



The Joy of Preparing for and Pursuing Marriage
1 Corinthians 7:7-9, 25-28, 36-40
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Pastor Juan Sanchez

I. Introduction

A. What singles are up against:

1. Women – the sexual revolution of the 60's liberated women to be as sexually free as men.
 - a. BUT – See book titles; Ensor, pages 25, 28
2. Men – the fall made tyrants out of men, while the feminist movement feminized them.
 - a. BUT – See book titles; Ensor, page 32

II. Proposition

A. In the words of John Ensor: “What men and women truly want deep down is “a healthy, tender, passionate, enduring, mutually fulfilling life with one good man or woman.”

III. Exposition

A. **Remain as you are-because of the present distress (7:26-27)!**

1. Celibacy - Paul's preference (7:7-8); but not everyone has this gift (7:9).
 - a. Celibacy is a divine gift and good for the purpose of undivided devotion to Christ (7:32-35).
 - b. How do you know you have the gift (7:9, 37)? Calling (Matt. 19:10-12)?
 - 1). ILLUS: Piper - Single servants who longed to be married.

B. **Marriage too is a gift from God and good (7:7, 9)!**

1. God designed marriage before the fall (Gen. 2:18ff).
 - a. Paul reminds us that marriage is to be only in the Lord (7:38).
2. Thus, if you marry, you do not sin, just know marriage brings other challenges (7:28, 36; cf. 32-35).
 - a. For example, marriage does not end the battle against sexual temptation and sin.
 - b. Also, marriage does not excuse from undivided devotion to Christ.

C. **So, if you don't have the gift of celibacy, it is good to prepare for and pursue marriage (7:36-38).**

1. Prong 1 of our vision for singles at HP: **A culture of biblical manhood and womanhood**
 - a. A culture where men lead, protect and provide for women

b. A culture where women are free to affirm, receive, nurture strength & leadership from worthy men

2. Prong 2: **A culture of brother/sister relationships where friendships may grow from which romance may blossom.**

a. This is the natural process of romance: brother/sister; friendships; romance.

1). Beware of where you build friendships (college, work, etc.) for romance will blossom!

2). Beware of short-circuiting that process (in our culture): bars, internet dating, etc.

3. Picture of preparing for and pursuing marriage:

a. **Men pursuing Christ and biblical manhood, growing in leading, protecting and providing.**

1). This means men pursue godly women at the appropriate time & places.

2). Lead, provide, protect (Song of Sol 4:12, 7): Protect the garden/purity of women

a). Do NOT overpower women to get what you want!

b). Do NOT be a wimpy guy to keep what you think you have!

b. **Women pursuing Christ and biblical womanhood, affirming, receiving and nurturing strength and leadership from Godly, worthy men.**

1). This means women prepare to be pursued by godly men at the appropriate time & places.

2). Prepare by becoming a Proverbs 31 woman (does not exclude external beauty, modesty)

a). Beware of becoming a Jezebel woman in order to land a man!

IV. Conclusion: Beware of personal idols: singleness, marriage

A. If singleness is your idol – you will willingly sacrifice everything, including your purity and joy of companionship in order to avoid the commitment of marriage.

1. Result: selfishness

2. Result: Pride – you think you are better, more spiritual (Corinthians problem)

3. Result: Sexual promiscuity – you are afraid of marriage, but cannot practice self-control.

B. If relationships/marriage is your idol – you will willingly sacrifice everything, including your purity and joy in order to approach the altar of marriage.

1. Result: Dissatisfaction – the person you marry will not match your idolization and you will be disappointed.

2. Result: Cynicism/bitterness – when God does not deliver on YOUR time table!

3. Result: Heartbrokenness – when you give up your purity in order to keep a man and he bolts after he gets what he wants.
 4. Result: Despair/Despondency – if you have placed your hope in marriage
- C. Only Christ can satisfy; only Jesus is big enough to hope in and to bear the weight of our worship!
1. If we are not satisfied with Christ,
 2. And if our hope is not in Christ alone,
 3. If we are not willing to forsake our singleness or marriage for the sake of Christ and His kingdom,
 4. Then our idolatry is exposed for what it is and neither singleness or marriage will be enough!
 5. Only when we are truly satisfied with Christ and willing to destroy our idols, then and only then will:
 - a. our singleness be meaningful
 - b. and our marriages be sweet!

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Website: <http://www.hpbcglobal.org> Email: info@hpbcglobal.org. Phone: 512.837.7725.