
Undivided Devotion

As a single person, have you ever felt like a second-class citizen, or that your life is on-hold until you are married, or that surely you are not favored by God because he has not yet given you the gift of marriage? As a single woman, I understand these questions. Yet, the Apostle Paul gives us a perspective that is often viewed as contrary to the popular worldview; marriage equals self-worth and happiness.

Paul's admonition to the Church at Corinth on the subject of marriage includes an encouraging verse for single believers.

"I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that." (1 Corinthians 7:7)

Wait, how can being unmarried be called gift? What about celibacy, romance, what about children and growing old together with the love of your life? What was Paul thinking? The following verses shed some light on this subject of singleness as a gift worth embracing. Our time on earth is brief, Paul says encouraging his listeners not to be engrossed in the things of the world, but rather to be free of the concerns of this world.

*"I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs---how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of the world---how he can please his wife---and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world--how she can please her husband."
(1 Corinthians 7:32-34)*

Paul was imparting his very passion for service to Jesus Christ, and his own undivided devotion to serve Him to the unmarried believers in Corinth, even as he was giving instruction on the sanctity of marriage. Yes, marriage is good, but singleness is good too—all of God's gifts are good and perfect. Paul referred to his single status as a "gift from God" that allowed him to live a life of "undivided devotion" to the Lord. (v35)

I am a woman content in singleness, and I can testify that singleness is a good gift and that God alone has given me the ability to embrace it with joy and with gratitude. Therefore, I am greatly encouraged by Paul's bold address to the unmarried people of Corinth. My life as a single believer counts. In fact, if I allow Him to, my singleness gives God the opportunity to cultivate in me an undivided devotion to Him. Now that is a good and perfect gift!

"But godliness with contentment is great gain." 1 Timothy 6:6

In Christ,

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