

Freed to Serve: Embracing God’s Call in Our Relationships

1 Corinthians 7:1–24 (ESV)

Student Devotional

This 5-day devotional explores how being “bought by Christ” frees us to serve Him wholeheartedly—whether single, married, or in any other station of life. As you read each day, ask the Holy Spirit to reshape your perspective on relationships, commitments, and where God has you right now.

Day 1: Honoring God in Marriage

“... The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ... Do not deprive one another... so that Satan may not tempt you.” (1 Corinthians 7:3, 5, ESV)

Think About It

In a culture full of distorted ideas about sex and intimacy, Paul offers a refreshing vision: marriage should be marked by mutual care, not selfish demands. Rather than viewing intimacy as something shameful or purely for personal pleasure, believers see it as a sacred gift. In Corinth, some Christians thought abstaining within marriage made them “more spiritual,” but Paul disagreed. A healthy marital bond is both spiritual and physical. Each spouse yields to the other in love, reflecting how Christ gave Himself for us. Married or not, we learn that the heart of Christian love is selflessness—putting another’s needs before our own.

Pray It

Lord, help me see that true love involves self-giving, whether I’m single or married. If I’m married, teach me to honor my spouse in both practical and emotional ways. If I’m single, show me how to cultivate Christlike love within my friendships and future relationships.

Do It

August 18 – **August 24, 2025**

If you're married, set aside time to have an open, honest conversation with your spouse about ways you can serve each other more thoughtfully—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

If you're single, consider one meaningful way you can demonstrate self-giving love toward a friend or family member. Maybe it's cooking a meal, writing an encouraging note, or offering help with a chore.

Day 2: Seeing Singleness as a Gift

“I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.” (1 Corinthians 7:7, ESV)

Think About It

In many cultures, there's an unspoken assumption that marriage is the “default” and singleness is a temporary waiting game. Paul challenges that mindset, calling singleness a “gift.” Far from being a curse or a second-class status, singleness can offer unique opportunities for undivided devotion to the Lord. While marriage is also a beautiful calling, the key point is that God can use our current stage—be it single, engaged, or married—to shape us for His purposes. By viewing singleness as a legitimate gift, we're free from the pressure of feeling “behind” or incomplete. Instead, we can lean into what God wants to do in and through us right now.

Pray It

Jesus, thank You for reminding me that every season—singleness or marriage—can be a place of serving You wholeheartedly. Give me gratitude and courage to embrace the gifts and responsibilities of my present season, trusting You to meet my needs.

Do It

If you're single, pick a ministry or a meaningful service project that excites you—something that might be harder to pursue if you had the responsibilities of marriage or children. Take one tangible step to get involved or learn more about that opportunity.

If you're married, consider how you can affirm and support the singles in your community. Maybe invite a single friend over for dinner or involve them in a church activity, showing they are valued and welcomed.

Day 3: Grace for Imperfect Marriages

“If any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. ... For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband?” (1 Corinthians 7:12, 16, ESV)

Think About It

Corinthian believers faced real tensions—some were married to non-Christians, others were in unhappy marriages, and still others wondered if faith meant they should leave their spouses. Paul speaks into these messy realities with compassion: if your spouse is willing to remain, don’t abandon them. Instead, trust that God can work through your love, patience, and prayers—even if the relationship feels imbalanced. This reveals a key principle: God is bigger than our imperfect family circumstances. He can bring healing, growth, and sometimes salvation to an unbelieving spouse or a struggling marriage. Our call is to remain faithful where we can, reflecting Christ’s presence in our home.

Pray It

Father, when relationships are tough or spiritually mismatched, remind me that You are powerful enough to change hearts. Give me patience, humility, and a hope-filled perspective. Use me as a vessel of Your grace, whether or not I see immediate results.

Do It

If you’re in a challenging marriage or know someone who is, commit to pray daily for that relationship. Ask God to reveal ways to express Christlike love—even if it feels one-sided—and to soften hearts. If you’re single, consider reaching out with encouragement to someone you know whose marriage is struggling.

Day 4: Serve God Where You Are

“Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. ... Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called.” (1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, ESV)

Think About It

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It's easy to believe happiness lies in a future change—when we're finally married, divorced, employed, retired, or moved to a new city. But Paul's message is countercultural: "Bloom where you're planted." This doesn't mean you can never make changes, but you don't need to wait for some future milestone to serve God wholeheartedly. Whether single, married, or somewhere in between, you can glorify God right now. When we view our current station as God's assignment, we stop obsessing over "what's next" and start asking, *"How can I honor Christ here, in this season?"* That question transforms ordinary routines into sacred opportunities.

Pray It

Lord, forgive me for the times I've been restless or dissatisfied, assuming a different status or setting would fix my problems. Help me see that I can honor You right where I am. Teach me to value faithfulness over constant change.

Do It

Write down at least one practical way you can serve God in your current context—your job, your neighborhood, your family situation. Maybe it's offering to pray with a coworker, hosting a small group in your home, or volunteering at a local ministry. Commit to taking action this week, viewing your role as a divine appointment rather than a delay.

Day 5: Remember Who Owns Your Life

"You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men. ... In whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God." (1 Corinthians 7:23–24, ESV)

Think About It

The greatest reality in Paul's teaching is this: you belong to God. Jesus paid for you with His own blood, which means your core identity isn't defined by marital status, social rank, or cultural expectations. You're free—free from the tyranny of human opinion or worldly norms. This freedom doesn't mean we act recklessly; it means we serve a new Master who loves and redeems us. When we grasp that Christ owns us (in the best possible way!), the pressures of society lose their grip. We don't have to match everyone else's timeline or their relationship ideals. Instead, we can trust the One who called us—here and now—to live with Him and for Him.

Pray It

Jesus, thank You for purchasing my life at the highest cost. Give me a fresh awareness that I am Yours—body, soul, and future. Let this truth remove any fear of not “measuring up” to the world’s standards. Fill me with joy as I serve You.

Do It

Memorize or write down 1 Corinthians 7:23 (“You were bought with a price...”) as a reminder throughout the week. Whenever you feel pressure to define your worth by your relationship status or social standing, pause and recite this verse. Let it realign your heart with the reality that you belong to Christ.

You’re Ready for Class!

Over these five days, you’ve seen how Paul’s words in **1 Corinthians 7** speak directly to our diverse relational statuses and life contexts. Whether single, married, or in any season, you’re called to honor God **now**, not just when conditions change. Come to class ready to share how you’ve begun to live out Christ’s call in your current situation—freed from the world’s expectations and free to serve the One who bought you at a priceless cost.

Before We Gather

- What cultural voices and pressures influence how we view marriage, singleness, or family life?
- How can the idea of mutual responsibility in marriage challenge us to serve one another in practical ways?
- In what ways does viewing both marriage and singleness as gifts from God free us from comparing our life situation to others?
- How can embracing our current station in life as “God’s assignment” shift our perspective on daily responsibilities or long-term goals?
- How do we practically honor both marriage and singleness as valuable callings from God within our church community?
- How can Christians maintain healthy, God-centered boundaries in both romantic and platonic relationships?
- What are tangible ways to serve God faithfully in our current circumstances—be it in a tough marriage, joyful singleness, or anything in between?