

Marriage, Singleness and Eternal Matters

God wants you to think biblically about marriage, 7:25-28

Many people decide these matters with their emotions, not biblical principles.

Paul addresses virgins, who in context, are betrothed.

Betrothal is not the same as our western engagement

In betrothal, you were legally married. You did not co-habit for 9 months to a year until the marriage was consummated usually with a party and later as the groom took home his bride, with intimacy. It took divorce to end a betrothal (Matt 1:18-19).

Presumably, these women and their fiancés were concerned about the same issue that Paul addresses in 7:1, 7:25

Paul renders a “faithful judgment,” much more than his personal opinion, 7:25

We are betrothed. Should we consummate the marriage or wait?

Paul's comments are in light of “the present crisis.” 21st century scholars can only guess at what reference this has, 7:26.

The present crisis does influence his “faithful judgment.”

Paul's specific advice to fiancés and their betrothed, 7:27

NIV's “Are you married?” should be better “Are you bound [as by a promise or obligation]?”

NIV's “Do not seek a divorce,” should be “Do not seek a release [from a promise]”

This has to do with those betrothed

NIV's “Are you unmarried” should be “Are you loosed [from a woman] (did you break off a betrothal?)

This, of course, fits his advice, “remain as you are”

Yet, Paul acknowledges that if they marry, they have not sinned, 7:28a

On the other hand, in light of the “present crisis” Paul, having their best interests at heart, informs them of the pressures of the moment, 7:28b

God wants you to think about eternal matters, 7:29-31

Troubles do not determine the believer’s existence, Christ does. Therefore, all need to understand their relationship to the word.

The time is compressed. Christians, in the light of this should think differently about the time that is left, 7:29-31

Marriage ends at death. One’s relationship with Christ is eternal. The Christian life must never be identified only with even the nearest and dearest of worldly experiences

Laughter and tears are not the last word (2 Cor 6:10)

Buying and not possessing. Continue to do your business, but realize that you can’t take anything with you

Use worldly things, but don’t let them use you.

Be reminded that all transactions and experiences here on earth must be interpreted in the light of eternity.

God wants you to see practical reasons for not getting married, 7:32-35

Those who are not married have less “earthly” cares to consume their time and attention. They can serve Christ full-time.

This material applied to the fiancé, 7:36-38

It is OK, if you are betrothed, to get married.

If you can control yourself don’t get married.

This material applied to the widows, 7:39-40

She can get married, in the Lord, if her husband dies

But, she may find greater joy in remaining single.

So what?

Difficulties in understanding this exist because of two things

We don't know exactly what their letter says

We don't know what the "present crisis" was

The Bible teaches us that marriage must be viewed in the light of Christ and eternity.

Paul would say elsewhere that marriage is good, Eph 5

Paul would say that those who have a gift to singleness should use their freedom for the kingdom of God.

The Bible teaches us that all things must be viewed in the light of Christ and eternity