

Is it better to get married or not?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 7:1-7; 24-35

Corinth in the past was like Hong Kong today, a place full of lust and sexual temptations. After believing in the Lord, some people felt that their previous life of indulgence in lust was wrong, so they went to the other extreme and advocated a life of abstinence. They believed that sexual behavior was unclean and should be avoided if possible. They believed that the best way was to leave their spouse after believing in the Lord and returned to a single life. If they could not leave, they had to settle for the next best thing, which was not to have sex with their spouse. If they were unmarried, they had to remain single. In short, they had to abstain from sex!

This view was not accepted by the entire congregation and caused controversy in the church. So the church wrote to Paul for guidance. Paul discussed this issue in Chapter 7: What should Christians think about marriage? Is it better to get married or not to get married? Paul gave us two good truths in this regard.

1. Marriage is a normal thing

Paul said in v.2: "But to avoid sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband." Pay attention to the word "should". "Should" means "of course", which means that it is reasonable and proper for men and women to get married, and that it is normal for people to have physical needs. Paul does not approve of asceticism. "Let the husband treat his wife with due regard, and likewise let the wife treat her husband." (v.3) Sexual relations are the due regard of husband and wife. The original meaning of "due regard" refers to the obligations that should be fulfilled. Married people, whether husbands or wives, no longer have the right to claim their own bodies, but the other party's. (v.4)

Some people may say that they are very busy and stressed in their service recently. In order to concentrate on praying and serving the Lord, they do not want to be intimate with their spouse. Is it okay to separate from their spouse for such a spiritual reason? Paul clearly stated: Even if you separate from your spouse in order to concentrate on praying and serving, it must be consensual and only temporary, and you must still have sex in the future. (v.5) What exactly does Paul want to express? Paul means that if you ignore the responsibilities of a couple in pursuit of your ideal service standards, or even ask your spouse to sacrifice to fulfill your service ideals, this will cause a crisis in your marriage, which is not pleasing to God.

Marriage is sacred. Fulfilling the duties of marriage is a sacred task, and it is also a kind of

service. There is no excuse for neglecting your family. If you want to serve faithfully, you must not neglect your family. Brothers and sisters, please cherish your leaders. One of the most concrete manifestations of cherishing your leaders is to protect his family. If you find that there are leaders among us who neglect their families because of their service, please remind them, pray for them, and share their work with practical actions to reduce the chances of them neglecting their families.

2. Not getting married is also a good thing

Although getting married is a normal thing, Paul did not say that getting married is better than not getting married. Unmarried brothers and sisters are not inferior Christians. Please do not look down at brothers and sisters who are of marriageable age but have not married, and do not think that there is anything wrong with them. In fact, single people can be more focused on the Lord's work than married people because they do not have the burden of family. (See v.32-35)

Jesus himself is an example. If he were married, he would have to fulfill the responsibilities of a husband and a father, and he might not be able to complete the work he wanted to accomplish on earth so whole-heartedly. There are also Paul, David Brainerd, C. S. Lewis, Nightingale, Mother Teresa ... and many others, countless, who are not married. Their commitment and struggle for the Lord's work are awe-inspiring. As long as a single person is completely committed to God, his life can be wonderful.

The point that Paul wants to point out is not whether it is better to get married or not. His point is: whether you are married or not, you must keep this duty and do not force it. (v.24) Married people do not ask for divorce, but treat your spouse well and fulfill your family responsibilities. For those who are not married, do not worry about not being married yet. The main purpose of your life is not to find an ideal marriage partner, but to live for the Lord. Do not force yourself to get married, just follow the Lord's guidance. The most important thing is to love God and keep His commandments. Whether you are married or not, your life will be wonderful.

Discussion Questions

1. For married people: Have you neglected your family because of your ministry or work? Do you think you have enough time and energy for your spouse and children? Please share your

struggles or successes in this regard.

2. For unmarried people: Do you think married life is suitable for you? Do you feel pressure to get married? (Whether this pressure comes from others or from yourself) Can you bear the pressure of being single? Can you enjoy the life of being single? Please share your struggles or successes in this regard.