

1 Corinthians 7.17-40

Where the Action Really Is!

Wow! We'll have Big Number for CHURCH Event! > Over 100 on WeChat Gp.

DAY Comes just 20 People are There! WHY?? > ISM Leader >> S.T.A.B.O.

subject to a better offer!

I WILL come UNLESS there is Something More Exciting, Fun, Entertaining

Many People AFRAID FUN TRAIN is Coming and they'll be Left Behind

Many MODERNS in Perpetual State of Uncertainty & ANXIETY

What is Purpose of Life? Gender Identity? How find FULFILLMENT?

Paul facing the STABO Challenge > Xtians 1<sup>st</sup> C Corinth Looking for ACTION

Some that Jesus wanted them to Leave Spouse, Refuse Spouse, Find a Spouse

Some thought Right Way be IMMERSED in World – Others tried ESCAPE!

If ONLY I could Change my CIRCUMSTANCES, Everything would be GREAT

### 1. Calling – The Lord Knows Right Where you Are

v. 17 Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

GOSPEL Change – REAL Change - is INTERNAL, Not EXTERNAL

God's sovereignty extends over all the detailed circumstances of every individual life...God's sovereignty does not come into play when an individual's spiritual life begins; it has governed everything from the beginning of creation. David Jackman

In ALL the Churches – God is LORD over ALL TIME and EVERY PLACE

God has placed EACH of His Children in the Place of His Special Love

v. 20 Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called.

v. 24 So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

Paul is only seeking to check those impulses, uncontrolled by reason, which drive many hither and thither, so that they are confused by their constant restlessness.  
John Calvin

Constant SEXUAL RESTLESSNESS in Corinth > EXTREME Attitudes

Some WILDLY REVEL in Freedoms / others WRONG REPRESS their Feelings

God Made all things Good including our Body and Sexuality

Sin has Spoiled our Relationship with God and Distorted His Good Gifts

Jesus' Cross-Work Redeemed His People, beginning the Renewal of All Things

God Lives in Believers Now and will be with them Forever

God has given the Gifts of Singleness and Marriage for This Life

God's Eternal Purpose is that His Redeemed from All Ages and Places will dwell in His All-Satisfying Triune Glorious Loving Presence Forever

“Believers will be Most Satisfied when God is most Glorified” John Piper

Paul's concern is not that they *retain* their present social setting, but that they *recognize* it as the proper one in which to live out God's call...which comes to them where they are as his gracious gift, totally eliminates social setting as having any kind of religious significance.  
Gordon Fee

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Philippians 1.21

## 2. Culture – The Lord is Making a New Creation

### 2 Illustrations – Different RELATIONS in Family of God

Circumcision was Greatest RELIGIOUS Barrier in 1st C Roman World

SLAVERY Greatest SOCIAL Barrier – Then & Now – MORE than in History

## a. Religious Hostility

TIME RELIGIOUS CONFUSION > Some Jews tried Remove Sign of Judaism

Some GENTILES that GAIN ADVANTAGE of they Took Sign of Judaism

v. 18 Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision.

ONE of Most RADICAL Statements ever Made by PAUL the PHARISEE

CONTRADICTS 2000 yrs JEWISH History and Tradition

NATIONAL Identity was MEN who were CIRCUMCISED

at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world... the dividing wall of hostility Ephesians 2.11-14

Meeting JESUS on Damascus Road – Paul got RADICAL RE-ORIENTATION

PREFERENTIAL Position of JEWS Ended at the ASCENSION

HOLY SPIRIT now Falls on ALL FLESH that put FAITH in LORD JESUS

As the Jews increasingly exposed and denounced the ‘heretical’ belief in Jesus as Messiah and pointed out the rivalry of his kingly claims to those of Caesar, the Roman authorities gradually perceived the radical nature of this new threat.

David Jackman

1992 1<sup>st</sup> Christian Theological Seminary to Open after Peristroika KECS

Offered Courses in RUSSIAN and KAZAKH Language

1998 became DIRECTOR – Authorities TROUBLING Churches – Not Sem.

Eventually 10 Different Seminaries Opened in Almaty – Training Many Leaders

Gov’t Realized this was HEAD of the SNAKE – More Pastors/Leaders – Cut Off

TODAY Seminaries CLOSED and Continue to TROUBLE the Churches

## b. Social Inequity

v. 21 Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it.

Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> EXAMPLE is BIGGEST Social Barrier in ROMAN World

SLAVE or FREE > People USUALLY NOT Choose to Become SLAVES

PAUL criticized by Some as ENDORSING SLAVERY

Not Essay SOCIAL JUSTICE – Pastoral Letter to Church > SLAVES Members

SLAVES - 60 million Rome Empire / 1/3 of Empire Slaves > In CHURCHES

NOT matter of RACE – Captured by WAR – Advancing Roman Army Meditter.

Professors, Doctors, Engineers, Translators, Businessmen among SLAVES

Not only the wealthy had slaves. Many of medium income, including freed slaves, owned five or six slaves, and some rich slaves themselves even owned slaves.

Ben Witherington III

WHY NOT BAN IT? 1) Could NOT – Xtians Small Minority Group

2) Immediate Ban, Collapse Society

3) Gospel ended it eventually - BROTHERS in X

Paul's Letter to Slave OWNER Philemon > His Returning Runaway SLAVE

...you might have him back forever, no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

Philemon 15-18

## c. Global Family

v. 19 For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.

QUICKLY Adds GLOBAL Principle does NOT Relativize OBEDIENCE

v. 19 (what) counts...keeping the commandments of God.

For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.  
Galatians 6.15

KNOWING the TRUE and LIVING GOD is SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

NOT a Matter of OUTWARD Ritual but INWARD RENEWAL – NEW Heart

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.  
1 Timothy 1.5

What is MOST Important is NOT One's SOCIAL Position but they're Salvation  
SALVATION in Jesus has made these 2 Huge Barriers – NULL & VOID, Empty  
In the Transforming Light of Kingdom they NO LONGER MATTER

vs. 22,23 For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

Jesus OVERTURNS all Human Categories – Male, Female, Black, White, Jew...

Christians MUST Not allow any Human Category or Status to DIVIDE them

One Master, One Teacher, One Savior, One Lord

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.  
Galatians 3.28

### 3. Crisis – The Lord will Take Care of Us

#### a. Then – Promise of the Apostle

vs. 25-31 I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

Corinthians OVERLY Focused on FINAL KINGDOM VICTORY of Christ  
 Over-Realized & Over-Heated Eschatology – We have it ALL NOW in Christ  
 Paul BALANCE – Not only has NEW AGE Begun / Old Age NOT YET Ended

The apostle writes to the Corinthians as he would to an army about to enter on a most unequal conflict in an enemy's country, and for a protracted time. Charles Hodge

Paul the Pastor has HEAVY Heart to Think of SUFFERINGS Ahead

Destruction of Jerusalem – Persecution of Nero, Diocletian, other evil Caesars

b. Now – Church kept by the Word

Sufferings Continue for Christians for last 2000 yrs.

More Xtians KILLED for Faith in 20<sup>th</sup> C than previous 19 C COMBINED

21<sup>st</sup> C KILLING of Believers ALARMING Rate – Bombings INDO

Paul writing Letter from Ephesus – Few Years later speaking to Elders of church

I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them...And now I commend you to God and to the *word of his grace*, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Acts 20.29-32

PAUL writes FINAL Letter – Finished Race, soon Poured Out drink offering

Expects TROUBLES Coming – NOT Afraid – STRONG Source of Confidence

Not Additional APOSTLES or PROPHETS, Signs & Wonders > WORD of God

FOUNDATION of BIBLE been HOLDING FIRM for 2000 yrs...

...in the last days there will come times of difficulty...But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3.1-17

## LAST Letter of Apostle to the JEWS – Peter same Challenge & CONFIDENCE

I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

EYEWITNESS of GLORIOUS Jesus w/ Moses & Elisha on Mt. Transfiguration

Something MORE WONDERFUL & SURE than a VISION of Jesus...

And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1.13-21

Prophetic Word – Lamp Shining – Morning Star > RIGHT HERE IN BIBLE!

Paul the apostle was a man who upheld the highest principles and taught people to think through issues, even to take decisions different from his own...He could easily have dealt with the questions of the Corinthians in a few terse commands... One of the glories of this letter is sitting at Paul's feet and learning how to make decisions for ourselves by the principles of the gospel. Paul Barnett

### 4. Contentment – The Lord is ours Now and Forever

#### a. Anxiety

vs. 32-35 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 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.

Paul made clear > GIFT of a SPOUSE AND Gift of SINGLENESSE  
ENTHUSIASTIC how Singleness ENABLES his FOCUS on APOSTOLIC Task  
FOCUS – Distractions --- More People in Family, More busy & Divided Time

UNDERSTANDS NOT Everyone has HIS GIFT > Some have Gift SPOUSE  
SPOUSE & CHILDREN also Open up GOSPEL OPPORTUNITIES!  
People OPEN Hearts to Women & Kids – More than SCARY GUY like ME!

NEWLY Wed Couple Arrived ARUA, Uganda 1983 – Still in my 20's  
Ugandans FRIENDLY, POLITE, WELCOMING > Staff @ Theological College  
Most been WEARY of Another EXPERT from USA with Empty PROMISES

Starting having KIDS – Hearts Opened to Us even More  
1<sup>st</sup> Child 1<sup>st</sup> Foreign Baby born there in 20 years > END of IDI AMIN ERA  
Gave him Lugbara name “Anguyandia” – BORN FAR from HOME  
Ret. ABp C / U Silvanus WANI – Dedicated & KAKWA Name “Adoke”  
3 Sons in 3 years – Still Not Sure How that Happened! – Bonded w People  
NOW there were 5 Blair Targets with REBEL ARMIES Shooting at US

Sometimes being MARRIED & KIDS make More Effective in HARD Places  
Every Time I needed to RENEW Visa in Africa – Took a Baby Son!

Whether your GIFT is SINGLENESSE or a SPOUSE > TRUST GOD!  
PRIORITY of our Calling is to SERVE & SHARE Christ from Whatever Status  
...free from anxieties...please the Lord...holy in body and spirit...undivided  
devotion to the Lord...

If Jesus isn't sufficient for you when you're single, he won't be sufficient for you  
when you're married.

Bethany Jenkins



## b. Advancement

v. 21 (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)

Paul NOT Suggesting we do NOT NEED AMBITION, Creativity, DRIVE

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 1 Corinthians 9.24

vs. 36-38 If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.

Marriage is NORMAL and GOOD and MOST People will be Married in Christ

1<sup>st</sup> C Corinth > Most Marriages Arranged by Families – Little Personal Choice

Marriage CHOICE Enhance Social Status – Business or Political Advantage

SOME have the GIFT of Singleness, just as others have GIFT of Marriage

Some taught that VERY HOLY Engaged Couples would NOT get Married!

Met couple who were ENGAGED for 8 years!// Wonder, Where was PASSION!?

4 Months from Engagement to Wedding – And it was HARD for us to WAIT!

AREAS of Christian Freedom – No COMMANDS – No Pressure from Church!!

It is NOT GOOD that AnyONE be ALONE – Single, Married, Divorced, Widow

PEOPLE Need PEOPLE – IMPORTANT Function of CHURCH / Community

Community – We have DEMEANED Singleness, If get too Close >> GAY!?

Chill Out – You are Free, SOCIAL STATUS does NOT Really Matter

Ask SINGLES NOT who are you DATING > What is your MINISTRY!?

Question the Lord will Ask – Not Single or Married – Who were you Serving?

### c. Acceptance

vs. 38-40 So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better. A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

Paul addresses WIDOWS – Many of Them – Husbands often MUCH OLDER!

Roman HUSBAND more like UNCLE – or Much OLDER Brother in AGE!

WIDOWS became Great Servants, Leaders in Early Churches

FREE to Marry if they so Choose to do... v. 39 “In the Lord”

Paul’s MAIN Point in Passage >> Accept STATUS in Life from Good Father

God knows if Single, Married, Divorced, Widowed

Too MUCH Education / Not ENOUGH Education // Too YOUNG or OLD

China might throw you Under the Bus when 60 > But God Never Will

Both singleness and marriage parade themselves around as ultimate, promising to give you everything your heart desires. But it’s all a charade. And now that Christ has come, the jig is up...they’ll always let you down. But He never will.

Stephen Um

v. 15 God has called you to peace.

“Remember this: Had any other condition been better for you than the one in which you are, divine love would have put you there.” Charles Spurgeon

Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Psalm 73.25,26

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1 Corinthians 7<sup>17</sup> Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. <sup>18</sup>Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. <sup>19</sup>For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. <sup>20</sup>Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. <sup>21</sup>Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) <sup>22</sup>For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. <sup>23</sup>You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. <sup>24</sup>So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God. <sup>25</sup>Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. <sup>26</sup>I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. <sup>27</sup>Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. <sup>28</sup>But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. <sup>29</sup>This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, <sup>30</sup>and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, <sup>31</sup>and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away. <sup>32</sup>I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, <sup>34</sup>and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. <sup>35</sup>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. <sup>36</sup>If anyone

thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. <sup>37</sup>But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. <sup>38</sup>So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better. <sup>39</sup>A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. <sup>40</sup>Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.