



Part 6: *Remaining As You Are*

INTRODUCTION – Exposing My Ordering Principle

What's your starting point?

1. How can I get the most out of life? (Carpe Diem!)
2. How can I best serve God and advance his Gospel in this life?
1 Corinthians 2:2; 7:35; 2 Corinthians 5:15

DINE IN – Overcoming the Grass is Greener Myth

1 Corinthians 7

2 Peter 3:16

Corinthian Questions and Pauline Responses...

Q: Some of our people are saying it is good to avoid sex all together, even in marriage. What do you say?

A: Sex is for marriage and marriage for sex. If you're married, don't deprive each other. (But if you do, make it short.)

Q: Since you taught us to stay uncontaminated from the world's influence, should Christ-followers divorce their non-Christian spouses?

A: No, divorce is not the best. And by staying married, not only will you not be contaminated, but you will have a sanctifying effect on your family. (But if you do, stay single or remarry your spouse.)

Q: If a Christ-follower's spouse has died, do they have to live celibate?

A: Staying single is better, and celibacy is part of singleness. (But it's okay if you marry again.)

Q: If your (non-Christian) spouse wants a divorce, should the Christ-following spouse fight to save the marriage?

A: No one should single-handedly fight for their marriage if it means fighting against their spouse. Let them go, in the name of peace.

Q: If a Christ-follower is a virgin (that is, has never been married), is it alright if they get married?

A: Staying single is best. (But if you marry, it isn't a sin.)

Other Principles in the Text...

- Leadership means knowing when to set the standard high and be uncompromising, and when to work with people where they're at. It is knowing the role of concessions and not just commands.
- Christ-followers should practice relational contentment. "Remain as you are."
(1 Timothy 6:6; Philippians 4:12-13)
- Paul agrees with Jesus that marriage may be good, but singleness is better. Marriage doesn't solve your problems – it increases them! (Also see **Matthew 19:1-12**)
 - The church should do a better job holding up singleness as at least as beautiful and blessed as marriage in our fallen world.

- Singleness allows us to focus more of our energies on God and his kingdom whereas marriage divides our time and attention.
- Sex in marriage should be an expression of egalitarian cooperation, mutual submission, and other-centredness.
- Divorce need not be the end of a marriage.
- If a Christ-follower does marry, their spouse should be "in the Lord". (Also see **2 Corinthians 6:14**.)
- God's work in this world is so thoroughly enmeshed with our lives, Paul can speak of Christians "saving" non-Christians.

TAKE OUT – I'll Have That to Go Please

When it comes to relationship status, Paul agrees with Jesus (**Matthew 19:1-12**, etc.): "Remain as you are." Pause from your pursuits to invite God's contentment where you are now in life. If God isn't enough for you now, why would he be then?

CONCLUSION – Reordering My Ordering Principle

1 Corinthians 7:35

Q & Eh? Text 647.330.2789 or email ask@themeetinghouse.ca

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

Warming Up...

1. Which do you think is harder – the single life or the married life? Why?
2. What are the clear advantages and disadvantages of both ways of living as they relate to serving others and spreading the gospel?

Look to the Book...

3. Review the sermon notes first, then read through Paul's amazingly practical and challenging counsel in **1 Corinthians 7**. Using this passage as a base of argument...
 - a) How would you respond to a single Christian who said that sex was their God-given right or that marriage was obviously God's will for their life?
 - b) How would you respond to a married Christian who said they were done with their marriage and wanted out?
 - c) How would you respond to a married Christian who said their spouse was leaving them, but they were going to do everything in their power to prevent the divorce from going through?
 - d) How would you respond to a single Christian who said they tended to date non-Christians and/or were planning on marrying a non-Christian?
 - e) How would you respond to a pastor or volunteer in the church who said their spouse and family needs to learn how to live with less of their time because they were busy doing the Lord's work?
 - f) Paul's radical vision of egalitarian sexual reciprocity in marriage (vv. 2-5) was unheard of, unprecedented, and unparalleled in ancient literature. What are the potential joys and dangers of husbands and wives giving authority of their bodies over to their spouse? How could married couples maximize these joys and minimize these dangers?

So What?...

4. Whether you are married or single, what could your Home Church do to support you being content as you "remain as you are"?
5. Can you think of a time that you felt like God's ways were a burden or a meaningless restriction that trapped you more than they freed you? Take time to meditate on **v. 35**. When finished, share anything God has been saying to you, and invite or offer help to follow through as appropriate.

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Notes are available online at themeetinghouse.ca/teaching