

# Joyful Life Bible Studies

## I CORINTHIANS 7:25-40

Lesson 15

**FIRST DAY:** Review and Overview

1. Regardless of the circumstances that you are in at the present moment, what are we told to do in I Corinthians 7:24?
  - a. What does *abide* mean in your life?
2. I Corinthians 7:1-24 covers several topics. Which one spoke to you the most?
  - a. How have you applied this to your life?
  - b. Realizing that this portion has principles that are so contrary to the ways of the world, how are you relating these godly precepts to your children and grandchildren?
3. In this latter portion of chapter 7, Paul amplifies the topics of marriage and singleness, shifting the focus to the importance of serving God in whatever state we are in. Note and mark the paragraph divisions and write a key phrase or verse from each that reveals its topic.
  - a. I Corinthians 7:25-28
  - b. I Corinthians 7:29-31
  - c. I Corinthians 7:32-35
  - d. I Corinthians 7:36-40
4. Begin this study of I Corinthians 7:25-40 by writing a sentence of thanksgiving to God for His plan for your life and a prayer of commitment to be content in His plan.
5. Paul makes several declarations concerning singleness in chapter 7. Complete the following chart by filling in Paul's statements (*judgments*) and why he believes as he does.

VERSE	PAUL'S JUDGMENTS
26 (see verse 25)	
28	
32	
34	
36	
37	
38	

**SECOND DAY:** Read I Corinthians 7:25-28

1. As each believer is a member of the body of Christ, it is important that we not only have compassion for the lost, but also compassion for one another. In I Corinthians 7 Paul is answering a number of questions presented to him by the believers in Corinth. It would appear by the questions that the Corinthian church was similar to our church today, a mixture of married and single people. Write a prayer asking God to give you His heart for the singles and widowed.
  
2. Paul begins this section with verses 25 and 26 addressing the state of singleness. Why did he feel it was *good* to remain single?

Note: A distress is a necessity imposed either by external circumstances or inward pressures. It denotes calamity, persecution or trial.

Challenge: What were some of the *distresses* at the time of Paul's writing?

3. What are some of the *distresses* that might make it profitable not to marry today?
  
4. What instruction does Paul give in verse 27?
  - a. From Paul's position of advocating singleness, a believer could draw the conclusion that to marry was wrong. How does Paul refute that? Verses 27a and 28a
  
5. The word *bound* means to fasten or to tie with a chain, a rope or a cord. This is where we get the expression "tying the knot". The verb tense is not that the person is binding himself, but a giving of oneself to being *bound*. It is God Who is doing the binding. What does Matthew 19:6 say about this?
  - a. Matthew 19:5 talks about the man *leaving his mother and father and cleaving to his wife*. The word *cleave* means to stick like glue. How should the marriage relationship reflect this kind of *cleaving*?
    - (1.) What is the husband's/wife's responsibility here?
  
  - d. Ephesians 5:32 speaks of the *mystery* that the marriage relationship represents the relationship between *Christ and the church*. Describe how these two relationships should be alike.
  
6. What might Paul have meant when he said, "*Art thou loosed from a wife?... seek not a wife.*"? I Corinthians 7:27b

7. In verse 28 the word *flesh* indicates external circumstances. For what compassionate purpose did Paul encourage singleness? verse 28b
  - a. What are some of the *troubles in the flesh* we might experience in marriage?

**THIRD DAY:** Read I Corinthians 7:29-31

1. Paul states in verse 29 that *the time is short*. Commentators believe that Paul could either be referring to his belief that the return of Christ would be very soon or simply that the time to live for Christ was very brief. What does Ephesians 5:15,16 and Colossians 4:5 say about this?
  
2. In verses 29-31 Paul describes how we should behave in various situations. Complete the following phrases:
 

*they that have wives* \_\_\_\_\_;

*they that weep* \_\_\_\_\_;

*they that rejoice* \_\_\_\_\_;

*they that buy* \_\_\_\_\_;

*they that use this world* \_\_\_\_\_;
  
3. *The important thing to remember is that our remaining time is very short, [and so are opportunities for doing the Lord's work]. For that reason those who have wives should stay as free as possible for the Lord....I Corinthians 7:29 TLB.* How does Matthew 10:37 and Luke 14:26 relate to this verse?
  - a. Paul states *that they that have wives be as though they had none*. This might lead us to believe that Paul is suggesting that we neglect our spouses and ignore their needs. How does Ephesians 5:25 and I Peter 3:7 balance this statement in I Corinthians 7:29b?
    - (1.) How would living in either of these extremes be dangerous?
  
4. Paul also writes about *weeping* and *rejoicing*. What do the following scriptures say about these subjects?
  - a. Matthew 5:4
  - b. Luke 6:21b
  - c. I Thessalonians 5:16
  
5. I Corinthians 7:31 instructs *they that use this world* not to *abuse it*. We are not to use the world to excess. We are not to make it a mere matter of indulgence, or to make things of the world the main object or purpose of living. What does I John 2:15-17 say about *loving* the things of the world? Use other versions if possible.

- a. What are some practical examples of *abusing* the things of the world?
  - b. According to verse 31b, what should we keep in mind when tempted to put too much value on the things of the world?
6. Read II Timothy 2:4. Define *entangleth*.
- a. From this scripture, what are we not to be entangled with?
  - b. How can we keep disentangled from the affairs of this life?
    - (1.) Romans 12:1,2
    - (2.) Colossians 3:2
  - c. According to II Timothy 2:4, what is the essential purpose in keeping disentangled?
  - d. Compare the effects of being entangled as a soldier to the Christian being entangled by the affairs of this world.
  - e. How do we become entangled with things or people other than the Lord?
    - (1.) Once entangled, how do we get untangled?

Personal: What is your purpose in life? How would others know that?

**FOURTH DAY:** Read I Corinthians 7:32-35

1. From verses 32-34 fill in the following chart:

STATUS	CARETH FOR THE THINGS	THAT HE/SHE MAY
vs. 32 Unmarried		
vs. 33 Married		
vs. 34 Unmarried		
vs. 34 Married		

- a. List the four reasons why Paul wrote these things. See verses 32 and 35.
  - b. What was **not** the intention of Paul's instructions in verses 32-34? (verse 35)
2. Paul's concern was that marriage might hinder us from fully serving the Lord. Often in our marriages we can distract our spouse from pursuing the things of the Lord. In what way might our demands to fill our own needs affect their spiritual growth?

- a. How might we be used to encourage them in their walk with the Lord?
3. Verses 33 and 34 speak of the fact that the married man and woman *care* about how they *may please* their spouse. What are some of the things you do to please your spouse?
    - a. What are some of the things your spouse does to please you?
  4. I Corinthians 7:35 in The Living Bible says, *I am saying this to you, not to try to keep you from marrying. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few other things as possible to distract your attention from Him.* What distractions hinder your relationship with the Lord?
    - a. Are any of these distractions ones that could be eliminated? How?
  5. Marriage or singleness should be a means to an end:
    - a. What is God's purpose for our lives? (Romans 8:29)
    - b. What was Paul's purpose for his life? (Philippians 3:10)
    - c. How has your marriage or singleness brought you closer to the above two goals?
  6. We have studied the advantages of singleness. For the singles: What are some of the difficulties that you experience? For the married: What do you think some of the difficulties of singleness might be?
    - a. For the singles: How could the body of Christ encourage you?
    - b. For the married: How do you think you could encourage those who are single?

**FIFTH DAY:** Read I Corinthians 7:36-40

1. Some commentators believe the word *virgin* in verse 36 means daughter; others believe it means betrothed. In Paul's time, parents chose the marriage partner for their children. What choice concerning marriage does Paul give in verses 36-38?
  - a. If marriage is the choice, what does Paul say about that choice? verse 38a
2. Consider verse 38 from the standpoint of a father not giving his daughter in marriage and from a betrothed person's standpoint. After studying this chapter, why do you think Paul felt not to marry was the better choice?

3. What does verse 39 say about the permanence of marriage?
4. What is the one requirement for a *widow* if she remarries? (verse 39 and II Corinthians 6:14)

Note: For further study on widows, read I Timothy 5:3-16.

5. Since a *wife is bound to her husband as long as her husband liveth*, what should her behavior be according to Titus 2:4,5?
  - a. What could be the result if she disobeyed these commands? (Titus 2:5b)
  - b. What should a husband's behavior be? (Ephesians 5:25, I Peter 3:7)
    - (1.) What could be the result if he disobeyed these commands? (I Peter 3:7b)
  - c. How might Matthew 7:1-5 speak to us regarding our mate's lack of obedience to the above scriptures?
6. Paul's judgment in verse 40 is that a widow would be *happier* (supremely blessed) if she remained unmarried. This is not to say that widowhood is not difficult; however, God has provided special care for the widows. How do the following scriptures support this?
  - a. Deuteronomy 10:18
  - b. Job 29:13b
  - c. Isaiah 54:5
  - d. Jeremiah 49:11b
7. Regardless of the circumstances we may find ourselves in, what are some things that we can always be thankful for? (See Psalm 103)
  - a. Where does true happiness or joy come from?
    - (1.) Psalm 4:7
    - (2.) Psalm 5:11
    - (3.) Galatians 5:22

*Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want,  
but the realization of how much you already have.*  
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**SIXTH DAY:** Review I Corinthians 7:25-40

1. With all of this emphasis on the advantages of being single, how do we know that God has ordained and blessed marriage?
  - a. Genesis 2:18

d. Genesis 2:24

2. What is the message of I Corinthians 7:27?
3. Summarize the general intent of I Corinthians 7:25-40.
4. Comment on the following quote.

*Marriage is like a cage;  
one sees the birds outside desperate to get in,  
and those inside equally desperate to get out.*

*Michael DeMontaigne (1533-1592)*

- a. What is Paul's response to the above dissatisfaction?
  - (1.) Philippians 4:11
  - (2.) I Timothy 6:6,8
  - (3.) Hebrews 13:5
5. What have you learned in this lesson that you will apply to your particular marital state?
6. How does Colossians 2:10 reassure us when we are feeling incomplete?

*No one but You Lord  
can satisfy the longing in my heart.  
Nothing I do Lord  
can take the place of drawing near to You.  
Only You can fill my deepest longing  
Only You can breathe in me new life  
Only You can fill my heart with laughter  
Only You can answer my heart's cry.*

*Andy Parks*