

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

SEX, SINGLENESS AND MARRIAGE | CHURCH IN THE WILD

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Well, it's good to be with you today. If you have a Bible, go ahead and meet me in 1 Corinthian, chapter 7—1 Corinthians 7 is where we are going to be today.

And as you are turning there and settling in, I just want you to be aware, if you haven't heard already, that our men's night has not been canceled, it's been rescheduled. There is a difference—rescheduled, not canceled. And if you are bummed about that, I don't blame you. I'm bummed about it too.

But there are a number of different reasons why we needed to do that. The primary thing being that the main theme we were building the evening around, that guy is not available until this spring. And there are a couple of other additional reasons. So, thank you for your grace, patience, and understanding in that as we look forward to men's night in the spring.

If this is your first time to be with us, we've been in a series of messages for the last couple of months—we'll be in it for another several weeks—called Church In The Wild. It's all based upon a book in the New Testament that really isn't a book, it's a letter that Paul writes to a group of Christians living in Corinth at the time. And you need to know that these are what I might call first generation Christians. Meaning that they've given their lives to Jesus as either young adults or later.

They didn't grow up in church. They didn't go to church camp or CIY. They don't know the lingo. And by the time that they would have given their lives to Jesus, undoubtedly, there would have been some habits, lifestyles, addictions, routines, relationships that had already been established prior to Jesus and now that they've given their lives to Jesus, those things were coming into conflict with this new life in Christ and the result of that is that it created a pretty wild environment.

Corinth was known at the time as the sex capital of the world. So, that would mean if Rome was kind of considered the New York City of the day, then Corinth, undoubtedly, would have been like the Las Vegas of the day. So, what happens in Corinth stays in Corinth.

Here's the problem. They lived there. So, they couldn't really escape it. In fact, many of them would have likely worked down on the strip, so to speak. They either visited the places of prostitution, or they were, in fact, some of the temple prostitutes. There was the temple of Aphrodite that was known for that.



Then Paul comes into town one day and starts this life-giving church. And they hear and respond to the gospel message of God's grace. It radically changed their lives. Maybe some of you know what that is like. Maybe for you, just like some of the Corinthians, maybe you grew up around religion, but it didn't necessarily mean that you understood what the gospel was.

There is a difference, you know. You can grow up in church. That doesn't actually mean that you grew up in Christ. There is a difference between giving your life to Jesus as Savior and living your life for Jesus as Lord. Those are different.

I remember being in the baptistry a few years ago and I was talking to this lady, getting ready to baptize her, and I just wanted to double check to make sure she understood what she was doing. I just leaned forward and I said, "Hey, do you receive Jesus as Savior of your soul." And she said, "Absolutely."

And I said, "And also, Lord of your life." And she goes, "What does that mean?" And I was like, "Well, that means that you're going to give every area of your life to Jesus and follow Him as Lord." And she goes, "Well, that sounds hard." And I was like, "Yeah, it kind of is."

Thankfully, we don't have to do it in our own strength. We are definitely saved by works, just not ours—His. I'm so thankful for that. The Psalmist says, "But by the grace of God." If God counted our sins against us, who could stand? The answer is: nobody. So, we all come to Jesus just as we are.

And He radically saved many of these Corinthians out of their sin. But that didn't mean that there was smooth sailing from that day forward. Some of you know that first hand. They still were having their old lifestyles, their old girlfriends and boyfriends, their old habits and addictions kept rearing their ugly heads and were clashing now with their new life in Jesus. Right there in the tension of all of that, being a church in the wild but not of the wild, we have this opportunity to begin to carve out a way to live for Jesus.

So, Paul—what happens is he hears about some things going on in this church. He wasn't there. He had moved on to go plant churches in other places. He even mentions this in the letter. There was a wealthy woman in the church in Corinth by the name of Chloe. Chloe had likely invited some of the church to meet in her home. And she apparently stayed in some sort of communication with Paul because she lets him know, "Hey, Paul. There are some things going on here. They are kind of messy."

So, that's part of his motivation for writing the letter of 1 Corinthians. He's confronting them on some really difficult topics. And if you've been here over the last few weeks, you know it's not been easy to talk about. He's talked about division, and arguments, and lawsuits among believers, and last week sexual immorality—it's just been one hit after another.

And I've been enjoying it. I've been encouraging Kyle and Ryan, "You go. You go. You keep tackling these difficult topics." But they tapped me back in. I've got to join in on the fun as well. I wish there were a little bit of relief, but if you've read ahead, then you know that there is not.

Really, that's what I love about expositional passages. You just keep teaching, expositionally, through a book. We're basically just tackling whatever is next. So, if you're like, "Man, why are we talking about this in church?" Well, because 1 Corinthians 7 is talking about it. It's going to be a little bit awkward and if you blush here in just a few moments, or start to squirm in your seat, just tell yourself it could be worse. We could switch places. You could be the one on stage teaching all of this. So, it is going to get a little bit awkward.

Here's the question. Why is Paul taking the time to just relentlessly talk about these difficult topics? And here's the reason. It's very simple. It's because he loves them. He loves them enough to make them uncomfortable.

Now, please understand that real love, you hear it all of the time, is not tolerating and affirming everybody's beliefs and behaviors. It sounds good on paper, but that's not real love. Real love also, though to be fair, isn't just being harsh and critical toward people either. Real love kind of threads the needle between the two. It's called grace and truth.

I know for me, I've got a lot of eyeballs on me. I know that the people who love me the most are not the ones who are harsh toward me or criticize me or misunderstand me. I also know that the people who love me the most aren't the ones who just tell me how great I am, tell me what I want to hear. The people who love me the most are the ones who love me enough to tell me the truth.

It would kind of be like if you hired a personal trainer and you're going to work out with him three or four times a week. And he sits down with you on the first consultation visit and he's like, "Hey, what should we do for the hour that we are together?" And if you were to say, "Well, I'm not really sure. But if you could, please don't make me uncomfortable. I'd rather not have my heart rate elevated. I don't want to break a sweat. I don't want to experience any pain."

"What do you want to experience?"

"I don't know, if you could just meet with me three or four times a week and just tell me how in shape I am, that would be great."

So, the same thing is true spiritually. That's what Paul is doing in this passage. And, understand, as we come to the latter half of 1 Corinthians, this isn't so much known as a work of composed theology, as much as it is Paul fielding some questions that these Corinthians Christians have. It's Q & A time.

Now, here's the thing about the latter half of this letter. We don't have the questions they asked, we only have the answers that Paul provides. So, it's sort of like the game show Jeopardy. We can guess the questions that they might have had based upon the things that Paul says in the text.

So, as we come to chapter 7, it's really clear that the questions that they are asking him really are all about relationships with a significant other: dating, marriage, sexual intimacy, divorce. We don't have the questions but we can imagine what some of the questions might have been. I took a stab at trying to guess what some of the questions Paul would have received were.

This one could have been the case, "Hey, Paul. I became a Christian in Corinth but my spouse didn't. And so now there is some real tension. I want to go to church on Sunday, and he or she doesn't." Or, "I really feel like we should tithe, but he or she thinks that is ridiculous. It's causing a lot of arguments in our marriage now, Paul. Is there ever an acceptable way out? Is divorce an option? Is that okay?" That might have very well been a question they asked.

"Paul, I am single and I just gave my life to Jesus. And the dating pool in Corinth was already slim enough as it was pre-conversion, but now that I've given my life to Jesus all of the prospects have gone way down and I'm beginning to lose hope. Paul, I met that gorgeous girl at worship night, and we went on our first date, and she just told me that she used to be a temple prostitute. And now I'm beginning to wonder about this."

Or, "I met a really cute guy and he told me that he used to frequently be a visitor at the temple of prostitutes and he still struggles with the temptation of it. And I'm just beginning to wonder, Paul, if there is ever a mister perfect or miss right, so, I'm thinking about lowering my standards so I'm not alone. What should I do?"

So, Paul goes to work trying to answer some of these messy questions. I love how The Message paraphrases chapter 7. So, I want to read along out of that. Paul says, in verse 1:

"Now, getting down to the questions you asked in your letter to me." Here's the first one. "Is it a good thing to have sexual relations?" (MSG)

So, apparently the question that they asked is, "Paul, is sex a good thing or a bad thing?" And I think the reason why they asked this question—a lot of it is based upon what he said last week from chapter 6 where he's talking about sexual temptation and how all other sin is sin outside of the body, but sexual sin is a sin against your own body.

What does he mean by that? Well biology is just affirming what Scripture has always told us, sexual intimacy is biologically bonding. It's chemically bonding with another person. So, when you have sexual intimacy with somebody, your body is making a

promise even if you don't. That's part of the reason why, if you've had multiple sexual partners, it has caused you harm, whether you realized it or not.

So Paul says, "This is a sin against your body." As it relates to sexual sin because it feels good and because it's so bonding it easily can become addictive. So, he says, "When it comes to sexual sin, don't mess around with it, man. Run from it."

Meaning that most other temptations you can go toe to toe with and contend with them. Meaning if Satan were to physically show up to your door later on today—I hope that doesn't happen but if it did you could step out and you could go toe to toe and nose to nose with him because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. You can fight him. Ephesians talks about putting on the armor of God.

But, if a gorgeous Instagram model slides into you feed as a DM looking all Corinthian, you don't get into the ring with that. That's out of your class. And Paul says, "You run. You run from that."

They hear this teaching and because so many of them... They live in the sex capital of the world. Many of them would have visited the temple prostitutes, many of them would have been a temple prostitute, so this brushed up against old patterns of behavior.

It's very clear that there were some in this church that swore off sex all together. They said that absolute celibacy is the way to go, "Sex is dirty. All sex is bad sex. You shouldn't have it even if you are married." So, there was this group of Christians going, "Paul, is it good or is it not?" And he answers the question in verse 2:

"Certainly—but only within a certain context. It's good for a man to have a wife, and for a woman to have a husband. Sexual drives are strong, but marriage is strong enough to contain them and provide for a balanced and fulfilling sexual life in a world of sexual disorder." 1 Corinthians 7:2-6 (MSG)

So, he says, "It is a good thing within context." What's the context? Between a husband and a wife, a man and a woman, within a covenant relationship because sexual intimacy is a picture of the covenant bond that you've made with one another as is Christ's covenant relationship to the church. And he said, "Within that context it is such a good thing."

You've probably heard the analogy before that fire in the context of a fireplace will warm your house. Outside of the context of a fireplace, it will burn it down. Hot piping coffee in an insulated mug on a cold, January Indiana morning is a good thing. Spill it in your lap, that's painful.

So, he says, "The same thing is true with sexual intimacy. It's a really powerful thing. And it's a good thing. God designed sex. We didn't stumble upon it on our own. We didn't invent it. God wasn't strolling through the garden of Eden one morning looking for Adam

and Eve, doesn't know where they went, and then He heard some strange moaning sounds behind the tree, "What are you guys doing? I can't unsee that." No.

I'm glad somebody liked that.

No. God designed it. It was His idea. It's a good thing. He designed it for three reasons: to consummate the covenant that you made, to reproduce and start a family, and for your pleasure and enjoyment.

So, what does the Bible say about it?

The Bible is pro-sex within boundaries where it will bring blessings and not pain

Now, if you're not already blushing, you're going to blush next. He says:

"The marriage bed must be a place of," this is an interesting word, "mutuality—the husband seeking to satisfy his wife,"

You might ask, "Well what does that word satisfy mean?" It is what you think it means. Okay?

"the wife seeking to satisfy her husband."

Here are two sentences that are so good, quite possibly the best descriptions for marriage that I think I've ever heard.

"Marriage is not a place to 'stand up for your rights.' Marriage is a decision," not just a feeling, it's a decision, "to serve the other, whether in bed or out." 1 Corinthians 7:2-6 (MSG)

So, it's this idea of mutuality, where you're thinking of the other. And we just know that men and women are wired differently. Men have a tendency to be a bit more visual than the ladies, it's not that ladies aren't. Men have a tendency to desire physical intimacy... (judging

by your laughs, you sprung it on me. I wasn't ready for that.) But that's a pretty good description.

Some of you ladies feel so seen right now, don't you? Some of you guys are like, "Yep."

Now listen. That's true physically and it could also be said that that is true emotionally. So, this is the idea of mutuality. I understand that your dials are not my dials. So, I want to serve you in that.

The idea of mutuality would have absolutely blown the minds of the average Corinthian man. He never would have heard that before. In fact, the first century world was brutal for women. Some of you know this. Women had no rights, they were considered property, and men held all of the cards in a marriage relationship. Meaning that he could

divorce her, walk out on her, for any reason. He didn't have to give a reason, leaving her incredibly vulnerable, offering her no financial or emotional support.

So, when Paul says this, he is overturning that entire way of thinking. And he says, "In marriage, both in bed and out, you should offer your body in service to the other." There are a lot of guys right now who might hear that and you'd be tempted to go home and say, "Oh, I heard the sermon today and honey it says that I'm supposed to offer my body to you in service, so if you must, have your way. Have your way." That's what you're going to come up with.

And then the ladies are going to say this, "Well, I'm actually thinking that the way that you can serve me with your body is take out the trash, do the dishes, give the kids a bath, and by the way, get rid of the unibrow while you are at it. You can do that."

Now, undoubtedly I just feel like I need to address this because I just know, especially when doing teaching like this, I just feel like I'm kind of navigating a minefield of a topic. This is one of those texts and one of those messages, by the way, that could be filled with a lot of, "Yeah, buts." Some of you have already done them internally, "Okay. I hear the truth. I hear what he is saying, but, 'Yeah, but... you don't know who I'm married to. You don't know the situation that I'm in.'"

I totally get that. In fact, I'm pretty confident given the number of people who are listening to this message right now, that there are some men or women who are in an emotionally or physically abusive marriage or relationship. And I just want to go ahead and cut this off at the pass for the narcissists in the room or anybody who is overly selfish or abusive and you read this passage and you might be tempted to take it out of context and go home and say, "Well, 1 Corinthians 7 says as your husband I have authority over your body, so if I'm in the mood, you can't say, 'No,' without sinning." That is not what that passage means. That would be called sexual abuse.

Paul says, "This is the idea that you're in this relationship to out serve your spouse." It's the idea of mutuality. You're putting his or her needs above your own. And that only works when it is two ways. What does mutuality mean? Fifty/50; 70/30; 60/40? Well, I don't know what it means but I do know that it means that you are not keeping track, "I'm just serving you."

Then he goes on and he says:

"Abstaining from sex is permissible for a period of time if you both agree to it," in other words you don't withhold it to punish, "and if it's for the purposes of prayer and fasting—but only for such times. Then come back together again. Satan has an ingenious way of tempting us when we least expect it." 1 Corinthians 7:2-6 (MSG)

Paul says, "Hey, it's permissible for you to abstain from sexual intimacy in a marriage relationship for the purpose of prayer and fasting." Which, I don't know how many of you

have done that. The last prayer and fasting week we had as a church, I don't recall that any of you ever told me that's what you were fasting from. And if you were, I'm thankful that you kept that to yourself. I really don't want to hear that.

What he is doing here is he is kind of tackling this idea that someone in the church had sworn off sex altogether, saying complete celibacy is the way to go. And Paul is kind of confronting that.

But, he's also saying, "Hey, if you choose to do this as a married couple just keep in mind how crafty Satan can be. And if one of you has a spouse who has physical needs just be sure to do all you can that is healthy to meet those physical needs, emotional needs, do everything you can that is healthy to meet those needs." Why? Because Satan is a brilliant fisherman and he knows that the thing that works for you doesn't work for your spouse or vice versa. So, it's just understanding how Satan might attack your spouse. "I want to do everything I can to have your back."

And then he says this. He says: Listen:

"I'm not, understand, commanding these periods of abstinence,"

Some of you are like, "Thank goodness. You are giving her ideas."

"—only providing my best counsel if you should choose them." 1 Corinthians 7:2-6 (MSG)

Now, I just want to go ahead and acknowledge that if you are a single adult, this is a difficult passage to read through and I want you to know that Paul hasn't forgotten about you because of what he says next. Look at verse 7.

"Sometimes I wish everyone were single like me," and then he says why. It's "—a simpler life in many ways!" 1 Corinthians 7:7 (MSG)

So, Paul says, "Hey, I'm single and I wish everybody could be single like me. Why? Well, it's a simpler life." And all of you married people are like, "Yeah, we know exactly what he's talking about."

How is it simpler? Well, for one you don't have any of that mutuality stuff going on. You are not arguing over whose family to spend Thanksgiving or Christmas with. There are no arguments over toenail clippings in the bathroom or whatever. Here's what he's acknowledging (those of us who have already been married, we know this and to those of you who have not, you probably assume this) marriage, even the best marriages, even the people who you are most compatible with, emotionally and otherwise, is still hard work. Two reasons. You're a broken fallen human being. And Satan hates your marriage so he'll do anything he can to break you apart.

So, Paul says, "Hey it's a simpler life to be single." Why? Because primarily you're just looking out for yourself when you are single. And Paul says he's single. Some contest

that. They actually say, “Well, Paul couldn’t have been single,” because they assume that he was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin. And to be a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin you had to be married, which is true.

But actually Paul never specifically said he was a member. In Galatians 1 it says that he was advancing toward it, but we don’t know if he became a Christian before that. It is possible that at one time in his life he was married. And maybe his spouse passed away. That’s all speculation. We don’t know. He never says. What he does say, explicitly, in this passage is that he was single. And then he says:

“But celibacy is not for everyone any more than marriage is. God gives the gift,” notice he uses that word gift. I’ll come back to that, “of the single life to some, the gift of the married life to other.” 1 Corinthians 7:7 (MSG)

So, he actually says, “Whether you are single or whether you are married, that’s a gift. And we’re not entitled to gifts. Gifts are something that is given. And the word that he uses for gift here is the word charisma it’s the same word that is used for spiritual gift.

Some of you may know that when you give your life to Jesus, God grants one or more spiritual gifts—it could actually be something you were naturally good at prior to your conversion but now you’re going to use it for different purposes. Or, it could be something that you were never good at and God has supernaturally gifted you with it. Either way it is a gift that you use to make much of Him and advance His Kingdom.

And he actually uses our marital status as a gift, whether you are a single adult and you use that for His glory and to advance His Kingdom. Or you’re married, whether it’s a happy marriage or an unhappy marriage, He can use that to give Himself glory and advance His Kingdom.

Maybe some of you are like, “I didn’t ever really see what I have as a gift. I kind of think I want the other gift. Paul, isn’t it vital? I mean we live in a world that just kind of idolizes relationships and romance and marriage and affection. Paul, isn’t it vital that I find my soul mate and have that kind of intimacy and connection with somebody in order to be a whole person, in order to live life to the fullest?” And the answer to that is definitely: No.

In fact, the most fulfilled person, the most joyful person to ever live and walk the face of this earth was a 33-year-old carpenter who was a single man. He remained celibate His entire life. And if you don’t know who I’m talking about, I’m talking about Jesus. That’s who I’m talking about.

Verses 8 and 9, he says:

“I do, though,” this is an interesting passage, “tell the unmarried and widows that singleness might well be the best thing for them, as it has been for me. But if they can’t manage their desires and emotions, they should by all means go ahead and get married.

The difficulties of marriage are preferable by far to a sexually tortured life as a single.” 1 Corinthians 7:8-9 (MSG)

Oh, that’s kind of an interesting way to put it. The NIV—I think I like how it puts it better—it says, “Burn with passion.”

I’ve officiated a lot of weddings over the years. I have never once preached out of that passage to officiate a wedding. In think I might the next time, though. I think I could have a lot of fun with that, “Hey, we’re gathered here today because Bill was living a sexually tortured life. And Sue was all hot and bothered. So, Bill picked Sue and Sue picked Bill so they could extinguish their passions in holy matrimony.” How romantic.

That’s kind of a crude, crass way of putting it, but we kind of understand what Paul was talking about, especially when we take it in context of the entire section of Scripture. I think that what he says next is quite possibly the most powerful, regardless of your relationship status today. All of us can apply what he says next in verse 17:

“And don’t be wishing you were someplace else or with someone else.”

You can do that, by the way, if you’re single or married. He goes:

“Where you are right now,” and notice he does not qualify it. He didn’t say, “If you’re happy, if you’re fulfilled, you’re satisfied. He says that wherever you are right now:

“is God’s place for you.”

Meaning God can use you and work in you regardless of your relationship status. And then he says:

“[you] Live and [you] obey and [you] love and [you] believe right there.” Because, “God, not your marital status, defines your life.” 1 Corinthians 7:17 (MSG)

Now we could all... If we could just apply that verse to our lives then our self-esteem and our sense of self-worth in our relationships and our marriages, I think, would get better.

So, here’s the over-arching principle. If we are making life application, we’ve first of all got to go, “Okay, what is the principle in the passage? What was the original application to the original audience?” Once we get the principle and once we get the original application, then we can make specific application to us today, because, obviously there are a lot of things that have changed over the last 2,000 years and we don’t live in Corinth, we live in Indianapolis. So, how do we make the application to us today?

Well, let me tell you the over-arching principle in these verses that we just read. It’s as if Paul was saying, “Okay, brand new, baby Christians living in Corinth, you’re now stumbling toward Christ likeness. You’re not getting it all perfect: messy, imperfect, wild lives. You didn’t grow up in the church. You got radically saved by the grace of Jesus.

“So, whatever your relationship status was at the time of your salvation, I think it would just be better if you did everything that you could to stay that way. If you’re married to a person who is not a Christian, stay in that marriage.”

He does say in the passage (I didn’t have time to cover it) that if you’re married to a non-Christian and they leave you, you let them go. Don’t turn to bitterness. Don’t turn this into a big, massive fight. He says, “Let it go.” And he says, “If you’re single, stay single if you can.” So that’s the over-arching principle, the immediate application for them.

Let me do my best in the remainder of our time just to maybe give you a handful of specific applications, either for you or for the people that you know and love. Here’s the first one:

The Bible affirms singleness and views it as a “gift”

And I just think that that is so important for us to acknowledge and to recognize. I think, as a church, we want to be thoughtful and mindful about the single adults within our church family and not give off the impression (I don’t think we do this as if it’s intentional, it can certainly happen unintentionally) where we communicate that marriage is varsity and singleness is JV. We don’t want to be careless about that.

We don’t want to say careless things like, “Hey, when are you going to get hitched?” “What’s wrong anyway? Why haven’t you met somebody? I can set you up with my niece.”

I heard about an adult social group at a church, horribly they named it Pairs and Spares. As if the single adults were spares.

And even in my own preaching—I have been married for 25 years, and I need to be careful and cautious. I’m always so grateful for the single adults on our staff and in our church who just remind me from time to time, “Hey, make sure every illustration is not always about marriage. Or, don’t always just talk as if you are talking to married people.” Those have been important reminders for me.

Paul’s heart in addressing singleness in chapter 7 is so that, if you are a single adult, you would not be anxious about being single. And I just want to acknowledge that that is a whole lot easier to say than it is to do.

And Paul would actually add a greater amount of credibility to say that to you than I would. Because if I said to you as a married pastor, “Hey, don’t be anxious about being single.” If you are single you could say, “Aaron, that’s easy for you to say. You’re just going to go home to your wife afterward.” And you would have a point. But, Paul was single when he wrote this.

Here is what I want you to hear. I want you to know that we see you. I want you to know that if you're single, you are not half of a person, you are a whole person. Your life doesn't begin when you walk an aisle and say, "I do."

Paul actually says, "I wish everyone were single as I am." He doesn't feel sorry for them. He's not saying, "Hey, I'm really, really sorry that you are single, but hold on, I'm sure there is somebody out there for you somewhere."

As I have already said, Jesus was single. And I think that oftentimes we miss the fact that we worship a man who never married, never had sex, and died single when he was arguably the most joyful, complete human being to ever walk the face of the earth.

And some of you may go, "Yeah, but He was God. That's not fair." Yeah, He was God. He was also fully man. And the Bible even says that He was tempted in every way that you and I are, yet He never sinned.

So, I think that Jesus has great empathy for your desire for companionship. And Jesus has great empathy for the battles that you face. And the Bible affirms singleness because your life is not dependent upon another person to give it meaning because of Jesus and what He has done for you.

So here's another reason why he affirms it:

The Bible views singleness (and marriage) as a gift

The Bible views singleness, and marriage, by the way, as a gift. The original word there is the word for spiritual gifts, charisma, so God has granted us with different spiritual gifts to make much of God and advance His Kingdom. And Paul says that the state of singleness, whether that's for life—there are some of you who actually feel like you have the gift of singleness for your whole adult life, there are probably not very many. But maybe it is that God has granted you the gift of singleness for a season, and that's a gift. You can use that and make much of Him to advance His Kingdom. The same thing is true of marriage.

I was talking to some people who took a spiritual gifts inventory test a few years ago. I don't know how many of you have ever done that. But you can take this test and instead of giving you your personality type, it will actually come back and say, "Hey, here are your top spiritual gifts." I don't know how accurate these are, but they can be helpful.

And somebody was taking this spiritual inventory test and I said, "Hey, what did you get on it?"

"Well, it said my top gift was martyrdom. I don't really know how I feel about that because that's kind of like a one and done. I get to use it one time."

"What did you get?"

“Well, my top gift was celibacy. Do you want to trade? I think I’d rather have martyrdom.”

So, how is singleness a gift? Well, if you go on down through the passage, it’s a long passage, I didn’t have time to read through all of it, if you look at verse 32 specifically and then other verse around it, he speaks to both husband and wives but he says:

“I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man,” or woman, “can spend his time doing the Lord’s work and thinking about how to please Him. But a married man,” or woman, “has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife.” He puts it this way, “His interests are divided.” (NIV)

So, he’s saying, “I want you to do whatever you can to serve the Lord in the best way that you can with as few distractions as possible. And as a single adult, you’re actually freed up more to do that in a season.”

Eddie Cantor said it this way, he goes, “Marriage is an attempt to solve problems together that you didn’t even know existed when you are on your own.” So, marriage just gets infinitely more complex.

That’s sort of like the over-arching theme, “Hey, when you get married, your life gets infinitely...” There is a blessing that comes with it for sure. But your life gets infinitely more complicated.