

Learning to Be Content in Your God-Given Singleness

In 1 Corinthians 7:25-40, Paul encourages those who have the gift of remaining single to stay single—to rejoice in it, have fun and serve the Lord. Spiritually speaking, the single person and the married person have no advantage over each other since no one is spiritually superior because of their marital condition. But Paul is saying that single people have some practical advantages that married people do not have.

In verse 25, he tells us clearly that this is his personal counsel and not a command from the Lord. But he has good reasons to recommend singleness. Don't forget that at the time Paul was writing this epistle, intense and horrific persecution was increasing in the Roman Empire under Nero. So Paul was being very practical when he called singles to remain single if they could do so without sinning. Persecution is difficult enough for a single person, but multiplied when a spouse and children are involved, just as our persecuted brethren around the world can attest.

Paul also points out that marriage, while it may solve some problems, can cause a whole lot more. When two people are bound together in marriage, problems of human nature are multiplied. When you are dating, you tend to see only each other's good points, but marriage allows you to see your spouse's faults with a magnifying glass. So we must consider marriage carefully and cling to the grace of God when we combine two distinct personalities, two sets of likes and dislikes, two sets of emotions, two sets of characteristics, two sets of temperaments and two sets of wills.

Another reason Paul gives for exercising the gift of celibacy is the shortness of time (see 1 Cor. 7:29-34). Both for single and married people, he reminds us that life is short and this

world is passing away, so we shouldn't let earthly concerns and sorrows eat us up. Rather, focus on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believers must learn to be content in whatever condition and situation they are. God has a purpose and plan for you; figure out what it is. Learn to love God and His kingdom above all else.

Prayer: God, help me to be content with where You have me today. Help me to focus on You and not my circumstances. I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

"I know both how to face humble circumstances and how to have abundance. Everywhere and in all things I have learned the secret, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Phil. 4:12). {eoa}

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