

Shaped by the Gospel Series – To Marry, Or Not to Marry?

The Sections of this Text

- **Verses 25 – 27** – to those who are not married
- **Verses 28 – 35** – to those seeking to marry
- **Verses 36 – 38** - to those who are engaged
- **Verses 39 – 40** – to those in widowhood

To Those Who Are Not Married (25 – 27)

- Marriage is good, but it's not *necessary*
 - Singleness is good, and it really has some *advantages*

To Marry is *not* a Sin:

1st Corinthians 9:5 Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

- The temptation for many who are single is to compare the *downs* of singleness with the *ups* of marriage – this is dangerous thinking!
- The temptation for many who are married is to compare the *downs* of marriage with the *ups* of singleness – this is equally dangerous thinking!
 - Paul is addressing our common assumption—that marriage is broadly *better* or *easier*— and helping us see that is simply *not* true.
 - Arguably, the lows of singleness are far less than the lows of marriage.

To Those Seeking to Marry (28 – 35)

- Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again
 - So don't let your ambitions be too earth-bound

Colossians 3:1 - 2

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

- There are single people who would be way more content and blessed in their singleness,
 - if they really lived as if Christ was coming back
- There are married people who would be way more content and blessed in their marriages,
 - if they really lived as if Christ was coming back

All Marriages are *Temporary*:

Luke 20:34 – 36

34 And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage,
35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage,
36 for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.



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- Singles can have greater and undivided devotion to the Lord
 - Marriage brings a complexity to life, that singleness doesn't

To Those Who Are Engaged (36 – 38)

- Misunderstanding and poor translations have caused some to conclude that this section speaks to fathers and that they should forbid their daughters from ever marrying.
 - This is not the case. Paul is giving instructions to men who may already be engaged but are feeling convicted by what they just read about the advantages of singleness.
- Paul's advice – don't break off the engagement.
 - Follow through with your promises to marry her.

To Those in Widowhood (39 – 40)

- Those in widowhood have the right to remarry. It is not a sin
 - But "only in the Lord," meaning only another Christian.
- However, Paul judges that she (or he) would be happier if they remained in celibacy and singleness for the rest of their life.
 - Paul emphasizes this because the option should be carefully and prayerfully considered as the potentially better and more godly choice.
- Again, this is not because sex itself is evil, as some of the Corinthian Christians apparently thought. Remember, **verse 1**?
 - Paul's point for widowers is the same as we've seen in this whole chapter: the unmarried state can be superior because it offers a person more opportunity to serve God without the complexities and distractions of married life.

How wonderful that the prophetess, Anna, only married once:

Luke 2:36 – 38

36 And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin,

37 and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.

38 And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

- She had been married as a young woman, and enjoyed seven years with her husband.
 - Tragically, their time as husband and wife was cut short.
- Instead of remarrying, she gave her life to the service of the temple
 - With fasting and prayers day and night
- She knew pain and loss but had not become bitter.
 - Now, as an elderly woman, she had not lost hope; instead, she was a woman of worship and prayer.
- She prophesied of the coming messiah to the people and lived to see his dedication in the temple on the eighth day.
 - What a loss for the kingdom if she hadn't learned to have such devotion and contentment in her singleness – so that her whole life could be in service.

