

“Concerning” Marriage: “The Time Is Short”

1 Corinthians 7:25-40

The principle behind this portion of the text on marriage is that our time to make an impact on those around us, and on this world, is short (is “shortened” – running out), and we need to do all we can in our service for the Lord while we have time.

I. A TIME OF DISTRESS – VS. 25-29A

A. There is no real, viable debate on whether we are in distress in this present world – the fact is very clear – we are in much distress. Not only from the enemy without, and all the social upheaval abounding around us, but from the enemy “within” – within the church as it attempts to accomplish the Great Commission. It is that distress that the Apostle has in mind when he writes this discourse to the Corinthian believers.

B. Distress that necessitates directed focus – vs. 25-26

1. “Now concerning virgins”

a) It would appear that this was a related question that the church in Corinth asked in their letter for which the Apostle Paul provided answers. He continues on with the subject of marriage and continues on with the context of verse 16.

- b) The use of the word "virgins" is most often considered to be anyone unmarried (male or female).
- c) Considering the context here, I think it's more specific to women than to men – especially considering its use in verse 36.
- d) Some consider it to be "virgin daughters" – from the viewpoint of the father. In the culture of the times that this letter was written it was common practice for the father to arrange the marriage without any real input from the child. In that setting, the father controlled, for the most part, the espousal and marriage of his daughter and she would have simply been referred to as his "virgin" until the wedding night.

"Verses 1 Cor.7:25-28 in this passage were written in response to a specific question 'concerning virgins.' While several possible interpretations have been given as to what virgin Paul refers to, it probably refers either to a father or guardian of an unmarried daughter, or to a man who was betrothed to a virgin but whose marriage had not yet been consummated." (Preacher's Commentary)

- 2. "I have no commandment of the Lord" – we dealt with this in verses 10 and 12 earlier in this chapter. It's not saying Paul wasn't under inspiration – it just means that there was nothing that Jesus had said or taught that was recorded for him to use as a commandment.
- 3. "Yet I give my judgement" – the word for "judgment" (γνώμη) deals with the idea of discernment based on knowledge and

experience. Some versions translate it "opinion," which gives a good sense, but it was not opinion as we think of it but an opinion that was based on his knowledge of the Word of God and his experience from ministry, as well as the knowledge he received from the Holy Spirit to be in a position to impart his "judgment" (or, opinion, if you would).

4. "As one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful"
 - a) This is why we can be confident that the "judgment" he was giving was inspired of the Lord – this was his justification or proof that what he was giving was truth.
 - b) Our ability to be faithful comes from the Lord – it is a mercy of the Lord that enables us to be faithful, not the other way around.
5. Vs. 26 – "I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress"
 - a) "Therefore" – because he had obtained mercy to give this view of marriage and service to the Lord
 - b) "This" – what he is about to say, not what he has said – "that it is good for a man so to be" (unmarried, as he was).
 - c) "Is good for the present distress" – "For the necessity which the saints are daily subject to, who are continually tossed up and down, so that their estate may seem most unfit for marriage, were it not that the weakness of the flesh forced them to it."

(1) "Present" – to stand, or standing on (or

in) – the world that exists at any given point in time as it relates to the believer. "There was no period in the heathen times when the Church was not under persecutions and afflictions; on some occasions these were more oppressive than at others" (Adam Clarke).

Galatians 1:4

⁴ Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this **present** evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Hebrews 9:9

⁹ Which was a figure for the time then **present**, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

(2) *"Distress" - necessity, imposed either by the circumstances, or by law of duty regarding to one's advantage, custom, argument (Outline of Biblical Usage from studylight.org).*

Another view: "On account of the pressing necessity" (Pulpit Commentary).

d) "That it is good for a man so to be"

(1) *I believe this is speaking specifically to the male gender (considering the next verse) and is speaking in a fairly direct way to the leadership of the church at Corinth. They had lost sight of the real purpose of their lives as it related to serving the Lord with focus and direction and were more concerned*

about sensual pleasures. This was another case of the Apostle Paul directing their attention away from those worldly pleasures.

- (2) *The words "so to be" can mean either the way he (Paul) was as unmarried, or as they were – whether married or unmarried. Either one fits, but, considering the next verse (and the previous text prior to the parenthetical) it would seem that he had the later in mind – in whatever state they were in (the Greek word εἶμι or εἶναι meaning "to be," or "to exist") they were to stay focused on the work of Christ.*

"I think therefore that this is good by reason of the distress that is upon us, namely, that it is good for a man to be as he is." (Coffman's Commentaries on the Bible)

C. Distress that necessitates undisturbed focus – vs. 27-29a

1. Vs. 27 is fairly straightforward and is associated with the previous phrase of verse 26. It's also pointing back to the previous text in this letter that dealt with the issue of remaining married unless the unbelieving departs. For the purpose of undisturbed focus in one's service to the Lord, there should be no desire to change status. The church had asked the question should they separate from their spouses to serve better and Paul is saying, again, no – stay married. He also expounds and says if not married stay unmarried. In other words, stay focused.

2. Vs. 28 – “But and if thou marry” – the “thou” is pointing specifically to the man.
3. “Thou hast not sinned – the answer to their question.
4. “And if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned” – the burden for servitude, whether single or married, is placed evenly on both man and woman – in whatever social status they have, they are not living in sin in either case (again, in answer to a question that was asked).
5. “Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh”
 - a) “Nevertheless” – even if one hasn’t sinned in getting married, as the Apostle saw it, and as he taught (by inspiration of the Holy Spirit), to be married would mean there would be trouble not otherwise there in an unmarried person’s life.
 - b) “Such” – those that got married (this goes back to verse 9 where it states, “it is better to marry than to burn.” There are times when it is simply better to be married, even knowing that will bring a different dynamic to life.
 - c) “Shall have trouble” – there are two parts to this issue:
 - (1) *First is the right interpretation within the historical/contextual value – Matthew Henry puts this in perspective: “Christians, at the first planting of their religion, were grievously persecuted. Their enemies were very bitter against them, and treated them very cruelly.*

They were continually liable to be tossed and hurried by persecution. This being the then state of things, he did not think it so advisable for Christians that were single to change conditions. The married state would bring more care and cumber along with it (1Co_15:33, 1Co_15:34), and would therefore make persecution more terrible, and render them less able to bear it. Note, Christians, in regulating their conduct, should not barely consider what is lawful in itself, but what may be expedient for them."

(2) *Second is that of application and putting this into our time today – having a spouse, raising a family, brings much care and concern, and rightfully so (according to Scripture). Paul is not saying here that you can't serve the Lord and be married. He is simply stating the obvious – if married there is a lot more trouble involved.*

(3) *The word for "trouble" is also translated "tribulation" and means to compress or squeeze, as in a very narrow place without the ability to turn around; pressure from all sides.*

John 16:33

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

2 Corinthians 1:4

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any

trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

Romans 5:1-5

¹ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

² By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

³ And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

⁴ And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

⁵ And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

d) "In the flesh" – "By the "flesh" he understands whatever things belong to this present life, for marriage brings with it many problems. So that he leans more to a single life, not because it is a service more agreeable to God than marriage is, but for those problems which (if it were possible) he would wish all men to be avoid, so that they might give themselves to God alone." (Geneva Bible comments)

e) "But I spare you" – or, "and I would spare you" – "I would your weakness were provided for" (Geneva Bible comments).

6. Vs. 29a – "But this I say, brethren, the time is short."

a) "But this I say" – the word for "say" (φημι)

is one that means to bring to light by speech (rather than just referring to words as the word "logos" does). Strong says of this: "to show or make known one's thoughts." Paul wanted to make sure this was something that he made known – that it was something that was imbedded deep in his thoughts on the issue of service.

b) "The time is short"

(1) *Alford: ὁ καιρ. συνεστ. ἐστ. τὸ λοιπὸν]*
The time that remains is short; lit., 'the time is shortened henceforth:'—i.e. the interval between now and the coming of the Lord has arrived at an extremely contracted period. (Alford) – Rom. 13.11; Eph. 5.16

Romans 13:11–13

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

Ephesians 5:16

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

(2) *This word for "short" is only used one other time in the New Testament and that appears in Acts 5:6 in relation to the account of Ananias and Sapphira's*

death. It is translated "wound him up," speaking of the burial shroud they would wrap tightly around the body for burial. The word has the idea of contraction, to shrink.

(3) In relation to the context, the idea of time being short is that, because of the distress man is in in this life (as was the case with the believers in Corinth as well), the time we are in is full of distress and is hastening on quickly because of it.

(4) Wesley says this: But this I say, brethren - With great confidence. The time of our abode here is short. It plainly follows, that even they who have wives be as serious, zealous, active, dead to the world, as devoted to God, as holy in all manner of conversation, as if they had none - By so easy a transition does the apostle slide from every thing else to the one thing needful; and, forgetting whatever is temporal, is swallowed up in eternity. (Wesley)

To illustrate the point: A Chinese preacher, wishing to impress upon his hearers the idea that time seems to pass more swiftly as we get older, used a telling illustration drawn from the incense-pan. The incense-pan is an article of furniture familiar to every Chinaman, young and old. It is a stand made to hold a great length of incense, coiled up like a clock-spring. The outer coils are by far the largest, the outermost being fifteen or eighteen inches in circumference; while the inner coils get gradually shorter, the innermost of all not being more than, perhaps, three inches in

circumference. This spiral incense being fixed on the frame and lighted, the first round takes a long time to burn; the second round, being shorter, is completed quicker; the third round is completed more quickly still; and so, with accelerated pace, the smoking point courses round the shortening coils till the last is reached, which, being the shortest of all, is travelled round in a fraction of the time that was taken to consume the first. In the same way, said the Chinaman, our years seem to go, flying more swiftly the nearer we get to the end of our life. (Biblical Illustrator)

Conclusion to this point: Whatever we do for the Lord in our service to Him needs to be done with a sense of urgency. We need to understand that it is a time of distress, a time of trouble, a time that we will soon be out of, and if we don't work now, while it is day, the night will be upon us when there will be no more time to work.

II. A TIME TO MAKE PROPER DECISIONS – VS. 29B-34

A. If there is ever a time when the believer needs to be aware of the decisions they make, it is now. In two aspects: one, in that we are not getting any younger; and two, the time of this world is short – time is running out on this age.

B. In a changing world – vs. 29b-31

1. This is a much-discussed text in First Corinthians and seems to contradict, or at

least contrast, other portions of Scripture. What must be kept in mind here, as well as in every passage of the Bible is that the right interpretation must come from within the scriptural context and the historical context. If this is done here, this text becomes much clearer.

2. Vs. 29b – “it remaineth” (henceforth, hence forward, for the future)– “it plainly follows” (Joseph Benson). This is pointing directly and dynamically to the specific context of the shortness of time. Based on the limited time left to accomplish what God wants in our lives, “it plainly follows” – it makes clear and distinct sense – to live one’s life as focused as possible.
3. “That both they that have wives be as though they had none”
 - a) “Both” – this phrase as well as the ones that follow – “both” here, as in other portions of Scripture, is all at the same time – live life without distractions, no matter what they may be.
 - b) “Though they had none”
 - (1) *This is not saying that we are not to care for our wives (spouses), and only care for the things of ministry*
 - (2) *Remember, he is most likely speaking to the leadership of the church so his focus is on them, and if that’s the case then this would make even that much more sense.*
 - (3) *“[T]hey that were married, his advice to*

them was, that they should so behave as if they were not married; not that he would have them put away their wives, or fancy with themselves that they had none, or make no use of the marriage bed; but suggests a moderate use of it; he would not have them give up themselves to lasciviousness and carnal lusts and pleasures, even with their own wives, and spend their time altogether in their company and embraces: but since the time of life was short, and that full of troubles, they should spend it in the service and worship of God, private and public, as much as possible; and not in the indulging and satisfying of the flesh.”
(Gill)

(4) “[T]hat is, they must not set their hearts too much on the comforts of the relation; they must be as though they had none. They know not how soon they shall have none. This advice must be carried into every other relation. Those that have children should be as though they had none. Those that are their comfort now may prove their greatest cross. And soon may the flower of all comforts be cut down.”
(Matthew Henry)

4. Vs. 30 simply carries the principle of the latter part of vs. 29 into other areas of one’s life. Whether it is in times of grief and sorrow, or in times of joy and happiness, or in times of prosperity and blessing – no matter our lot in life, our decisions must be made with the betterment of the kingdom of God in focus.

5. Vs. 31 gives us the reason why we are to treat life as given in this text – because the world is passing away and what we do now is to be done with eternity in view.

Matthew 6:31–34

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

James 4:13–17

13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

- a) "They that use this world" – "those that are making use of this world" (Wuest)

- b) "As not abusing it" – "as not making excessive use of the same" (Wuest) – "and they who use the world, as not using it in full" (Alford)
- c) Jesus prayed that we would be kept while in the world – that we would stay focused no matter what was happening around us.

John 17:14–16

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

- d) "For the fashion of this world passeth away"

(1) "For" – *because*

(2) "The fashion"

(a) The Greek word here is *σχῆμα* (*schema*), where our word "schematic" comes from. It is defined in English as "a representation of a plan or theory in the form of an outline or model" (lexico.com). It is pointing to an external form, an external representation.

(b) *σχῆμα* (*schema*) – *Habitus* (/ˈhæbɪtəs/) is ingrained habits, skills and dispositions. It is the way that individuals perceive the social

world around them and react to it. These dispositions are usually shared by people with similar backgrounds (such as social class, religion, nationality, ethnicity, education and profession). The habitus is acquired through imitation (mimesis) and is the reality that individuals are socialized, which includes their individual experience and opportunities. Thus, the habitus represents the way group culture and personal history shape the body and the mind; as a result, it shapes present social actions of an individual. (Wikipedia)

(3) *"Of this world passeth away" – the form it is in now will soon be gone. "Το σχῆμα, the form or appearance. Grotius remarks that the apostle's expression is borrowed from the theatre, where [παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα] means that the scene changes, and presents an appearance entirely new." (TSK) Robertson says that Paragei (old word) means "passes along" like a moving panorama (movie show!).*

2 Peter 3:10–12

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy

conversation and godliness,

¹² Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

6. The context of verse 29-31 is unique, especially for today. Considering how much emphasis is placed on marriage and family relations, this seems out of order – but it isn't as it relates to "time is short." No more emphasis is to be placed on the family and spouse than what Scripture puts, and that is nothing near what is placed on it in our culture. When all of a parent's time is spent taxiing their children around, and when all available resources of money, time, and talent are given for the pleasure of family then there is a very limited awareness of the shortness of time. As a believer, all of our life is to be devoted to service to the Master, and that includes our allotment of time, talent, and treasure when it comes to family things.
7. This world is changing, and we need to make sure the decisions we make are those that are for the betterment of the kingdom of God, for the edifying of the body of Christ, and for the advancement of the gospel in the world.

C. Caring for the things of the Lord – vs. 32-34

1. Vs. 32 has a very important statement made that is something that is found throughout Paul's writings – something for

which he was keen that the churches, and believers therein, were fully aware – “But I would have you without carefulness.”

- a) “But I would have you” – he goes back to vs. 28 and is dealing with the idea of sparing the married person from the trouble that married life brings, and to vs. 25, where he brings up the idea of what he was about to say was his “judgment” (based on his understanding and experience, even though Jesus hadn’t taught on the subject as found in recorded Scripture).
 - b) “Without carefulness” – without worldly cares (Alford); free from cares (Robertson); without anxious cares (Wuest)
2. Vs. 32b-33 – a very simple truth is made about the differences in service to the Lord between the married and unmarried. It is not saying it is wrong to be married – just that priorities will be different.
 3. Vs. 34 – the point made here is simple – the unmarried woman (whether a virgin daughter, a widow, or a divorcee) is unencumbered with the cares of this world and she can devote all her attention to service to the Lord. The married woman, on the other hand, has a devoted, biblical care to her husband – and rightfully so. Neither aspect is wrong in itself – it’s just a statement of truth.

1 Timothy 2:9-10

⁹ In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with

shamefacedness and sobriety; not with
broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly
array;

¹⁰ But (which becometh women professing
godliness) with good works.

1 Peter 3:1-6

¹ Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your
own husbands; that, if any obey not the
word, they also may without the word be won
by the conversation of the wives;

² While they behold your chaste conversation
coupled with fear.

³ Whose adorning let it not be that outward
adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing
of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

⁴ But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in
that which is not corruptible, even the
ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which
is in the sight of God of great price.

⁵ For after this manner in the old time the
holy women also, who trusted in God,
adorned themselves, being in subjection
unto their own husbands:

⁶ Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him
lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye
do well, and are not afraid with any
amazement.

Conclusion to this point: The decisions made in life
are to be made with the utmost care and with the
intent to make a difference in this ever-changing
world. The life of the believer is to be dedicated to
Christ as the One who gave His life for our
redemption. We cannot do that without
understanding the world in which we live. Where do
you fit in this world, and what are you doing to make

a difference?

III. A TIME TO BE WITHOUT DISTRACTIONS – VS. 35-40

A. In order that one may be profitable – vs. 35

1. The word for “profit” here is the same Greek word (συμφέρω) as the word “expedient” in chapter six and verse twelve (1 Cor. 6:12).

a) Literally translated, as in Acts 19:19, it means to bring together (“brought...together”).

[Acts 19:19](#)

¹⁹ Many of them also which used curious arts **brought** their books **together**, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

b) “I say this for your own benefit” (ESV) – not for anyone else’s, including his (the Apostle Paul). He was not trying to exercise his apostolic authority over them, even though he could. He was only giving them something that would be the most helpful in their sacrificial service to the Lord.

2. “Not that I may cast a snare upon you”

a) “This is an allusion to the Retarius (a Roman gladiator who fought with equipment styled on that of a fisherman: a weighted net, a three-pointed trident, and a dagger” (TSK). The weighted net (rete) was used to throw over his adversary’s head to slow his assault so the gladiator

could use either the trident or the dagger without interference.

- b) He didn't want to cast a restraint upon them and hamper them – he just wanted to point out the best way to work for the Lord without distractions.

“The apostle, therefore, intimates that what he says was not intended absolutely to bind them, but to show them the propriety of following an advice which in the present case would be helpful to them in their religious connections, that they might attend upon the Lord without distraction, which they could not do in times of persecution, when, in addition to their own personal safety, they had a wife and children to care for.” (Adam Clarke)

3. “But for that which is comely”

- a) The word “comely” is the same root word as the word “fashion” in vs. 31 – schema (a representation or pattern) – with a prefix that means well or good. It carries the idea of well-fashioned, well-formed; what is proper and decent.
- b) Bishop John Pearson of the 17th century: “But for the sake of decency”

4. “That ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction”

- a) “Attend upon the Lord” – “Only here in the New Testament. From εὖ well, παράδροσ setting beside. That ye may attend is a kind of circumlocution [the use of many words where fewer would do]. The Greek reads literally: for that which is seemly [‘but for that which is comely’] and for that which is

assiduous [showing great care and perseverance]. Assiduous conveys the sense of the word as nearly as possible, since etymologically it means sitting close at. One is reminded of Mary at Bethany sitting at Jesus' feet, Luk_10:39. (Vincent)

- b) "Without distraction" – the word "cumbered" in Luke 10:40 is the same word as here only without the alpha privative (the "a" at the beginning of the word acts as a contrast or negative – "not" – i.e., atheist). In that text the following can be said:

Luke 10:40

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

(1) The word "cumbered" literally means to draw different ways at the same time – we would think about it in the term "distracted," as it relates to not knowing which way to turn with more than one thing drawing our attention.

(2) We would say "she was running around like a chicken with her head cut off."

(3) The thing she was so distracted with was "much serving" – there was a lot to do and she just couldn't "keep it together" to get it done and it overwhelmed her.

- c) The whole of the point made is simply that we do all we can to be profitable to the Lord without the distractions that the world and culture put upon us.

B. In order to do what's best – vs. 36-40

1. Best for both the Lord and His work, as well as for us, in our service to Him
2. Vs. 36 is bringing the father of a virgin daughter back into perspective. If she passes “the flower of her age” (of full age to be married) – the time when most daughters would have been married and it become a detriment to their standing in society to the point where the testimony for Christ would suffer, it was okay for the father to allow his daughter to marry.
3. Vs. 37, continuing with the father with a virgin daughter – if there is “no necessity,” going back to the things he has already said about those that could not live the celibate life (better to marry than to burn), and if his daughter is willing to live single in service to the Lord, it is advisable that they do so.
4. Vs. 38 is another verse that seems to say that it is best if a young person stays single, and in the context of the shortness of time, that may be a valid point to be made. However, this is not saying that one is the best choice for all, but, as it relates to the service to the Lord, the one who stays single has further opportunity than does the married.
 - a) “So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well”
 - (1) *“He that giveth” – in the culture of the day (and even in some cultures today)*

the father had the ultimate say in who his virgin daughter married. Even in our weddings in western culture it is common to ask, "who gives this woman to this man in marriage."

- (2) *"Doeth well" – "Does that which is in its own nature good; that which is agreeable to the will of God, is of his institution and appointment, and therefore must be good, and answer many good ends and purposes. Such an one that marries his daughter, he seeing a necessity for it, and a propriety in it, does a very good thing; secures her chastity, and his own credit; prevents fornication, and other evils that might follow; consults the good of mankind, and the honour of religion."*
(John Gill)

Hebrews 13:4

⁴ Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

- (3) *"Not in marriage" – Philip the evangelist (Acts 21) is an illustration of this point.*

Acts 21:8-9

⁸ And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

⁹ And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

- (4) *"Doeth better" – "not a better action in*

itself, simply considered; but more profitable and advantageous under such and such circumstances, with such and such conditions and consequences; since hereby a single person is more fit to encounter with and endure persecutions, is freer from the cares of life, and more at liberty to wait upon the Lord, and give up himself to his service.” (John Gill)

5. Vs. 39 actually seems out of place in this particular context, but if we consider that context for what it is actually saying, this verse helps clarify the point. Some teach that celibacy, or single life, is “best” (although the text does not say that) and they encourage young people to stay single and for either divorcees (that could scripturally remarry) and widows to do the same. This verse shows that not only is that not required (nor is it what is being taught), it is perfectly acceptable and right, both biblically and culturally, to remarry, “only in the Lord” (only to someone who is a believer). The aspect of “better” in vs. 38 is not what we think, most of the time. It must be placed in the context of both the Scripture and the historical context of the day. For the persecuted life they would live, it would be easier on the woman to remain unmarried but for the cause of Christ in general, it really would have no bearing (this whole context was simply looking out for the women and their well-being – vs. 35).
6. Vs. 40 restates what Paul has already said in relation to his “judgment” – if they could

remain unmarried, that would be preferable to his view of ministry. He concludes the context with the phrase, "and I think also I have the Spirit of God."

- a) "She is happier" – supremely blessed – goes back to vs. 34 and being unhindered by the cares that married life brings.

"Approaches nearer to the happiness of heaven, which consists in freely enjoying God, and uninterruptedly serving him" (Joseph Benson).

- b) "After my judgment" – (from earlier in the notes on vs. 25) – the word for "judgment" (γνώμη) deals with the idea of discernment based on knowledge and experience. Some versions translate it "opinion," which gives a good sense, but it was not opinion as we think of it but an opinion that was based on his knowledge of the Word of God and his experience from ministry, as well as the knowledge he received from the Holy Spirit to be in a position to impart his "judgment" (or, opinion, if you would).
- c) "And I think also" – the ESV translates it this way: "And I think that I too."

(1) The force of the Greek here shows that Paul was indicating his apostolic authority and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit on his writing on this particular issue, bringing up that he had as much authority as other apostles and teachers to teach on the subject (even though he was not married and may not have been married, depending on one's view).

(2) "I think" (δοκέω) – there has been

much debate on this particular word and why Paul said, "I think" rather than "I know." He is not expressing doubt, or that there could be doubt – he is referencing, again, the fact that Jesus had not taught on this issue (no "commandment from the Lord"), and that, based on his understanding and experience ("judgment"), his thought on the matter, his teaching on the issue, was from the Spirit of God.

*"Rather, 'I judge (or consider) also that I have the Spirit of God;' for δοκειν is frequently used to express not what is doubtful, but what is true and certain."
(TSK)*

- d) "I have the Spirit of God" – for all those that didn't think he did (and there were plenty in the churches at the time), he is reassuring them that all that he has just said was as equally inspired by the Spirit of God as everything else he had written.

1 Corinthians 9:1–2

¹ Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

² If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 14:36–37

³⁶ What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

³⁷ If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 10:8-10

⁸ For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:

⁹ That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

¹⁰ For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

Conclusion: "The Time Is Short" – a simple enough statement, yet, connected with the backdrop of this text, as well as the whole of this first letter to the Corinthians, and the cultural situation the church faced in the Roman Empire at the time, the meaning takes on a much more significant relevance to today. No matter what our position is in life – be it married, single, divorced, remarried, or widowed – the whole of our attention is to be devoted to service of our Savior. He it is that allows us to be what we are, to have what we have, to do what we do. The question then remains: "Why don't we do more for Him?"