

CLOSER LOOK



A LIFEGROUP STUDY ON THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

Current series: Asking for a Friend
LPW September 18, 2022 Singleness

Context- Paul is addressing how a Christian community should live within a fallen world. But basically, his purpose of writing was to answer a letter that they had sent to him with certain questions. So, Paul beginning with chapter 7 is responding now to their letter and the questions that they had asked. Corinth was an extremely pagan city. On the acropolis above Corinth there was a great temple to Aphrodite, and the temple priestesses would come down into Corinth each evening. There were prostitutes, and the worship of the goddess was supported by the earnings of the prostitutes.

Commentary- Paul deals with sexuality within the community of God. Sex within marriage-last week, this week sex and singleness. This is not an exhaustive view of sex and marriage.

First of all, Paul is concerned that we exercise the "gift" that we have received from God in relation to marriage or singleness. It is clear that Paul regards his single state as in many ways an advantage: he can focus on the gospel without distraction. On the other hand, he also thinks that if this is not someone's "gift," then it is better that they marry. All of us are single for a season of life; some are single for all their life. It is important we rediscover the biblical teaching about singleness: to follow God as a single person is not to be a second-class citizen. It is a real gift from God that has real benefit for the church and can be a place of fulfillment and is to be respected and honored.

1 Cor. 7:8-9- It is likely that Paul was married at one time. Acts 26:10 "I cast my vote against them" probably means he was a member of the Sanhedrin-an unmarried man could not be a member of the Sanhedrin. We don't know what happened to his wife either she died or left Paul.

Paul is answering a question about a specific situation at Corinth, and not presenting a universal principle for all Christians. To encourage Christians to marry for the purposes of sex alone would be absurd, but it is one of the factors to consider. The word translated "burn" describes raging sexual feelings and desires, not punishment in hell. This is clear from verse 7 where Paul spoke about sexual self-control being a gift.

Eph 5-adds balance to the discussion of Christian marriage. Ephesians was written approximately 7 years later.

1 Cor. 7:25, 36-38 It is suggested that in Corinth there were men and women who had actually gone through the marriage ceremony but had decided never to consummate the marriage so as to devote themselves entirely to the spiritual life. Having done so, it might well be that they discovered that what they planned to do placed too great a strain upon them. In that case, Paul would be saying, "If you can keep your vow, you will do supremely well; but if you cannot, frankly admit it and enter into normal relations with each other." 2 schools of thought on these verses 36-38.

1. This is directed to the father of a virgin daughter, who is past her prime. He can give her in marriage or take care of her himself.
2. This is directed to the young man who is engaged to the virgin and it becomes his decision on whether to marry or not.

1 Cor. 7: 26-35- Paul recognizes that marriage brings about certain obligations of which those who are single do not have. What is foremost in his mind is serving the Lord.

"because of the present crisis" the immediate return of Christ -due to this urgency focus your attention on the kingdom. Live not just for the here and now but for eternity. Serve God in whatever station in life you have been placed>

"Time is short" But Paul is true to the heart and teaching of Jesus, who told all Christians in all ages to be ready and anticipate His return. Paul is not encouraging the neglect of proper family duties, but encouraging living as if the time is short. It means that we will not live as if our earthly family was all that mattered, but also live with an eye to eternity. Our focus and priority should not be a world that is passing away.

Resources that might be helpful:

[1 Corinthians 7:9 - Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary - StudyLight.org](https://knowyourbible.co.za/food-for-thought/translations-of-1cor7-36-38) **Barclay's Daily Study Bible**
<https://knowyourbible.co.za/food-for-thought/translations-of-1cor7-36-38>

Start of Life Group Use this time to introduce the topic of discussion (Icebreaker, optional game, a prayer)

Main Point *Living a life devoted to Christ in Christian community*

Introduction

Q. What is it that you liked or currently like best about being single?

Q. What were/are the advantages and disadvantages of being single?

Understanding Unpack the biblical text to discover what the scripture says about the topic

Read 1 Cor. 7:8-9

Q. Paul mentions a lack of self-control as reason for marriage, what are other Biblical reasons for marriage?

Q. How does Eph. 5:22-33 add balance to our Christian view of marriage?

Summary: Sexual self-control or Biblical boundaries

Read 1 Cor. 7:25, 36-38 Seems appropriate to have discussions regarding preparing children for marriage or singleness.

Q. How would it impact you if your child were to decide to remain single for the rest of their life?

Q. How do you think we influence our children to adopt our views when it comes to singleness?

Q. When it comes to raising our children, how can we give them a balanced approach to marriage?

Q. What characteristics should we develop in our children to make them better in marriage?

Summary: Parents should have a biblical view of marriage when it comes to their children.

Read 1 Cor. 7:26-35

Q. What does a balanced life look like regarding ministry and family?

Q. How can the community of believers help us maintain this balance?

Q. What is Paul's main point in these verses?

Summary: Time is short, remain as you are if possible

Application Help your group identify how the truths from the scripture passage apply directly to their lives

Q. How does this passage change the way you think about being single?

Q. How will tonight's discussion enhance or change the way you help your children understand marriage?

Q. What is the one thing we discussed tonight that really spoke to you?

Q. What is one step you could take this week in order to grow in your relationship with the Lord?

Leader Story: Tell of one way that God has impacted you in relationship to the topic tonight

Key scripture to memorize

1 Cor 7:2...

Prayer requests Take a moment to pray with your group

Lifepoint reminders

Baptism next week