

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND SINGLENESS (PART 2)

GOD'S GRACE FOR AN IMPERFECT CHURCH: A STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS · 1 CORINTHIANS 7:17-40 · JUNE 9, 2024 · STEVEN JAEHNERT

"I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:35)

When we remember that God is a partner with us in our singleness it changes everything.

Celibacy (1 Corinthians 7:1-2)

The God-given boundary for sexual intimacy
Invited into the mystery and holiness of God
What do you orient your life around?
Strength in the Spirit & Scriptures

Freedom to Marry (1 Corinthians 7:6-9)

Marriage or singleness your choice
What kind of gift?

"Slow & Steady" (1 Corinthians 7:6-9)

The pastoral principle: "Remain"
The blessing of spiritual fruitfulness
Counsel for us? Not distressed

Single-Minded Devotion (1 Corinthians 7:6-9)

Shared calling with marrieds
WITH God: What's your prayer life like?
IN Fellowship: How does singleness impact your Kingdom story?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. This week we continue our preaching series, "God's Grace for an Imperfect Church" by looking at 1 Corinthians 7:17-40. Whether on your own or with others, begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you through this study and then read that text aloud.
2. What parts of this passage stick out as controversial in today's culture? What do people outside of the church build their convictions upon (cf. Eph. 4:17-24, 1 Thess. 4:2-4).
3. Describe seasons in which you experienced singleness: what was good about it and what were challenges?

4. How does this passage inform how we view singles/singleness? How are you challenged?
5. Describe the ministries that reach singles that you know about at Eastbrook.
6. Try to think of non-official church ministry related ways in which singles can be sharing in the fellowship of the church community.
7. How might thinking about singles change how we "do" church?
8. Today's passage builds on the vision of Christian's as the temple of God. Read Ephesians 2:14-22 & 1 Peter 2:4-6 about how God is building us into his spiritual house (temple). Discuss how this transforms how we live in our bodies.
9. If the gospel is about the selfless love of God revealed in Christ, how do you think selfless love might shape singleness in general or your singleness specifically?
10. Paul speaks to singles who are "burning with passion," and encourages them to marry. Discuss what this says about God's design for the body, and what good stewardship of our bodies looks like.
11. The stats about the growth of singles in our country is staggering. How are we prepared, as a church and as individual Christ-followers to missionally encounter, minister to, and walk alongside singles?
12. Have you viewed singleness and marriage, equally, as a "gift"? How does reflecting on this passage challenge your views about the gift of singleness or marriage?
13. The benefit of singleness is to be able to be single-minded in our devotion to God and experience less anxiety or divided attentions which can result from marriage. How well does this describe your journey of singleness?
14. What is God speaking to you through this study about how the gospel of Jesus shapes our relationships? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then pray about what you shared. If you are on your own, write it down, pray about it, and share this with someone during the next few days.

DIG DEEPER

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Spend this week praying for those who are of a different "status" than you: single or married.
- Explore these resources for more in-depth study:
 - Read the short book: *7 Myths about Singleness* by Sam Allberry.
 - Read a chapter or two of: *Fighting Shadows: Overcoming 7 Lies that Keep Men from Becoming Fully Alive* by Jefferson Bethke & John Tyson.