

1 Corinthians 7:25-40 (June 5, 2022)

OPENING QUESTION:

SERMON DISCUSSION: How were you impacted by the sermon? What new thoughts or lessons did you discover? In what ways did you find yourself challenged and/or encouraged?

READ 1 Corinthians 7:25-40

1. **NOTE regarding the reference to “the present distress” (v. 26):** “Scholars are increasingly suggesting that Paul has in view something unique to Corinth and the surrounding area. For instance, the distress could be related to the unworthy manner in which the Corinthians were taking the Lord’s Supper, which caused many of them to die (11:27-30).” (Ligonier.org regarding 1 Corinthians 7:25-28)

“Several matters of a general kind are known to have been critical at that time. One was the shortage of food in the Eastern Mediterranean due to the protracted famine which began in the late forties and whose effects were felt for many years. This was exacerbated by a coincidental series of heavy floodings of the Nile, preventing harvests for some years...Local rioting due to food shortage and overpricing was common...Another problem, local to Corinth, was [Emperor] Claudius’ creation of an Imperial Cult in Corinth in AD 53 which must have placed considerable pressure on Christians to offer public worship to the gods”.

How does taking into context the possible “present distress” of the Corinthians help you better understand Paul’s instruction to “let those who have wives live as though they had none” along with the other instructions given in 1 Corinthians 7:25-31?

2. Explain Paul’s rationale for remaining single. What are the challenges presented for those who are married?

3. "I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:35)

What is Paul's motivation in his judgements to the Corinthians? How does this motivation motivate you regarding yourself and others?

4. "Christians should ask themselves in which state, single or married, they can best serve the Lord. Michael Green recommends asking the following question, 'Could I be equally useful to the Lord if married, or would it inevitably curtail my usefulness to him?' He then comments, 'The quantity of time available for Christian involvement may be reduced once we are married, but its quality may be enhanced. At all events, I have no right to marry unless I have honestly faced the question of the impact marriage will have on my Christian life and service.' "
(The NIV Application Commentary-1 Corinthians p. 154 by Craig L. Blomberg)

Discuss the main ideas of Blomberg's quote and how they could be applied to other decisions in life?

5. What qualification in 1 Corinthians 7:39 is given for widows that applies to all believers considering marriage (2 Corinthians 6:14)? Why does this matter?

6. Share what you view as the key point in this passage applicable to your present day life?