

# Single and Safe

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**Text:** 1 Corinthians 7:25-40

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**Introduction:** Open your Bible to the book of **1 Corinthians 7:25-40**. We are talking about being "Single and Safe". This morning I want to give you three protections for all those who are single in our congregation. You may never have been married. You may be a single mother, or you may be a widow or a widower. You have special challenges and temptations, and I want to talk about those today.

You remember last week I read you a poem written by a young man to the Ladies' Home Journal in the 1800s about singleness. This week I'll read you a poem from a young lady from the same edition.

The young lady writes...

*The only reason I've never wed  
Is as clear as the day and easily said.  
Two beaus I knew would've made me a bride  
But the trouble was just that I couldn't decide.  
Whenever John came, I was sure it was he  
That I cared for the most, but with Charlie by me  
The looks that he had, and his eyes fixed on mine,  
'Twas as easy as could be to say "I'll be thine".  
Now tell me, what was a poor maiden to do  
Who could not make her choice between these two?  
I dillied and dallied and couldn't decide  
'Till Johnny got married and Charlie, he died.  
And that is the reason why I've never wed  
For how could I help it as everyone said,  
When Johnny was married and Charlie was dead?*

There are many reasons a person might have for being either married or single, but for a Christian, we need to remember that God has absolute control over whether we are single or married. He is in absolute control of us and of every detail of our destiny. It's ultimately His to decide for every one of us whether we will be single or married. His way is perfect and His choice is best.

We have already spoken much of marriage, and last week we spoke on being "Single and Satisfied". So this morning our subject is about being "Single and Safe". There are many snares and temptations in this world. Satan would like to sift you like wheat. Now this message will be good for married people too, but specifically directed toward those who are single. Let's see what God's Word says about being "single and safe".

**1 Corinthians 7:25-35**, "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, *I say, that it is good for a man so to be.* 27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a

wife? seek not a wife. 28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. 29 But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; 30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; 31 And they that use this world, as not abusing *it*: for the fashion of this world passeth away. 32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried [SINGLE] careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife. 34 There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband. 35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction”.

[Prayer for Guidance]

We need to know about singleness, because singleness is quite common in our society. Do you realize that 50% of our society is married, and 50% live in an unmarried state? Out of the 50% single, 30% of adults don't get married, 10% are divorced singles, and 10% are widowed. We are not talking about an exception here. We are talking about almost 50% of our society that are single adults.

There is a great amount of promiscuity among unsaved singles. There is great temptation being single, especially in our modern society. My hope is that this message will bring a hedge of protection around you if you are single.

Singleness has been God's will for numerous people throughout the ages. There are notable individuals who were single such as Jeremiah and Paul. Modern people such as Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Richard Baxter, David Brainerd, and Amy Carmichael were all single. God had given them the gift of singleness, and they used it wisely.

I. If you are single, you need to **WAIT** on the Lord.

A. First, wait under God's **management**. **Verse 20**, “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.” And **verse 24**, “Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.” The calling Paul is talking about is either marriage or singleness. Some are married in a Christian marriage, others have an unsaved spouse. You may have been married before and now you are in widowhood. You may never have been married. Paul says, the calling or state you are in is totally and absolutely in God's control. “A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps” (**Proverbs 16:9**).

To live a single life for God in order to be more greatly used of God is a gift of God that God esteems highly. Look over at Isaiah 56. Use your singleness for God. Wait on Him. Serve Him. **Isaiah 56:4-5**, “For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose *the things* that please me, and take hold of my covenant; 5 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.” There is a place and a name that God gives to singles that serve Him that is better than sons and daughters. I don't know how you get better than that, but that's God's promise!

It is obviously not wrong to seek a spouse as a single person, but you should consider that it may be God's will for you to remain single and live a rich life of service for Christ. So if you are single, WAIT on God's management of your life. God is the orchestrator of both singleness and marriage. Keep your eyes on Christ, not on your marital status!

God says, "Be still, and know that I am God" (**Psalm 46:10**). It is hard to be still and to trust God. But know that He is God. He is in absolute control. Have you surrendered *everything* to God's control? It's already in His control. He just wants you to acknowledge that!

B. Second, wait in **moral purity**. Remember the word Paul uses in **1 Corinthians 7:25** is "virgins". If you are single and you love the Lord, then you are also celibate. You are keeping yourself morally pure. Paul was qualified to write about moral purity. It is probable that he had been married and then widowed. As a former member of the Sanhedrin, marriage would have been a requirement. Paul seems to refer to himself being a widower in **1 Corinthians 7:8**, "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I." The word "unmarried" in context is probably referring to widowers.

As a single person, you must be abstinent from fornication. There cannot even be a question about your purity. Your purity is priceless. Make your purity a priority. Paul says in **1 Corinthians 6:13**, "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." If God has called you to singleness, then he's called you to be pure. You are to be a virgin until after you say "I do"!

C. Third, wait with the right **mentality** (**verse 26**, "I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be." What Paul is saying is that it is good to remain unmarried.

When I was a Senior in college, I remember all my friends got what we called "senioritis". It's a devastating disease of discontentment. My friends wanted to get married. That's all they were focused on. They felt like if they didn't make it happen that year, it wasn't going to happen. Paul says in **verse 26** that we should not let our marital status dominate our thinking and focus. He says "I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be". You were made to serve the Lord. Use your singleness or your marriage to serve the Lord.

D. Fourth, wait with a view of your **mortality** (**verses 29, 31**). This life is a vapour that is quickly passing away! This is a protection for your **soul**. All this marriage stuff is temporal. There will be no marriage or giving in marriage in heaven. Paul says, "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none". He says in **verse 31**, "And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away".

**Matthew 22:30**, "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Marriage is a temporary institution that is a picture of Christ and the church.

The second protection is this:

II. If you are single, you need to **WORK** for the Lord. Marriage and Singleness are both a divine calling. Consider your calling. Whatever your plans are, your calling as a single

person is not just the current status you happen to be in. It is part of your divine calling.

A. God wants you to be **free** from concern so that you can work for the Lord! God has made you free so that you can minister to others. **Verse 32a**, "But I would have you without carefulness." God wants you to be free from cares. Marriage brings some serious distractions. What kind of distractions?

1. In marriage there is more possibility for **Conflict**. Back up to **verse 28**, "Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh". Those who get married will have "trouble". The Greek word for "trouble," means "pressed together"<sup>1</sup> or "squashed"<sup>2</sup> or squeezed. What Paul is teaching here is simple. Anytime you press two sinners together in a marriage relationship, there's trouble! This is not rocket science. There's a greater potential for misery in marriage. It's true. If you are single, the only person that can make you miserable is you. In marriage, that potential is doubled!

**Illustration:** One day a couple was having some friends over, and they received a telephone call from their recently married daughter. After several tense minutes on the phone, the mother told the father to pick up the extension. The newlyweds had had their first big fight.

In a few moments, the parents rejoined their guests. The guests wondered what happened. The father explained, "My daughter said she wanted to come home." The guests wondered what he had told her. He replied, "I told her **she was home.**"

That's the truth. Once you are married, you are home. Look over at what Jesus said about marriage in **Matthew 19**. You are pressed together. The Scripture says you are to leave your parents and "cleave to your wife". Look at **Matthew 19:3-6**, "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Some people make the terrible mistake of getting married simply because they are lonely. That is a great mistake! A very wise person said, "There is something far worse than single loneliness, and that is marital misery." The key is to learn contentment in whatever state you are in.

2. In marriage there is more possibility for **Commitments**. **Verses 32b-33**, "He that is unmarried [SINGLE] careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord 33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife." "Marriage is like twirling a baton,

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<sup>1</sup> Augustus Strong (1996). *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* : (electronic ed.) (G2347). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

<sup>2</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (3:139). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

turning handsprings or eating with chopsticks. It looks easy until you try it.”<sup>3</sup>  
There are so many responsibilities!

God wants them to enjoy the freedom their status gives them to serve Him without distractions. With marriage, you have a lot of other cares. If you are married and one of your children is hurt, you are at the hospital. You have to be home for dinner most nights. You have to save money for college. You have to buy medical insurance for your family's physical needs. You have massive responsibilities that mean you cannot be away for very long from the home.

As a single person, you do not have these encumbrances. You are free to serve the Lord.

B. God wants you to be **functioning**. **Verse 34**, “There is difference *a/so* between a wife and a virgin [SINGLE PERSON]. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit”.

God’s purpose for having you be single, is so that you can serve Him.

Turn over to Genesis 2 for a moment. What was Adam doing when he found a wife? He wasn’t out girl-watching, because there were no other human beings around. He wasn’t daydreaming about his wedding day. Adam was busy functioning in his God-given role of tending the Garden of Eden and, more specifically, naming the animals when God put him to sleep and removed a rib to fashion Eve.

**Genesis 2:20-22**, “Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.”

**Application:** If you are a Christian single person who is preoccupied with getting married to the point that you are frustrated day in and day out, week in and week out, year in and year out, then you are living outside the will of God. God has you single for a purpose. That is to serve Him.

God can give you a mate at any time. Remember that Adam was alone in the garden and it was not good. Adam needed a wife and there were no women on the planet. God put Adam asleep in His will and made Adam a wife. You need to be “asleep in the will of God”, and God will bring you a spouse if He wants you to be married. Until then, work for Christ. Give yourself to kingdom service. As a single person you are free from distractions.

C. God wants you to be **focused** on Him. **Verse 35**, “And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction”.

1. Singleness **not imposed**. Paul says I don’t want to “cast a snare upon you”. This means literally to “put a noose” on someone. There is nothing in the Word of God that prohibits marriage for any one. You simply need to marry a godly person. This one verse does away with imposed celibacy that the Roman church

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<sup>3</sup> Helen Rowland, quoted by Robert Keeler in *The Toastmaster; Reader's Digest*, June, 1994, p. 130.

has on its priests, and other religions have. God says, this is not to be a noose. You are free to get married.

2. Singleness is **encouraged**. Why? Because it is "that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction" (**verse 35**). The word "without distraction" means "undivided devotion". You have one focus if you are single — "How can I serve the Lord?"

I believe if you focus on Christ, he will take care of whether or not He wants you married. I think if you focus on God, God will do the looking for you if He wants you to marry.

So often we get focused on all the little things, worrying about our job, God's will in this area or that area, and we become frazzled. There's an answer to this in **Matthew 6:33**, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

**Illustration:** Many traffic reports include a helicopter that allows the reporter to see beyond the traffic tie-ups on the ground and give drivers the big picture, including warnings of trouble ahead and alternate routes. When you are tuned in to the person in the helicopter, you hear things that other people who are in too much of a hurry to listen don't get to hear. Are you tuned in to Christ? He will guide you!

The third protection is this:

- III. As a single person, if you ever decide the it is God's will for you to be married, you must be **WEDDED** in the Lord.

A. You must have parent's **permission**. Remember the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother".

1. We must consider the father's authority in **verse 36**. A father has the right to give or to withhold or to give his daughter in marriage. That what **verse 36** speaks of. "But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely [UNFAIRLY] toward his virgin [SINGLE DAUGHTER], if she pass the flower of *her* age [PHYSICAL MATURITY], and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry." In other words, if a young lady has come to physical maturity and has the desire to marry, and she has such a desire that it requires her to be married, the father should take serious consideration of that and permit marriage.

2. The father's **consideration**. **Verse 36**, "But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely [UNFAIRLY] toward his virgin [SINGLE DAUGHTER], if she pass the flower of *her* age [PHYSICAL MATURITY], and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry." Why was this such a big deal? Why would Paul have to remind the fathers that they were not "sinning" when giving their daughter in marriage? The context is that some father's in this church had dedicated their daughters to the Lord's service as single people. At the time some of the girls came to physical maturity and wanted to be married. Paul said, you are not sinning if you dedicated your daughters and they want marriage. Let them marry. The father should consider the daughter's desire for marriage, and if the young man is godly, the father should consider the daughter's desires.

3.The father's **prerogative**. Look at **verses 37-38**, "Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, **having no necessity**, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. 38 So then he that giveth *her* in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth *her* not in marriage doeth better". If the daughter has no necessity of getting married, the father still has the prerogative to encourage her in marriage or to encourage her to remain single. It's fine if the father encourages his daughter or son in marriage, but it is even better if parents encourage singleness if they can bare it. **Matthew 19:12**, "there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. **He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.**"

B.Remember that marriage is **permanent!** **Verse 39**, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth". When you get married, you are married. And that is it. And there's no turning back. I want you to consider the traditional marriage vows.

We usually say, "I take you (Name) to be my (husband/wife), to have and to hold, from this day forward..." and then what does it say?—

- 1.**For better or for worse**. Whether your spouse gets sweeter or more sour with age, marriage is for better or for worse.
- 2.**For richer or for poorer**. Whether you've got money or you are poor, marriage is permanent!
- 3.**In sickness and in health**. There may come a day when your spouse gets a disease like Alzheimer's, or cancer, and you will watch them slowly deteriorate. Some of you have been through deep waters with health issues with your spouse. We are to love our spouse "in sickness and in health".
- 4.**For as long as we both shall live**. **Verse 39**, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth". That means the only legitimate thing that will separate a person from their spouse is death!

C.Your marriage is to be **principled**. You must marry another Christian. Missionary dating is out of the question. **Verse 39b**, "but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; **only in the Lord.**"

**2 Corinthians 6:14**, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

D.The single life is the **preferred** life! **Verse 40**, "But **she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.**" This life is soon passing away. Only one life 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last! It is better to give your life to the Lord for his service!

Whether you are single or married, your satisfaction comes from Christ! Marriage never made any one happier than they were already in Christ. No mate is better than Christ. If you are able to be single for the Kingdom's sake you should! It is BETTER!! Whatever your station in life, SERVE THE LORD!!

**Conclusion:** So, here is a word of encouragement to singles: be safe! Wait on the Lord! Work for the Lord, and if you desire marriage, be wedded only in the Lord!