

Introduction

Today's theme is "*marriage*" and "*singleness*." Through the teaching of the apostle Paul, let us learn from God's Word and keep in mind the essential principles we must also pass on to the next generation.

1. The problem in the Corinthian church and Paul's response (vv. 1–2)

- Problem: some believers claimed, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" (asceticism).
- Paul's response: "Because of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband."
- Paul gently corrects extreme asceticism.
- Marriage and sexual union are blessings that protect from immorality.
- Sexual intimacy is blessed only within the one-man, one-woman covenant of marriage, established by the Creator.

2. Mutual duties and rights in marriage (vv. 3–5a)

- Duties: husband to wife, wife to husband—mutual giving of themselves.
- Rights: each one has authority over the other's body.
- Marriage is a relationship of equality and mutual respect.
- A healthy marriage guards against temptation.
- Warning: neglecting these duties can lead to destruction and immorality.
- Sexual intimacy is not self-seeking pleasure but loving self-giving.
- Importance: teaching these biblical principles of sexuality to the next generation.

3. Temporary separation for prayer (vv. 5b–6)

- Allowed only by mutual consent, for a limited time, devoted to prayer.
- Must end with coming together again.
- Paul emphasizes this is a *concession*, not a command.

4. Paul's true desire and the diversity of gifts (v. 7)

- Desire: that all could serve the Lord with undivided devotion, as he did.
- Singleness understood as a way to be fully devoted to the Lord.
- Diversity of gifts: each has his or her own gift from God.
- Some serve through singleness, others through marriage.

5. The blessing of singleness and the call to marriage (vv. 8–9)

- To the unmarried and widows: “It is good for them to remain as I am.”
- Paul himself experienced the blessing of singleness (freedom to serve without being ruled by passion).
- But: “if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”
- Key point: not whether married or single, but to follow the Lord's calling and live for His glory.

Conclusion

- Both marriage and singleness are precious gifts from God—neither is superior.
- **Marriage:** a path of mutual giving, love in practice, protection from temptation, and expression of God's love.
- **Singleness:** a path of devotion, made possible by God's gift, to serve the Lord more fully.
- What is required: receive your gift with gratitude, serve faithfully in that calling, without comparing yourself to others.
- Ultimate purpose: marriage and singleness alike exist “not for ourselves, but for the Lord.”
- Our life's goal, as redeemed in Christ, is to glorify God.