

Bible Instructions for Those Who Live Alone

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Lessons are often presented on the subjects of Home and Family.
 - 1. Considering problems of marriage and difficulties in parenting, the responsibilities of spouses, parents, and children.
 - 2. In many cases, little is said concerning those who live single or who have been widowed.
 - 3. Perhaps because the "nuclear" family is assumed to be the norm among brethren.
- B. There is a large segment of each congregation who live unmarried.
 - 1. Those who have been widowed (Naomi)
 - 2. Those whose marriages end in divorce
 - 3. Those who have not reached marriageable age
 - 4. Those who elect to remain alone (the apostle Paul)
- C. These beloved disciples and the lives that they lead are addressed in the word of God.
 - 1. They have a vital role in the health and work of the local church.
 - 2. They are spoken of with respect by the scriptures.
 - 3. They must be treated with affection and regard by the disciples.

I. QUESTIONS ABOUT LIVING SINGLE

- A. Why might one be single?
 - 1. Some may be single by circumstance.
 - a. Women who have yet to be asked to marry.
 - b. Men who have not yet found a woman to accept their proposal.
 - c. Those who are divorced, perhaps through no fault of their own.
 - d. Those who are widowed, suffering the untimely loss of a spouse.
 - e. Those too young to marry.
 - f. Those who cannot marry due to illness.
 - 2. Some may be single by choice.
 - a. Perhaps they prefer the single life on its own merits.
 - b. Perhaps they have chosen to remain single for other reasons.
 - 1) Jesus said some would be single for the sake of the kingdom - Matt. 19:11-12
 - 2) Paul considered his singleness a gift from God - 1Cor. 7:7-8
 - 3) Some may simply have no interest in physical relations reserved for and required in marriage.
 - 3. Sometimes, circumstances make being single the best choice.
 - a. As in times of persecution - 1Cor. 7:25-28
 - b. Or in times of war, disaster, famine
 - 4. With so many possible reasons, we should be careful not to assume why one may be single.

- B. Are there benefits to being single?
 - 1. Freedom from care in times of distress or persecution - 1Cor. 7:26-28, 32
 - a. In such times, it is a blessing not to have to worry about protecting and providing for a spouse and children.
 - 2. Freedom to serve the Lord - 1Cor. 7:32-35
 - b. There are opportunities to serve the Lord that may not be available to one with familial responsibilities.
 - c. Mission work; benevolent ministry
- C. Are there disadvantages to being single?
 - 1. Increased Temptation
 - a. Physical desires can be strong
 - 1) If so, then one should not be single by choice.
 - 2) Marriage is for those who don't have the gift of singleness 1Cor. 7:8-9
 - b. If single by circumstance, one needs to be extra careful.
 - 1) They may not have the help of close supervision by other family members.
 - 2) Opportunities to sin increase when no one is looking.
 - 3) 1Cor. 10:13
 - 2. Risk of Loneliness
 - a. Not to be confused with solitude that many single people enjoy.
 - b. Loneliness can lead to depression, which can render one ineffective in the service of God.
 - 3. Potential for self-centeredness
 - a. Living alone, it is easy to become set in one's own ways.
 - b. One may soon forget how to accommodate others.
- D. In spite of what zealous and misguided brethren may teach, there is no command for one to marry. While it is God's design, He will not judge and punish those who remain single.
 - 1. The single life is not worse than married life, only different. It comes with its own unique challenges, of which all Christians (married or single) should be aware.

II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR SINGLE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

- A. To those who are single:
 - 1. Take advantage of being single
 - a. Use the freedom to increase your service to God - 1Cor. 7:32-35
 - b. Don't be selfish with the extra time you may have.
 - c. Don't resent others who may not do as much as you because of their family obligations.
 - 2. Watch out for the dangers of being single
 - a. Temptations - make an effort to develop a close relationship with the Lord.
 - b. Loneliness - accept invitations to be with others, initiate opportunities to be with others.

- c. Self-centeredness - offer yourself in service to others; be flexible.
 - 3. Remember that you are in the family of God.
 - a. You have many mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, children; develop and maintain these relationships - Mark 10:29-30
- B. To those who are not single:
 - 1. Be accepting of those are single by choice.
 - a. If they have the gift of singleness, don't consider them strange.
 - b. Thank God for His diversity of gifts to His people.
 - c. Use the singles for increased service to God.
 - 2. Be understanding toward those who are single by circumstance.
 - a. Often the challenges they face are due to no choice of their own.
 - b. The temptations they face in living the single life are hard.
 - 3. Be sensitive toward all who are single, whether by choice or circumstance.
 - a. They need to be part of our family in Christ.
 - b. They need friendship and involvement in our activities.

Conclusion:

- A. No matter what our station in life, God can give us the strength and wisdom to lead productive and joyful lives.
- B. If you are single, and your service to Christ has been hindered by misconceptions, either your own or those of others, put them aside and join together in our work in this place for the Lord.