

Small Group Study Guide

The Mind of Christ: Undistracted Devotion to Christ
1 Corinthians 7:25-35

Introduction: In 1 Corinthians 7:25-35, Paul addresses yet another question posed to him by the Corinthians. It seems that they were asking about the advisability of getting married. Paul's response challenges all of us regardless of our marital status to consider the lifestyle we are leading and whether it is one of undistracted devotion to Jesus Christ. That's Paul's desire for the Corinthian believers and that is certainly his desire for us as well.

Read 1 Corinthians 7:25-35

1. What sticks out to you in this passage?
2. Is there anything that strikes you as strange or unusual about this passage? If so, what?
3. Paul says what he says in light of the "present distress" (v. 26). How should that comment affect how we handle this passage?
4. What are some ways that being married can bring "trouble in this life" (v. 28)?

Steve said:

It's not obvious what Paul means by the statement that "the time has been shortened" [v. 29]. Some think Paul believed that the return of Christ is soon, and therefore the amount of time the Corinthians had on earth is short. Others understand Paul's statement in light of the general perspective that after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, the "end times" have begun; however long until the return of Christ, we're living in the last chapter of history. This last explanation rings true with me: the kingdom has been inaugurated, and the next major event in salvation history is the return of Christ. This reality demands a type of spiritual intensity that we might not otherwise have.

5. One example of this kind of spiritual intensity is that "those who have wives should be as though they had none" (v. 29). Obviously, Paul is not contradicting other instructions he has given on marriage (i.e. husbands love your wives, etc.), so what do you think this means when he says that those who have wives should be as though they had none?

6. What does Paul say are some of the benefits of singleness (v. 32-34)?
7. **For those who are single:** Have you ever thought of your singleness as a benefit? How does this passage affect your thinking about your singleness?
8. **For those who are married:** What are some ways that you have at times become so preoccupied with marriage and family that you have ended up neglecting your walk with God? How can you avoid that?
9. In all that Paul teaches here, his motivation is to “promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord” (v. 35). How would you describe what undistracted devotion to the Lord looks like?

Steve said:

As I suggested earlier, this passage challenges all of us regardless of whether we're married or single. Every person has a finite amount of time and energy. It is quite common for people to fill their lives with so many things – mostly good things – that there's very little room for seeking and serving God. We have cluttered, busy, distracted lives (which is what Paul was concerned about). We tend to think that we're victims of our culture and victims of our circumstances. But most of us have a lot more control over our lifestyles than we realize.

Let me encourage you to evaluate your own life. Is there anything you need to do differently in order to be more single-minded in your devotion to Jesus Christ? Are there things in your life that are distracting you from loving God and loving others? We only have one shot at this life. We need to be able to look back and know that we've filled our lives with the right things.

10. Is there anything you need to do differently to be more single-minded in your devotion to Jesus Christ? Are there things that are distracting you from loving God and others?