

Bible Study Series: Man, Woman and God

3. Singleness and God

1. What does our culture think about people who are single?

Particularly thinking about people who are getting older (maybe late 20's – 30's) and have never married

2. Read 1 Corinthians 7:25-40. What is Paul's basis for being able to give this judgement? (see verses 25 and 32)

What he says here are not direct instructions that Jesus has given. However Paul, by the grace of God is seen to be trustworthy to take the truth of the outworking of the gospel to the Christian communities he establishes (v25). He does this in the power and authority of the Spirit's guidance (v40)

3. What is this passage saying to believers about their priorities?

We should treat the things we have in this world as temporary. As this world is passing away, so are all the things of this world. Our focus should be in the coming, eternal kingdom of God. This should shape the way we live and prioritise. (see particularly v29-31 but also the parts that talk about concerns in this world)

4. Why does Paul stress the necessity for widows to only marry someone in the Lord? What difficulties could they face if they went against this?

He is talking here to Christians who have become widows/widowers. Marring someone who is not a believer would have such negative affects on the person's Christian life, desires and priorities. Back then, they would have had nothing in common, a lot more obviously than for us today, but the same principle applies in our time.

5. In Genesis 2:18 God says, 'it is not good for the man to be alone'. How do we hold this together with what Paul says about not needing to be married in the 1 Corinthian passage?

A person is not created to live without any relations with other humans, this remains to be true. However marriage is not the only way a person can experience companionship.

6. Looking at Matthew 19:11-12, what reasons does Jesus give for a person to not be married?

Eunuchs often refer to people who are castrated, but it seems that Jesus uses the term here to mean men who never engage in sexual activity or get married. Some are born that way – maybe a physical defect or maybe someone who has a homosexual orientation who chooses not to marry, or engage in sexual activity. Next are those made that way – this refers to those castrated, or maybe even people made this way by their circumstances. Maybe the child who cares for elderly parents, and by doing so forgoes marriage. Then there are those who do so for the kingdom of heaven – either temporarily or permanently, make a decision to not get married in order to undertake certain work for the kingdom. One that demands single minded devotion. Maybe an itinerate preacher, or a bible translator.

7. Read Matthew 22:30. What will be different about relationships in heaven? What will the relational focus be in heaven? (see Revelation 7:9-17)

They will not be like we have on earth, marriage relationships will not remain the same. All believers will be united as one, glorifying the Lord Jesus.

8. From the passages we have looked at here, what advice would you give a Christian friend who is desperate to get married? **Or if you are unmarried, and feel you really need to be married, how could you be encouraged and comforted by Matthew 22:23-33 and 1 Corinthians 7:25-40?**

Answer this one according to your current situation.