

## Study 12. 1 Cor 7:25-40

Big idea: being married, though a gift from God, brings particular temptations to compromise our faith in God

### Observation and interpretation

"Virgins" in verse 25 and following means young women of marriageable age, usually without sexual experience. In his context Paul is probably thinking of young betrothed women who are questioning whether to go through with their marriages in light of pressure from some groups who think it is intrinsically more holy to resist sexual desire. It seems the Corinthians have asked Paul about it, and may have assumed his support for the anti-sex position given his own situation as an unmarried man.

Read verses 25-28

- What do you think Paul means by the "present crisis", and why is it relevant to the question of marriage?
- What kind of "troubles" (verse 28) is Paul trying to help people avoid?

Some commentators think this refers to particular persecution, culminating in the destruction of the temple in AD69 (shortly after this letter was written). Others think he is speaking more generally about the end times as we wait for Jesus' return.

Read verses 29-35

- What does it mean that "the time is short" (verse 29)?
- What are some of the practical benefits of being single in these last days?

Read verses 36-40

- What mistakes does Paul want engaged couples to avoid?
- Why must a widow, if she remarries, pick someone who "belongs to the Lord" (verse 39)?

### Application / Implications

Do we live in a similar age (of "crisis", in which "time is short") to the one Paul is describing here?

What temptations are there for married people to compromise their faith in Christ for the sake of their spouse or children?

Imagine a young person is weighing up whether to get married or not, and asks you for your theological advice. Based on what Paul says here, what factors do you think they should consider?

Paul is writing into a situation where some people were over-emphasising the benefits of singleness. Think about our own church culture: do we over-emphasise marriage or singleness? What could we change to have a more balanced Biblical view?

### **Prayer ideas**

- Pray for those in your group who are single (whether never married, divorced or engaged), that they would not compromise their faith in Christ
- Pray for those in your group who are married, that they would not compromise their faith in Christ
- Pray for those in the world today who are experiencing persecution for the sake of Christ, particularly those who have children