

1 Corinthians 7:25-40
Paul Teaches the Virgins

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Paul's Dilemma

How can Paul recommend celibacy without approving of the ascetic reasons by many of the Corinthians?

I. 1 Cor 7:25-28 – Paul alludes to Corinthian slogan – he agrees but qualifies.

II. 1 Cor 7:29-35 Paul offers 2 reasons for his preference to celibacy – but puts no restraint on them.

III. 1 Cor 7:36-38 Paul teaches that both options (marriage and celibacy) are open to them.

IV. 1 Cor 7:39-40 Paul reminds women that they are bound to their husbands as long as he lives. If he dies, however, both options are again available.

Who Are The Virgins?

1 Cor 7:25 Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy.

1. This section concerns fathers who are giving their daughters away in marriage.

2. This section concerns men and women who are living in a "spiritual marriage." The men are struggling and are wondering if they can marry.

③ This section concerns betrothed women and their fiancés who are being told by the "pneumatics" that they cannot marry.

Paul's Opinions By Christ's Mercy

1 Cor 7:25 Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy

By = $\upsilon\pi\omicron$ – preposition of agency with the genitive:
 “But I give an opinion as one who received mercy by the Lord to be trustworthy.”

What's the point? Paul was given mercy for the purpose of being trustworthy. (Paul was an apostle)

What Is The “Present Distress?”

1 Cor 7:26-28 I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.

1. The present distress is the death of some at Corinth (cf. 11:30)

② The present distress and trouble is part of the trials all believers go through in this life.

Paul Is Speaking To The Betrothed

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$\gamma\upsilon\upsilon\eta$ = woman 129 times, wife 92 times
 $\lambda\upsilon\omega$ = not used of divorce ($\chi\omega\rho\iota\zeta\omega$, $\alpha\phi\eta\mu\iota$, $\alpha\pi\omicron\lambda\upsilon\omega$)
 But = Paul is not forbidding betrothal or marriage.

The Revelation Draws Near

1 Cor 7:29 But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none;

- Shortened = **67.118 συστέλλω^a; κλίνω^c; προκόπτω^d**: to extend in time, with focus upon the end point—‘to draw near, to draw to a close.’

Acts 5:6 The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

Rom 13:12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

1 Cor 1:5, 7 ...you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge...so that you are not lacking in any gift awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Status In Christ Defines Us

1 Cor 7:29-31 But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.

Is Paul contradicting himself? ↖ Παροργω

Rom 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

- Paul is teaching the Corinthians that what defines their existence and attitudes is not their social or marital status, but their salvation. (funeral analogy)

Three Views of Verses 32-35

Vs 32a But I want you to be free from concern.

V32b Unmarried = concern for pleasing the Lord
but Married = concern for pleasing wife and the Lord

1. **Traditional view** – Paul writes to endorse the single life so that people live fully devoted lives to the Lord. This does not imply that Paul prohibits marriage in any way. (Free from concern = free from cares of marriage)
2. **Barret's view** – Both unmarried and married are worried about pleasing the Lord due to the asceticism – and should not be. (Free from concern= free from asceticism)
3. **Fee's view** – Both unmarried and married are doing something positive. Unmarried = “cares for” the Lord/ Married “cares for” the Lord and family. Paul wants both to realize that their lot in life is pleasing to the Lord. (Free from concern= free to live in God's calling)

~~1 Cor 7:28~~ But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you. (The "sparing" Paul is engaged in must be related to the cares within marriage.)

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Both Married And Celibate Are Secure In Christ

~~1 Cor 7:32-35~~ **But** want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord, **but** one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and *his interests are divided*. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit, **but** one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, **but** to promote what is appropriate and to secure **undistracted devotion** to the Lord.

Men And Women Are Free To Marry

~~1 Cor 7:36-38~~ But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin *daughter*, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry. But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin *daughter*, he will do well. So then both he who gives his own virgin *daughter* in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.

1. Fathers giving their daughters in marriage
2. Men who are betrothed to a virgin

If she is past her youth = better – if he is in his prime

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Εἰ δέ τις ἀσημονεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ νομίζει, ἐὰν ᾖ ὑπέρακμος καὶ οὕτως ὀφείλει γίνεσθαι, ὃ θέλει ποιεῖτω, οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει, γαμείτωσαν → 3rd plural!
 ὑπέρακμος = can't control himself

Til Death Do Us Part
 1 Cor 7: 39-40 A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 7:1-40 "Wrap Up"

<u>Corinthian Ascetics</u>	<u>The Apostle Paul</u>
Celibacy = more spiritual	Nonsense! – Celibacy -gift
Prostitutes are o.k.	Nonsense! – Joined to Christ

Paul taught the Corinthians that celibacy does not make one "more spiritual." Paul taught that to be single or married was a vocation from Christ, and that each person was to glorify God in whatever social setting to which they had been called. To Paul, marriage is a covenant before God that must be honored until death. Social status, marital status, and the cares of this world are all secondary to the status that ultimately matters – right standing before God – in Christ Jesus.
