

(1st Corinthians 7:25-40)
“The Great Distraction”

~ INTRO ~

AS WE RESUME...

- Our study of 1st Corinthians...
 - Remember we're learning how to apply Christianity...
 - In the basic areas of life.

WHAT IS ONE OF SATAN'S MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES?

- It isn't always persecution – it's often distraction.

IN (Chp. #7)...

- We've covered what to do with sexual desire...
- We've talked about the gift of marriage & the gift of being single
- We've covered the issue of withhold sex in marriage.
- We've discussed divorce, widows, re-married, & mixed marriages.

NOW...

- Today we conclude the chapter with advice...
 - To those who are not married (virgins & widows) (men & women).

HOWEVER...

- To those who are quick to *check-out* because the category...
 - Doesn't fit your context. HANG ON!
- The core aim of this section...
 - Is about undivided devotion to Christ...
 - Which applies to all of us.

~ STUDY ~

Paul repeatedly uses phrases like:

- “*because of the present distress*” (v.26)
- “*the time is short*” (v.29)
- “*the form of this world is passing away*” (v.31)

These are leading statements to help us understand the context of his counsel.

- Paul isn't encouraging the neglect of earthly responsibilities.
 - He's reminding us that earthly responsibilities...
 - Should never replace eternal priorities.

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*Whether married or single, make decisions...
that position you for wholehearted devotion to Christ. (Pause)*

IDEA #1 – WISE DECISIONS

(v.25) Now concerning virgins...

- This is the target audience Paul is giving an answer to.
 - And he’s saying Jesus didn’t give a specific answer on this issue...
 - Nonetheless... here’s a wise principle.

(v.26) because of the present distress...

- Many Bible scholars believe Paul is referring to a season of hardship.
 - Persecution / famine / economic / or some significant crisis.

AND HE REASONS...

- That under this crisis *an eternal perspective* was the wiser course.
 - He is NOT saying marriage is wrong (v.28).

HE’S SPEAKING ABOUT PRACTICAL WISDOM!

HERE’S THE LESSON:

*God’s wisdom doesn’t change – but different circumstances
may call for different applications of His wisdom.*

MANY PEOPLE MAKE BAD DECISIONS...

- Because they neglect wise counsel...
 - They rush into life-altering decisions too fast.
- They have a blind spot and keep getting tripped up...
 - With the same mistake time and again.

CHURCH...

- Paul is NOT giving a universal command.
 - He’s teaching believers how to think biblically in difficult seasons.

SO THIS IS HOW WE APPLY IT:

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- What best enables you to serve Christ right now?
- Make decisions with the counsel of God’s word...
 - In light of the times we live...
 - And with regards to your **past** / **present** / **future** in mind.

IDEA #2 – ETERNAL PRIORITIES

(v.29) This is one of Paul’s most misunderstood Bible verses.

PAUL IS NOT TELLING HUSBANDS...

- To neglect their wives.

RATHER...

- He wants the church to understand...
 - That marriage should NOT obstruct obedience to Christ.
- And in the next two verses (vv.30-31)...
 - He continues with the perspective...
 - That all earthly experiences are temporary.

(v.30) **Sorrows** and **joys** and **possessions** in life...

- Should NOT be given a place that out-ranks our devotion to God.
- All things in this life are to be subordinate to serving Christ.

(v.31) We’re authorized to USE the things of this world...

- But NOT misuse them.

WHY?

“[because] the form of this world is passing away” (v.31b)

Everything we see is temporary.

- Marriage is temporary.
- Money is temporary.
- Success is temporary.
- Sorrow is temporary.
 - BUT... God’s Kingdom is eternal.

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APPLICATION:

(Ecc. 2:24) NKJV

- Christians should enjoy God’s gifts...
 - Without allowing those gifts to become their master.

Personal comfort should not hinder our devotion to the will of God.

IDEA #3 – UNDIVIDED DEVOTION

NOW...

- Paul begins to teach the church **WHY singleness...**
 - Can sometimes be an advantage.
- An unmarried believer can focus more fully upon ministry (v.32)

ON THE OTHER HAND...

- A married person **must also** care for:
 - Their spouse
 - Their children
 - And other responsibilities singleness does not carry.

NEITHER OPTION IS SINFUL...

- Because they’re God-given.
 - BUT... marriage multiplies legitimate responsibilities.

HERE’S SOME PERSONAL QUESTIONS:

Whether married or single...

- *What competes for your affections?*
- *What consumes your thoughts?*
- *What keeps you from saying yes to Jesus?*

(Pause)

FOR SOME PEOPLE...

- The greatest distractions aren’t sinful things
 - They’re good things that have gotten out of balance.

IDEA #4 – FREEDOM WITH WISDOM

THERE ARE **TWO VIEWS** BEHIND THESE VERSES...

- But both arrive at the same conclusion.

(v.38) *He who gives himself in marriage does well, but he who maintains the unmarried state (for greater service to the Lord) does better.*

POINT BEING...

- This is NOT *singleness for selfishness*.
- This is *singleness for service* to the LORD.
 - It's a life choice to remain unmarried.

IDEA #5 – FINAL COUNSEL

Paul returns to widows with his final counsel:

- 1) Marriage lasts “*as long as her husband lives.*” (v.39)
- 2) If a spouse dies, the surviving believer is free to remarry *only in the Lord*.

That means marriage should be to another believer.

Paul then says a widow MAY be happier remaining single (v.40).

*This does not contradict Paul's later counsel in (1 Tim. 5:14) “*younger widows*”

~ IN CLOSING ~

Some of you are married. Some are single. Some are widowed.
Some hope to be married one day.

Whatever season God has you in today... **don't waste it.**

- Arrange your life so that Jesus gets your best!

Let's finish the day by taking Communion...

- And calling upon God's grace for our lives. AMEN!