

I. Seek No Marital Status Change

²⁵Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy ²⁶Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. ²⁷Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife. ²⁸But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

It is best to stay longer in your current situation because the time is getting shorter.

II. Live Like "Time is Short" and the "World . . . is Passing"

²⁹What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; ³⁰those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; ³¹those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

Thus far: stay in your status because time is short. Next: factor devotion and division into your marital decision.

III. Know If Married, Your Devotion Will Be Divided to Spouse, Away From the Lord

³²I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. ³³But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—³⁴and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. ³⁵I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

Whether you marry or not, know that the decision is not between right/wrong, but between "good"/"better."

IV. Marry, For That is "Good;" Do Not Marry, For That is "Better"

³⁶If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if his passions are too strong and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. ³⁷But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. ³⁸So then, he who marries the virgin does right (literally, "good"), but he who does not marry her does better. ³⁹A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. ⁴⁰In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

The Sermon-in-a-Sentence: Words of wisdom for the unmarried, and words of warning about "many troubles" for the married.

The Big Question: Will you consider Paul's inspired opinions—he admits they are not requirements—about status change, living like time is short, divided devotion, and good versus better in life and marriage?

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