

Freed to Serve, Part 2: Living in Light of Eternity

1 Corinthians 7:25–40 (ESV)

Student Devotional

Life is full of big decisions—relationships, career moves, family plans. The world tells us to chase after the next big thing, but what if the key to true freedom isn't found in changing our circumstances, but in changing our perspective?

In **1 Corinthians 7:25–40**, Paul challenges us to view everything—singleness, engagement, marriage—through the lens of eternity. Instead of being consumed by what's next, we're called to anchor our lives in Christ, trusting that He is our ultimate security.

This 5-day devotional will help you reset your focus. Whether you're single, dating, or married, God has a purpose for you **right now**. Each day, we'll dive into Scripture, reflect on how to live with undivided devotion, and take practical steps to embrace the freedom of serving Christ above all else.

Day 1: Navigating the “Present Distress”

“I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. ... But if you do marry, you have not sinned...” (1 Corinthians 7:26, 28, ESV)

Think About It

The Corinthians were facing some kind of crisis—maybe famine or social turmoil—and marriage complicated those pressures. While Paul didn't forbid marriage, he encouraged them to weigh their decisions realistically in light of the hardship. Life circumstances—be they personal, cultural, or global—can influence the responsibilities that come with marriage. Yet Paul is clear: choosing marriage is not a sin, and staying single is equally honorable. This counsel reminds us that life doesn't always offer stable, perfect conditions for big decisions. Instead, we rely on God's wisdom in uncertain times, trusting that He can guide us toward faithfulness whether we remain single or marry.

Pray It

Lord, help me see today's challenges in light of Your bigger plan. Give me discernment about the commitments I make—whether it's a career move, relationship step, or other major choice. Teach me to trust You when conditions are less than ideal, knowing You provide both guidance and grace.

Do It

Consider one area of your life where “uncertainty” looms—maybe finances, family changes, or cultural pressures. Spend a few minutes listing possible “next steps” and pray over each one, asking God for clarity. If needed, seek wise counsel from a pastor, mentor, or trusted friend.

Day 2: Holding This World Loosely

“...the appointed time has grown very short... those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.” (1 Corinthians 7:29, 31, ESV)

Think About It

Paul’s urgency challenges us to see life through an eternal lens. He’s not telling us to neglect spouses, ignore grief, or abandon work—far from it. But he does say to hold those pursuits with an open hand, recognizing their temporary nature. When we grip possessions, successes, or even relationships too tightly, we risk missing the joy and freedom of serving God first. The reality that “this world is passing away” doesn’t make us apathetic—it helps us invest in what truly lasts: Christ’s kingdom. Whether single or married, let that perspective shape your schedule, your spending, and your heart’s affections.

Pray It

Lord, remind me that You are the only constant in a constantly changing world. Help me treasure my relationships and responsibilities without clinging to them as ultimate. Show me how to value eternal things over fleeting pursuits.

Do It

Pick one routine activity—shopping for clothes, browsing social media, or planning your weekly calendar—and consciously approach it with an eternal viewpoint. Ask: “Does this reflect my hope in God’s kingdom, or am I being sucked into the world’s temporary values?” Make a small adjustment to align with God’s priorities.

Day 3: Undivided Devotion

“The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord... But the married man is anxious about worldly things... I say this... to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 7:32, 35, ESV)

Think About It

Paul highlights a practical truth: marriage brings genuine responsibilities—caring for a spouse and potentially children. Singleness, on the other hand, can grant a unique focus on kingdom work. Neither is “better” in a moral sense, but each has its advantages and challenges. If you’re single, you might enjoy greater flexibility to serve, travel, and disciple others. If you’re married, you can display Christ’s love through everyday family life. The key is “undivided devotion,” asking how we can align our relationships and obligations around Jesus. It’s not about idolizing marriage or singleness but about surrendering whichever gift we have to God’s glory.

Pray It

Father, thank You for the season I’m in—be it singleness, engagement, or marriage. Show me how to use it well for Your kingdom. Keep me from romanticizing the next season or resenting the current one. Help me shape my daily choices around wholehearted devotion to You.

Do It

Reflect on your weekly schedule and highlight areas that might distract from “undivided devotion.” It could be excessive screen time or an overfilled social calendar. Prayerfully pick one distraction to curtail this week, channeling that energy into prayer, Scripture reading, or ministry.

Day 4: Discernment in Marriage Decisions

“If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed... let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin... so then he who marries... does well, and he who refrains... will do even better.” (1 Corinthians 7:36–38, ESV)

Think About It

Here, Paul addresses those wondering if they should go ahead with marriage plans or remain single. His counsel is refreshingly balanced: marriage is good, but it’s also good—and sometimes even preferable in certain contexts—to remain single. There’s no one-size-fits-all rule. Instead, we’re to prayerfully assess our desires, self-control, circumstances, and sense of calling. Maybe you’re discerning marriage right now, or perhaps you’re content in singleness. Either way, Paul’s message is to walk your unique path with integrity and faith, trusting that God can bless either route when your motives are aligned with Him.

Pray It

Lord, I’m thankful that You give wisdom for big decisions. If I’m considering marriage, guide

me to approach it with reverence and readiness. If I'm single, help me celebrate that status without fear or shame. Show me how to honor You in all my relationships.

Do It

If you're wrestling with a relationship decision—engagement, marriage, or even a dating question—take time to list your motives and any concerns. Prayerfully invite God to shape your desires. Maybe seek input from a mentor or couple whose marriage you respect. If you're not in that stage, consider praying specifically for a friend who is navigating a major relational choice.

Day 5: Freed to Live for God

“A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives... Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is... And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 7:39–40, ESV)

Think About It

Paul's concluding words underscore a core principle woven throughout 1 Corinthians 7: we belong to the Lord, not to cultural expectations or arbitrary timelines. If you're married, you're called to faithfulness and service within that covenant. If you're single, you're called to maximize that freedom for God's kingdom. Even in cases of widowhood or unexpected life changes, the goal remains the same: to honor Christ above all. Living in light of eternity means we don't let relational statuses define our identity or future. We're **freed** to serve God—trusting His grace to guide each season and each step.

Pray It

Jesus, thank You for the freedom I have in You—freedom from others' opinions and from the pressures of this world. Teach me to use that freedom to love, serve, and walk in step with Your Spirit. Whether I stay in my current situation or move into a new one, be my first love and final hope.

Do It

Take a moment to write a personal “freedom statement.” It might start with “I am free in Christ to...” and include ways you sense God inviting you to live boldly—maybe stepping out in ministry, risking vulnerability in relationships, or offering your talents in fresh ways. Revisit this statement when you face doubts or cultural pressures.

You're Ready for Class!

Over these five days, you've explored Paul's wisdom for navigating life's seasons—particularly regarding singleness and marriage—with an eternal perspective. Whether you're facing big choices or finding contentment in the mundane, **1 Corinthians 7:25–40** reminds us that living in light of eternity changes everything. Come to class ready to share how this perspective is reframing your goals, freeing you to serve God wholeheartedly—whether you remain single, enter marriage, or transition into a new season. Let's keep our eyes on Christ, our unshakable hope.

Before We Gather

- What are some “urgent” or “temporary” worries in our culture that can overshadow our devotion to Christ—especially regarding future plans, relationships, or family life?
- How might today's uncertainties—economic concerns, social pressures, global instability—affect our approach to marriage and singleness?
- What does it look like in practical terms to hold our life circumstances “loosely” while remaining faithful in our responsibilities?
- How can both singles and married couples intentionally cultivate devotion to God amid everyday obligations?
- In what tangible ways can we cultivate an eternal mindset in our day-to-day routines (work, finances, relationships)?
- How do we discern the difference between a God-honoring decision and one driven by cultural expectations?
- How can singles and married couples in our church better support one another's spiritual growth?
- Practically speaking, what does it look like to give our full attention to the Lord, regardless of our marital status?