

# Singular Focus

Long Beach Alliance Church • May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I.**

**~ 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:8 (NASB)**

## **I) Be Devoted To God First**

- A) After giving direct guidance for married couples to “fulfill their duties” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:1-5) to one another (remember the daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly investment?), the attention turns to those who are single.
- B) Note that the encouragement for what Paul is about to say is not meant in a “command” fashion (7:6), but as wise counsel from a spiritual father (cf. 4:15).
- C) The wish of Paul is that everyone could be “as I myself am” (7:7). Whether Paul had formerly been married, or if he was a life-long single man -- we do not know. What we know is Paul wished that everyone be unmarried (7:7).
- D) In keeping with it being a “wish” or “hope,” Paul recognized that not everyone was gifted to be single (7:7), and that this gift must come from God.

- E) As noted last week, the ultimate purpose for Paul's request is not to promote frustration or unhappiness, but to promote "undistracted devotion to the Lord" (cf. 7:35).

## 2) Which Is Stronger In Your Life? God's Call Or Culture's Call?

- A) Paul has already directed that married people should function according to the "duties" of marriage (7:1-5). Here he specifically addresses those who are single, especially addressing a sub-set of formerly married Christians (7:8).
- B) Paul wishes for those who are currently single to remain single (7:8), a similar experience to Paul's.
- C) Our culture (still) trains us to consider marriage an "automatic" expectation. We live in a culture where dating and serious relationships are the norm. Paul is appealing for a different consideration, that of remaining unmarried.
- D) The gift of being unmarried is not so much a choice against marriage, as it is a choice for undistracted devotion to the Lord. We should not view being unmarried as a negative curse, but as a positive gift (7:8).
- E) For some though, it is clear that remaining single is not a gift (7:9). For those who have seriously explored whether they have a gifting from God for being single, but are still dissatisfied, it is better to pursue a Christian marriage.
- F) Paul's maxim "it is better to marry than burn with passion" (7:9) is not meant to be the only reason for marriage, but only a strong indicator that you are not to remain single.