

1 Corinthians

Wisdom & Unity

Meeting the demands of
Christian life and living



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Starting where
you are:

Any questions?



1 Corinthians 7:25-40 – Christians and Sexual Intimacy, pt. 2

This second half of Paul's response to questions about Christians, marriage, and sex is addressed to unmarried believers. We can still hear some of the believers' struggles reconciling the realities at the intersection of sexual intimacy, marriage, and Christianity. With this part of Paul's response, we get a more defined sexual ethic for married and unmarried, widows and widowers, and saved and unsaved.

In 7:1-24, the focus was primarily on persons already married or engaged, with some counsel for the widow(-er). In 7:25-40, attention shifts toward unmarried and single persons, with some counsel for engaged persons.

Outline: Part 2 (7:25-40), for the unmarried

- Remain as you are (25-31)
- Serve the Lord free from anxieties (32-35)
- Saved, Single, and Satisfied (36-38)
- Remain as you are, or remain as you are (39-40)

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The Main Idea

“It is best for Christians to remain as they are when they come to Christ, but if they lack self-control, it is best to marry only Christians.”

- Joel C. Gregory. “1 Corinthians,” p. 484 in Matthew D. Kim & Scott M. Gibson (eds.) *The Big Idea Companion for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2021) pp. 482-488.

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Remain as you are (7:25-31)

The counsel Paul offers to unmarried (i.e., widow(-er), divorced, engaged, single) is consistent with his counsel to the married:

“If you are unmarried before becoming a believer, remain as you are.”

What is on Paul's mind? Why not encourage marriage?

- A concern for the time in which they lived.
- A concern for the trials that were to come.
- It is not a sin to marry—and thus not “remain as you are.”

Serve the Lord free from anxieties (7:32-35)

Paul's pastoral advice is shaped by his desire for Christians in Corinth to be free of worldly distractions that could prevent their ministry work. He viewed this as "profitable" for one's ability to serve the Lord.

7:32 □ **ἀμέριμνος** amerimnos = free from anxiety (not anxious), free from care (without care). [ref. Matt 28:14, out of trouble.]

- A response to the world's condition (7:26, 28, 29, 31)
- An encouragement to fulfill one's responsibilities
 - Unmarried (previously married)
 - Married
 - Virgin (young, never married)

How might being "anxious" negatively impact one's ability to meet their responsibility?

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Saved, Single, and Satisfied (7:36-38)

In this section, Paul addresses the same question for cases of arranged marriages, which were customary in that day. Here, the concern is for those who are engaged (betrothed) – or as is primarily the practice today, for those who are dating.

- The choice to allow marriage
- Do not prevent marriage
- Do not rush into marriage

Ultimately, each case is different, but Paul's counsel is consistent: remain as you are (see 7:38).

Remain as you are, or remain as you are (7:39-40)

One final reminder is offered to married Christians: if you are married continue in your marriage until separated by death. If you become unmarried, Paul's counsel (not the Lord's command) is that you remain unmarried.

A few thoughts for Christians considering remarriage:

- You are free to remarry. **There is no stigma.**
- Only marry a Christian. **There is a stipulation.**
- Count the cost. **Be sure.**

A Christian Sexual Ethic

Based on the whole of Paul's responses to how Christians should view marriage and the place of sexual intimacy, 1 Corinthians 7 provides believers with an ethic—a set of moral principles—about sex.

- A natural, human desire which is not sinful.
- To be enjoyed in a marriage.
- Should represent mutuality – duty, consent, accountability, partnership.
- A sign of one's spiritual discernment/maturity.
- Intended as a gift and not as a burden.

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Any Questions?



For next week:

- Pray about today's lesson**
- Read 1 Corinthians 7:25-40**



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