

Remember that God ultimately desires us to trust Him and fix our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to "... run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..." (Hebrews 12:1-3). As Proverbs 3:5-6 states, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths."

Steven J. Cole, *Lesson 8: Practical Advice for Singles (1 Corinthians 7)* Copyright 1995, Bible.org. Edited and used with permission.

Find the full article at:

<https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-8-practical-advice-singles-1-corinthians-7>

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Books and Websites:

Boundless.org offers young adults encouragement to live abundantly as singles while seeking God's best in either celibacy or marriage.

The New Lady in Waiting Book by Jackie Kendall and Debby Jones reminds young women that "You are worth waiting for!" Blending humor, honesty, and insights from the biblical story of Ruth, it will encourage you to become a woman of purity, faith, contentment, and patience as you pursue an intimate relationship with Jesus.

Singleness: How to be Single and Satisfied by June Hunt. This book provides encouragement, insight, and advice for contentment and joy in singleness.

Thrive: The Single Life as God Intended by Lina Abujamra. Make a difference with your life right now instead of sitting around waiting for something to happen to you. Figure out what God has to say about singleness instead of relying on your own feelings.

Print Date: 8-Aug-18



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SINGLE

Should You Pursue Marriage?

FELLOWSHIP at
HOME

Pointers

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR SINGLES

Adapted from the article FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 7 by Steven J. Cole

Paul has specific advice for singles in 1 Corinthians, chapter 7. First, his message is that singles should pursue a course that leads to the greatest devotion to Christ and His cause. This advice actually applies to every Christian, single or married, but it is Paul's word especially to singles. Consider these points:

If you can remain single and be devoted to the Lord in purity, do it!

While marriage is God's design for most people (Genesis 2:18), He has gifted some to remain single so that they can serve Him without the encumbrances that necessarily go along with marriage. Paul is not commanding being single, since he recognizes the single state as a gift which God only gives to some (7:7–9), but he is strongly commending it, since it provides a number of advantages for serving the Lord that being married precludes. If there are people in your sphere that are pressuring you to marry, share with them that Paul teaches that being single is good since it opens some opportunities for serving Christ that are closed to married people.

Advantages of remaining single:

Single people are spared from various troubles that married people face. In 7:32–35, Paul points out that the married person, of necessity, cannot have the same undivided devotion to the Lord as the single person.

Marriage carries with it certain responsibilities and obligations that take time and effort, which otherwise could have been given to the Lord. Paul's point is that if a single person gives himself fully to the Lord and His service, and a married person does the same, the single person may be more devoted since he does not have the family responsibilities that the married person has.

How can I know if I should pursue marriage?:

Paul recognized that though he had the gift from God of being single, not everyone does (7:7–9). In determining how to answer this question, consider these things:

1) Can you control sexual desires? Paul is quite practical and human at this point: "But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn" (7:9). If you are single and find that fighting sexual temptation is a daily, constant battle, then you need to pursue marriage. Paul is not saying that it is impossible for a single person to resist temptation, because he later says that in every temptation, God provides the way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). Every Christian can be pure in thought and deed, however, if all your energy is directed toward fighting the battle of purity every day, the best solution is not

more self-discipline, but getting married. Of course, you still need self-control even as a married person, but God has given marriage as a legitimate safeguard against immorality (7:2).

2) Are you constantly lonely in spite of close relationship with the Lord and with other believers? In Genesis, we find Adam in a perfect environment in unbroken fellowship with his Creator, and yet God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). To be lonely when you're single is not necessarily a sign of a spiritual problem. If, as a single, you can reasonably control your loneliness through Christian fellowship, then you may be able to remain single, but when I was single, in spite of having good friends, I often felt very lonely. I also like kids and desired to have my own children—long before I got married—so I often used Genesis 2 in my prayers to the Lord!

3) To what ministry has God called you? As mentioned already, if God is calling you to a role or location where you are unable to care well for a family, then you should remain single, at least for that season. When you do marry, it should not be for the purpose of self-centered fulfillment and personal happiness. While marriage and children are good gifts from God that bring great joy, you should marry because you can better serve Christ as a married person. As Christians, we are to "seek first God's kingdom and righteousness." If you seek your own happiness, you will come up empty (Matthew 6:33; 16:25).

If you desire to marry, pray and look for a godly mate! When I was single, Paul's words in verse 9 often frustrated me. He makes it sound so simple and matter of fact: "Let them marry." Okay, so how do I go about doing that?

Focus on spiritual growth in godliness.

Rather than feeling depressed or wasting time in a frantic search for a companion, use your time to seek the Lord in His Word and in prayer. Look for local opportunities to serve the Lord in some way. Take time to become the kind of person you would want to marry!

Never consider marriage to an unbeliever.

According to 1 Corinthians 7:39 and 2 Corinthians 6:14–18, it is not God's will for a Christian to become unequally yoked with a non-Christian in marriage.

Guard your moral purity.

1 Corinthians 6:18 says "Flee immorality." Remember that your body belongs to God, whose Spirit dwells in you; therefore, you are to "glorify God in your body." (6:19–20).

