

# 1 CORINTHIANS

SEEING EVERY PART OF LIFE THROUGH THE GOSPEL

28 Mar 2021

Chapter 7:25-40

### Verse of the Day:

*God has called you to peace (1 Cor 7:15b).*

**Review:** Who, What, When, Where, Why?

### What's Going On Here?

After his plea for unity (chapters 1-4) and his discussion of moral problems (chapters 5-6), Paul proceeds in the third portion of his letter (chapters 7-10) to answer questions submitted to him by the Corinthians. The questions dealt with the application of Christian freedom. In chapter 7 the apostle dwells on matters pertaining to the question whether or not to marry. His advice represents indirect counseling, since he leaves it to the individual to decide the question on the basis of the Word of God, his or her own ability or inability to cope with sexual desires, and the unsettled conditions prevailing in the Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Unmarried and the Widowed

<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

v25: c.f. 1 Corinthians 7:12

v26: most likely referring to the present Corinthian circumstances with an eschatological focus. c.f. Jeremiah 16:1-4

“Numerous Greek states were affected by food shortages in the a.d. 40s and 50s. ... One of these occasions has been placed during Gallio's proconsulship of Achaia in a.d. 51 (cf. Acts 18:12), another seems to have preceded Gallio's term and Paul's first visit to the city, while the third has been placed later.”<sup>2</sup>

v28: c.f. 1 Timothy 5:8

v29-31: How would you describe the Christian attitude toward life in this world, that Paul is expressing here?

v30: c.f. Revelation 21:4

v31: c.f. Luke 21:10-11, 23 & 2 Peter 3:10-13

v32: c.f. Philippians 4:6 & Matthew 6:25-34

<sup>1</sup> Engfehr, Lois M. (1997). *God's Word for Today: 1 Corinthians* (p. 36). St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House. Reproducible by purchaser only. © 2009 Concordia Publishing House.

<sup>2</sup> Lockwood, G. J. (2000). *1 Corinthians* (p. 253). Saint Louis: Concordia Pub. House.

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.

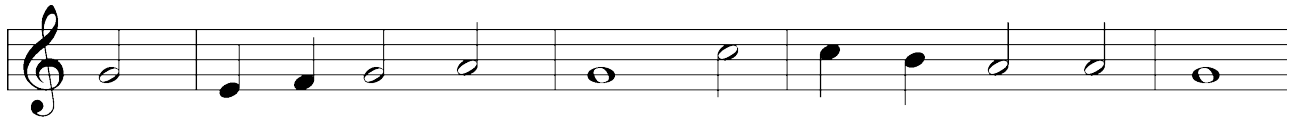
v35: c.f. Luke 14:25–30

v37: heart vs head vs gut in ancient thought

v38: c.f. v26

Think back over the chapter, what advice might you give to enable a young person to make a thoughtful choice about marriage? What are the benefits of marriage for a Christian? What are its cost?

### 649 Blest Be the Tie That Binds



1 Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Chris - tian love;  
 2 Be - fore our Fa - ther's throne We pour our ar - dent prayers;  
 3 We share our mu - tual woes, Our mu - tual bur - dens bear,  
 4 When here our path - ways part, We suf - fer bit - ter pain;  
 5 From sor - row, toil, and pain, And sin we shall be free



The fel - low - ship of kin - dred minds Is like to that a - bove.  
 Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, Our com - forts and our cares.  
 And of - ten for each oth - er flows The sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.  
 Yet, one in Christ and one in heart, We hope to meet a - gain.  
 And per - fect love and friend - ship reign Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

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