



No. 5

THE SINGLE BELIEVER

1 Corinthians 7:7-9

“But I wish that all men were even as also I myself. But each one has his own spiritual gift from God, one, on the one hand, in one way, and the other, on the other hand, in another way. I say then to the unmarried men and to the widows that it is a right procedure for them if they remain as I also am. But assuming that they are not able to exercise self-control in the realm of the continent life, let them marry, for it is more advantageous to marry than to continue to burn [with the heat of sexual passion]”

Paul is saying that he wishes all believers were the same as him, that is, single. He makes this statement from a spiritual perspective. He counsels the unmarried and the widows to remain single. We cannot imagine the Apostle Paul pouring his whole energy, time, effort, heart and life into travelling around the world and risking his life for the Gospel, while at the same time, having a wife and children.

As a single man, Paul was able to dedicate his whole Christian life to Jesus without any distraction or any other responsibilities; he had no duties apart from the Gospel. Paul was free to serve God and did not have to care about the wellbeing, finances, housing (etc.) of a family.

Paul's singleness was a gift from God. He experienced the life of Jesus in an extraordinary way without hindrances. He had the most blessed life even while suffering and sacrificing everything to Jesus. This does not mean a single believer must become a missionary or a pastor. A single believer can serve God in any capacity, with the blessing of being totally free to serve God without any other distractions. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul calls it a “gift” to be single. On the other hand, he writes, being married is also commendable: then the believer can serve God, but will also have to care for their family and all its responsibilities.

In my own experience, my wife and I have worked together serving God and it has been a wonderful experience because our marriage has been enriched in many ways. We helped one another and combined our giftings and talents for the mission.

Our society has been deceived into thinking that just about everyone is to be married. I know some people who would actually prefer to “reverse” their marriage. To marry just because this is what one does is not commendable, it is even dangerous, because many times people have married out of fear of remaining single and subsequently, have married the wrong person. This is very dangerous, because marriage is a very important and sacred covenant and it is not to be dissolved.

I know single people who are fulfilled and I also know married people who have a miserable life. Many times I feel sorry for some married couples and families, because their lives are quite difficult and stressful: there is division, discord, resentment, abuse, etc. The tragedy is then when divorce or separation happens, the children are the ones who suffer the most.

For us as Christians, our main motivation should be to seek the spiritual life of Jesus. Sometimes, God's plan can be for a person not to marry. Whatever life God leads us into, it is about learning to live that life in righteousness. To be married and experience constant unrighteousness in the family is a tragedy and also brings shame to the Gospel. This is not to make anybody feel guilty. If you are a believer, you are forgiven and you are now the righteousness of Christ.

Fulfilment in Christ

When we understand that as believers we now have a new life, a spiritual life, and that nothing but Jesus can fulfil us, then we are open to this new spiritual life which is superior to our natural life. There is no substitute to seeking God's will.

Submitting to God's will

God knows very well your situation, and He also knows your longings and desires. When we abandon our will to God's will, this is the beginning of peace and contentment. For a single Christian to live believing they are missing out on life is ungodly and brings discontent and frustration. Discontentment brings oppression.

The trap

We need to understand that gratifying the lust of the flesh can be very dangerous. Too many marriages have taken place because of physical attraction alone. The believer has to put first the spiritual, then the natural. Lust is not love and the results of seeking to gratify the flesh above all else can be devastating.

The repercussions

Some marriages suffer discord and division during the relationship and much more when divorce or separation takes place, then the children also will suffer the repercussions. This is why it is imperative to put God and His will for us first. We need to be spiritual people in order to see God's plan for us. The Word of God must be the only foundation for our lives.

Divorce and re-marriage

Very often, after divorce, the individual wants to re-marry. This can cause more trouble, because while divorce is not God's will, re-marriage is in many cases not permitted within God's Word. Depending on the reasons for the prior divorce, God's Word might not allow them to re-marry. God's Word is wisdom but also protection and when we choose to ignore God's Word, we will carry the repercussions.

Don't compare yourself with others

A single Christian can make the mistake of comparing themselves with other Christians who are married and have children. Comparing ourselves with others is not wise and will cause wrong thoughts and conclusions:

Galatians 6:4-5

But his own work let each one put to the test and thus approve, and then with respect to himself alone will he have a ground for glorying, and not with respect to the other one [with whom he had compared himself], for each shall bear his own private burden.

This scripture is related to a Christian who thinks he is superior to others. However, the principle of not comparing ourselves with others remains. We can't compare ourselves with others simply because we don't know their hearts and because we don't know God's plan for the other person.

Matthew 12:48-50 **THE FAMILY OF JESUS**

And answering He said to the one speaking to Him, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And having stretched out His hand toward those who were His pupils, He said, behold, my mother and my brethren, for he who is of such a nature that he does the will of my Father who is in heaven, that very person is my brother and sister and mother.

Remember that our real family is the eternal spiritual family of God. Jesus only considered as His family those who do the will of the Father. We are God's family, we are never lonely!