

# The Single Christian and the Single Saviour - 2

## discussion guide

based on **1 Cor 7.25-40** (Linked to sermon of 12/11/23)  
which can be accessed at [www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks](http://www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks)

Intro: Emma Watson described herself as "self-partnered". Jonathan Berry (this week's visiting preacher) talked about "happily unmarried". Do you think of 'single' as having positive or negative connotations in our culture? What are the most positive ways of describing someone who isn't married?

### **Read 1 Corinthians 7.25-31**

'The present crisis' (v26) is linked to 'the time is short' (v29) 'for this world in its present form is passing away' (v31). In other words, because Jesus will one day return and renew all things, we live in a temporary age – a crisis – and everything we do (finances, relationships, work etc) needs to be considered in the light of Jesus' return. Hence Jonathan's first point: Time is short – so keep your marital status in perspective.

'Those who marry will face many troubles in this life' (v28). What does the Apostle Paul mean by this?

What are some of the troubles that single people (like Paul) face?

What would help those who are married have a better understanding of the troubles and joys of being single; and vice versa?

Jonathan talked about those who are married having a 'gospel-centred' marriage – not just focusing on their nuclear family, but on how they can use their marriage / home / resources etc to serve the gospel and bless others. Share examples of where you've seen couples enacting that vision well. Every marital household is different, but if you are married, what could having a more 'gospel-centred' marriage look like?

Jonathan reminded us that we should not make a marriage partner (however good they are!) into an 'ultimate', because in the new creation, our spouse will be Jesus (eg Rev 19.7-9), not an earthly partner (Matthew 22.30). Whether single or married, how does that make you feel?

### **Read 1 Corinthians 7.32-40**

Jonathan summed up these verses as "Jesus is Lord, so whether married or single, devote yourself to him". Do you think that's a fair summary? Why / why not?

Jonathan described the Bible's teaching for those who are single is that they should only consider marrying someone who is a believer (eg v39) – someone who will encourage them as a disciple of Jesus and member of Christ's body, the church. Do you think this is wise advice? Why / why not?

He also said "Freedom from marriage isn't a freedom to please self. The single life can very easily become a selfish life." What are some of the temptations married people face? Single people face? What helps you resist those particular temptations?

What would help us as a church to become more welcoming to single people? (Try to be specific – and feel free to feed your ideas in to Dan.)

**Pray** for those you know in church who are single, for whatever reason.