

January 23, 2022

# THE MARRIED OR SINGLE CALLING

## **1 Corinthians 7:1-11, 17-35**

Now for the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”<sup>2</sup> But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband.<sup>3</sup> The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.<sup>4</sup> The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.<sup>5</sup> Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.<sup>6</sup> I say this as a concession, not as a command.<sup>7</sup> I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

<sup>8</sup> Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do.<sup>9</sup> But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

<sup>10</sup> To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband.<sup>11</sup> But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

<sup>25</sup> Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy.<sup>26</sup> Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is.<sup>27</sup> Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife.<sup>28</sup> But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

<sup>29</sup> What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not;<sup>30</sup> those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep;<sup>31</sup> those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

<sup>32</sup> I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs—how he can please the Lord.<sup>33</sup> But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—<sup>34</sup> and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord’s affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband.<sup>35</sup> I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

## **Community Building Tip of the Month**

What goals do you have as a group this year? This is a great chance to explore how you hope to grow deeper and maybe even wider. Is there someone you would like to invite to your group?

## **Questions for Discussion**

1. We are in a series called “Knowing Your Calling”. This week we’re looking at God’s calling in our marriage or single lives. What joys and challenges come to mind about being married or single?

2. First, we saw that our marriage or single life is a gift from God to be embraced. How do you experience God's sanctifying work in your marriage or singleness?
3. Second, our union with Christ must inform our human relationships. How can a deeper love of Jesus help us love others better? How do we know if Jesus is the center of those relationships?
4. Next, Paul points out that the gift of marriage requires different priorities from the gift of single life. Where can you more intentionally seek intimacy with your spouse? Where can we invest in deep and meaningful relationships out of our singleness?
5. Finally, it's important for the family of God to honor both marriage and singleness to grow disciples of Jesus. How can we grow in empathy and support of both married and single people?

Additional texts to consider what love and marriage look like:

- Colossians 3:18-19
- Ephesians 5:21-33
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a