1 wife and 3 daughters just to be clear . . .

And the older they got, the more I just shook my head – who can understand them?

And from what Becky tells me, what woman can understand the mind of a man?

Assuming he has one in the first place; Or uses the one he does have

Which means that just due to human nature alone, marriage means trouble

And when you throw our sin nature into the mix, it's even worse

Those who marry will have worldly troubles (28b)

Just b/c men are from Mars, women are from Venus, and sin abounds

➤ Now, does that mean that marriage is void of *joy*? Or without *benefits*?

Not at all; There's a *ton* of both

It just means that marriage has more issues than being single

➤ This is something Becky and I experienced in *spades* when we were first married

We had *one* disagreement when we were dating and engaged; One

But as soon as we were married, we fought like cats and dogs; From bickering all the time, to knock down drag outs

B/c our *sin* nature, amplified our *human* nature, and trouble ensued

And though we eventually corrected the problem, it proved Paul's point beyond *any* shadow of doubt; That there's *less* trouble being single

2nd . . .

There's more focus (v29-31)

There's less *trouble* being single, and more *focus*

After saying in v28 that *those who marry will have worldly troubles* . . .

He says in v29 – *This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short* [as in the appointed time of Christ's return].

It's a phrase that's meant to convey urgency; So . . .

[29b] *From now on* [v29], *let those who have wives live as though they had none* [the verse that every golfer claims this time of year], [30] *and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those*

who buy as though they had no goods, [31] and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

Don't get so caught up in the cares of the world Paul is saying, that you forget or neglect the cares of God
Rise *above* the mourning; Rise *above* the celebrations; Rise *above* the buying and selling and dealings with the world

Why? B/c the time is short; *The present form of this world is passing away* – v31; The window of opportunity is closing
The opportunity to spread the word, reach the lost, make disciples, build the church, and advance the kingdom – is closing

➤ Which means we need to focus; Minimizing distractions, and maximizing our attention; And concentration; And effort; And single-mindedness; *Even* if we're married
In fact, *especially* if we're married; Don't miss the exhortation; V29
Let those who have wives live as though they had none; As though they weren't married at all

IOW be *single-minded*; In spite of the added responsibilities, entanglements, heartaches, joys, peaks, valleys, and distractions – be single-minded
That's the idea; Not to the point of *neglecting* your responsibilities in marriage, but to the point of *keeping* them with God; Doing the things *he* wants you to do
Focusing on *kingdom* things, instead of just worldly things
Giving him first priority, and your spouse second

Like making sure your time with the Lord, takes precedent over time with your wife
Or making sure your presence at church isn't sidetracked by your *husband's* desire to stay home; Or your *mutual* desire to stay in bed with each other
That's the idea of being single-minded and living as though you're *not* married

Which is quite the high bar, and easier said than done, isn't it?

➤ Whereas if you're single, you can focus *all* your attention on kingdom things; *All* your affection on the Lord; *All* your effort on him; Or at *least* far *more* of it
With less to divert you, less to disturb you, and less to deter you
It's an advantage; There's more focus
But that doesn't relieve those of us who are married, from pursuing the same; From being *single-minded*

3rd . . .

There's less tension (v32-35)

[32] *I want you to be free from anxieties* [he says; free from worries and concerns]. *The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord.* [33] *But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife.* [34] *and his interests are divided* [IOW there's a tension; his interests are pulled in two different directions].

And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit [just like the single man; her interests are singular; she lives for

an audience of One]. *But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.*

Now, Paul is *not* saying that marriage automatically *prevents* great devotion to the Lord; He's not; Nor is he saying that singleness guarantees it
Rather, he's saying that it's *easier* for a single person to be devoted to the Lord, b/c their *concerns* are singular
Meanwhile, a married person's concerns are divided – they're trying to please both their spouse *and* the Lord; And rightfully so

But it creates a tension; This feeling and *reality*, of being pulled in 2 different directions
It's a tension; And something Paul would have us avoid; Which he gets at next, in v35

➤ [35] *I say this for your own benefit*
This, referring to his warnings about marriage in general, and his desire that we be free from anxieties; Free of tension
I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you [i.e. to remain single when you want to be married; that's not his intent], *but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.*

He's calling attention to the tension, for 2 reasons
One, to promote *good order*; So that people aren't getting married or divorced willy-nilly, just b/c they got saved; Don't do that he says; Keep your head
That's his *first* objective

➤ The 2nd, is *to secure* [our] *undivided devotion to the Lord*
And *that*, is the thrust of this entire chapter; Single *or* married
That we would be unhindered and unfettered when it comes to our love and allegiance to Jesus Christ; That the distractions and responsibilities of life, including marriage . . .
Would not diminish our passion for the Lord Jesus Christ
It wouldn't diminish our worship, it wouldn't diminish our service, it wouldn't diminish our giving – it wouldn't diminish *anything* having to do with God

That's the *goal*; An undivided devotion to the Lord, that's free of tension
Something those of you who are single, should take advantage of
And something those who are married, should pursue like crazy

And then last, from v36-40 . . .

There's more freedom (v36-40)

There's less trouble being single, more focus, less tension, and more freedom; V36
[36] *If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed* [as in, he's not honoring the purity of the one he intends to marry], *if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin.* It's ok

[37] *But whoever is firmly established in his heart* [that being single is what they want], *being under no necessity* [no mandate to remain single] *but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart to keep her as his betrothed* [to not marry her], *he will do well.*

[38] *So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.* Better

It's not *wrong* to get married; And if you do, you do *well*; It's a *good* thing
Ordained by God for procreation, pleasure, protection, and a picture; A picture of Christ
and the church; All good

➤ But if your passions are in check and your convictions strong – you *do even better* Paul
says, to remain single (38); Why? B/c there's more freedom
More freedom to *do* as you please, *when* you please
More freedom to *spend* as you please, *how* you please
More freedom to *go* as you please, *where* you please
More freedom to *serve* as you please, *like* you please
There's more freedom as a single person

Including the freedom to get married; Like Paul says in v39
*A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to
be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord* [only to someone who's a believer;
only with God's blessing]. There's freedom for that
[40] *Yet in my judgment* [Paul says] *she is happier if she remains as she is* [if she
remains single]. *And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.*
He has the Holy Spirit as much as anybody else, and therefore speaks on his behalf

➤ The point being – If you're single, you have the freedom to get married; The freedom to
change your marital status
If you're married, you don't; You're *bound*; You can't just wake up one morning and
decide that you're going to get a divorce; Not with *God's* blessing
Which means there's more *freedom* as a single

➤ But that doesn't mean you have to exercise it
In fact, you'll be happier if you don't Paul says; Unless, your passions are strong; In
which case you should get married
Either way, there's more freedom (**Summary**)

Don't squander that; Take *advantage* of the advantages
And if you're married, be single-minded

Pray – Lord Jesus, spur us on to an undivided devotion; An unhindered passion; An
unchanging allegiance; And help us to make the most of the life we live, single *or* married
We give now for that very purpose; Asking you to make the most of all you've given us,
as a church