

The Gift of Singleness

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[0:00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! 1 Corinthians 7, verse 25. At the conclusion of the reading, I'll say, this is the word of the Lord, and we will respond. Thanks be to God. Now, concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who, by God's mercy, is trustworthy.

I think that in the view of the present distress, it is good for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free.

Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned. And if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned.

Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. This is what I mean, brothers. The appointed time has grown very short.

[1:10] From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none. And those who mourn as though they were not mourning. And those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing.

And those who buy as though they had no goods. And those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife.

And his interests are divided. And the unmarried man or unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.

I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. If anyone thinks he's not behaving properly towards his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes.

[2:23] Let them marry. It is no sin. But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity, but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well.

So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better. A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives.

But if the husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes only in the Lord. Yet in my judgment, she is happier if she remains as she is, and I think I too have the Spirit of God.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please be seated. In God's abundant kindness to me, as a kid, most Sundays began the same way.

My parents waked me up, along with my two brothers, and took us to church. But one Sunday began quite differently. There was a knock at the front door by one of our local police officers.

[3:41] Now, it was a bit unusual to have a visitor on a Sunday morning, so when I heard the knock, I looked towards the door and saw my dad inviting in a police officer.

I was a teenager at the time, and one thing I knew, the police officer was not there for my parents. He must be there for me or one of my brothers, Vance or Macaulay.

I immediately began rehearsing what I did the night before to see if I did anything so worthy as a visit from the law. But before I could finish, my dad said, Vance, come downstairs.

The police are here and would like to speak with you. I must be honest, my first thought was, Hallelujah! It wasn't me!

I dodged a bullet. My second thought was, I've got to find out what this officer is saying to my brother.

[4:46] I'm sure you all want to know what this officer is saying to your brother. You have to ask me after the service. But my younger brother and I tiptoed closer to hear the officer addressing my older brother in the living room.

The officer was there for a specific person, my older brother. He had nothing to say to us on that day. But we wanted to hear what he was saying. We wanted to eavesdrop.

This morning, our verses have something to say to a specific group of people. If you've been following us along, these verses of Corinthians, Paul is addressing different groups, different categories of people, different kind of life circumstances.

He's addressed to those who are married. As we talked about last week, he addresses those who are married to an unbeliever in this chapter. Someone who suddenly is converted and finds out, I'm married to an unbeliever.

But in these verses, Paul addresses a specific group of people, those single and unmarried. Whether you're young and have never been married, or whether you're older and have been divorced or widowed, these verses are for you.

[5:59] They include vital principles about the privileges and responsibilities of singleness. Threading through these verses is the Apostle Paul's firm conviction that each has his own gift, one of one kind and one from the other.

And so, alongside marriage, singleness is a wonderful gift. In a patriarchal culture, where a woman gains so much status and stability in her life, these verses are radical.

Because the Apostle Paul dignifies singleness because of the gospel, which we'll see in a few moments.

But what about the rest of us? Are we left to kind of be like me and my little brother, eavesdropping on this address to single folks?

Well, in the same way that single folks need to hear about the privilege and responsibilities of marriage so as to help married folks in the family.

[7:01] So, too, married folks need to hear about the privileges and responsibilities of singleness. So, to help singles in the family. And more than just that, we need to listen.

The majority of our membership is married. And it's so easy to assume that the main problem of a single person is that they're unmarried.

Their main problem, they're not sorted or matched up or something like that. What they need is for us to be a matchmaker. That's just not biblical. It's not the teaching of Scripture.

So, in a way, where we're going is if you are single, let no other pursuits distract you from pleasing the Lord with all your heart. If you're single, let no other pursuits distract you from pleasing the Lord with all your heart.

I'm going to break this out in three points. Per usual. The first one is, singleness is a gift because there is less trouble. Now, I cannot get every nook and cranny of this passage.

[8:05] There's so many different things going on. I was seeing new things as I was reading it. So, alas, I'm going to give you my best guess at kind of collecting some things together. But the first one is, singleness is a gift because there is less trouble.

Now, the Apostle Paul wrote these verses. He was most likely married before writing these verses because he was a member of the Sanhedrin and it was required to be married to be a member of the Sanhedrin.

But he says, as we noted earlier, I wish that all were single as I am. Look down at verse 6. He says, I wish, in verse 7, I wish that all were as I myself am.

But each has his own gift, one of one kind or one of the other. I wish that all had the gift of singleness, he's saying. And in these verses, he begins to tell us why. Look at verse 26. He says, I think that in the view of the present distress, it is good for a person to remain as he is.

Now, that aligns with what he's been saying. Live as you're called. Remain there with Lord. And so he says that when he's applying it to singles here. Now, here is the question. How could the same Apostle Paul who wrote Ephesians 5 saying the mystery of marriage is how it points to Christ and the church be the one who says, I wish that all were single?

[9:14] And some folks say the riddle is solved right here. Because in verse 26, he says the present distress.

And so historians argue that there was a famine going on in Corinth and it is historical. There was a famine and during these times, you shouldn't get married.

You shouldn't change what's going on because it's a crisis time. You know, we have an inch of snow and everybody loses their mind. Imagine a real disaster. A real crisis. He says, don't add trouble to trouble.

Not in troubling days. By getting married. But I don't think that's it, personally. There's way too much tied in to what God is doing in these days.

In these chapters. It seems more likely to me and the majority of scholars that the present distress refers to the suffering believers must face. Christ did not say, follow me and you'll have your best life.

[10 : 20] He said, follow me and take up the cross. Peter said, don't be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you. Oh, you got passed up for a promotion because of your faith?

Don't be surprised at the fiery trials. There was something strange that happened. I don't know what kind of life you thought Jesus promised you, but his life was a cross. The present distress, then, is that we live in a broken world.

Things are not as they will be. The world does not love what God loves and often opposes those who love God.

The disciples face massive persecution. I have a book called After Acts. Now, a lot of it's based, we know Peter was crucified or we know Peter was killed and James, but, you know, so much is just based on history, but after Acts, talking about the suffering that all of the apostles faced for the cause of Christ.

The persecution ramped up after Jesus' death in Rome and so Paul seems to be saying, be careful because the persecution you faced could bring more trouble on your wife or your spouse and your children.

[11 : 36] The idea is the exception is prosperity for a Christian. Historically, persecution is the norm. Trouble is the norm.

So he seems to be saying, don't bring on more trouble because of how it might work out. And how does that work out? You know, I think the story is helpful. John Bunyan, who you know, wrote the Pilgrim's Progress, the book, I think, translated in more languages than any other book besides the Bible.

He was put into prison for 12 years because he refused to conform to the king's demands to stop preaching the gospel. All he had to do was recant.

Not even the faith, just recant or commit to not preach the gospel. But he refused. He had a wife and four children, one of whom was blind.

His journals, he has a book on grief and suffering, describing the agony of remaining in prison for his conscience rather than providing for his wife and children.

[12 : 52] What would you do? That's the idea. The trouble that is brought on by Christianity has made it even worse when you have kids. Francis Bacon said, children sweeten labors.

There's more labors in the field, but they make misfortunes more bitter. Right? If Bunyan had been single, there would not have been a conflict of conscience.

And so, don't assume you should just get married without considering the calling of God on your life and the effect on a spouse or family. But the present distress is not merely that we live in a broken world, but that we have sin in our hearts.

We're prone to wander. We're not yet as we will be. We stumble and sin often in horrific ways. And so, the Apostle Paul seems to be saying, be careful before you get married because you bring about more trouble.

Look at verse 29, he says. Yet those, or 28, yet those who marry have worldly troubles and I would spare you that. I think he's talking about just the troubles of two people relating together.

[13 : 55] See, marriage mass is one plus one equals one, but marriage mass is also one plus one equals double the trouble. In this world, there is trouble and when you say, I do, you volunteer for more trouble.

That's marriage. There is trouble I have known after getting married that I never would have known before. Endless amount, seemingly endless amount of selfishness revealed in my heart.

That's a pretty good guy. Marital disagreement and conflict. Miscarriage. I'll never hear that word again in the same way than after losing several children.

Household responsibility. Anxieties about finances. When you're living on a shoestring as a single man, finances are just not much of a thought but when you have a wife, when you have kids. So the reason sufferings increase when you get married is because your wife is joined, or your life is joined to a spouse such that your trouble becomes hers and her troubles become yours.

[15:09] Your disappointment becomes hers and hers yours. Your losses become hers and her losses become yours. So say I do, you know, and have some more trouble in your life.

What's that mean? Marriage can be wonderful but it can also be quite miserable. And when it's miserable, it's more miserable than you would ever be by yourself.

In fact, I would bet five American dollars that the most miserable person in the world is not single.

When you're single, you're the only person that can make you miserable.

When you're married, it's double the misery. And when you have kids, oh my goodness, there's no limit. That's what we say, right? You're only as happy as a parent as your happiest kid.

Everybody's having fun at the party. The kid in the corner is not. And so misery loves company.

That's not the way we talk about marriage, is it?

[16:11] We say happily ever after. They lived happily ever after. Exactly who are they talking about? So, Paul says, singleness is a gift because there's less trouble.

The brokenness of the world, the brokenness of this world cannot take as much from us when we're single. The sinfulness of our hearts cannot tear down as much around us when we're single.

When boy meets girl, we act like something happens that we cannot stop. It's rolling down a hill. But these verses would caution us about dating before we're mature or marrying before we're ready to take up the trouble.

I love the way, actually still in Anglican services, wedding ceremonies, they begin with this statement about marriage. Marriage is not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God.

I think that might change a lot of marital issues if we didn't act like boy meets girl and everything takes over and thought more critically.

[17:31] And so that's what the Apostle Paul is getting at. So singleness is a gift because there's less trouble. Point two, singleness is a gift because there's no time to lose. Singleness is a gift because there's no time to lose.

Look at verse 29. He gets right to the point. This is what I mean, brothers, the appointed time has grown very short. This is some of the reason I believe that he's not talking about a famine in Corinth because he's tying these two things together.

This is what I mean. So he's talking about a reality that has changed everything, not merely a local crisis of some kind. So he says, the appointed time.

Now that's a strange way to talk about time. Now if you called your friend and said, the appointed time has come, I will meet you for coffee tomorrow afternoon, they would think you are undeservedly.

So insane. Paul's not saying a specific time or hour has arrived. Paul is saying a decisive time has arrived. That's what he's saying.

[18:28] These are the last days as the Apostle Paul talks about in other places. Christ has come as Savior even as we just sang. Jesus is our judge and our Savior. Christ has come as Savior.

All the blessings of the new covenant or so many of them come into our life. Now we receive forgiveness from God. We've heard and we believe we were sealed by the Spirit but the final day has not yet arrived.

Christ will come as judge and Lord and we'll finally be home. And so knowing that these two days have been split up, we're awaiting this final day, it's meant to change everything.

including marriage as he talks about in a moment. Now one hot summer day everything changed for me.

I was 12 years old. I thought mayonnaise was a nasty substance old people whipped into their chicken salad. But one hot summer afternoon everything changed.

[19:39] I was at my friend, I know lie, I was at my friend Reeves Tinkler's house. Around lunchtime his mom brought us two grilled ham and cheese sandwiches with mayonnaise oozing out.

I thought mayonnaise was this disgusting inedible substance but it was hot and I was hungry. I took one bite and with just one bite everything changed.

The clouds parted. A tub of dukes descended down on the Lord's servant. The time of mayonnaise had arrived everything changed.

Every sandwich changed. Eating things that weren't sandwiches. I was putting on burritos last night because mayonnaise enhances everything and in a much, much, much, much, much, much more glorious way the Apostle Paul is saying Christ has died and rose again and everything changes now.

It must change from the bottom up because of Christ. The gospel comes.

[20 : 59] It doesn't say nothing else is important but it does say nothing else is ultimately important. Nothing gains ultimacy any longer because of these wonderful things and I do offer you the gospel of Lord Jesus Christ is wonderful reality that when Christ came they anticipated a day of judgment but the Lord say Christ he was sent in the world not to judge the world as John 3.17 says but in order that the world might be saved through him and so these days are split up so that salvation might come to you.

That indeed just like Zacchaeus that salvation might come to your house. Today is a day of salvation. If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that his death was not merely a historical fact but that your sins were placed upon him so that the judgment of God that should have rested on you was poured out on him so that you might walk out set free into newness of day.

And so everything is different. Now these verses are so incredible because he goes through this list of things that characterize daily life marriage adversity prosperity possession business they're unfolding this provocative way if you look down there with me he says verse 29 let those who have wives live as though they had none those who mourn as though they were not mourning who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing all these things like how do you do something without doing it?

Apostle Paul is helping us to see something very important what is going on here why are all these things here why are they together listen this is what it is these are still wonderful things but they are not ultimate things so they could distract us from the main thing I think that's why they're all together they're wonderful things but they are not ultimate things and so they could distract us from the main thing that is to occupy us in these days while we await Christ return so what is he saying in these verses I think he's saying sit loose to your life don't grip it you know you try to swing a golf club you squeeze it too tight you're supposed to hold it like you hold eggs you know you squeeze it too tight you hook things he's saying sit loose to your life sit loose to your marriage sit loose to your possessions sit loose to your life think about marriage let those who have wives live as though they had none double the trouble right?

but that's not really what he's saying he's saying something very important you remember what Jesus said about marriage when he was tested in the temple they were talking about some woman who's married seven times who's she going to be married to in the resurrection it's an absurd question that's what they're trying to do trap Jesus but he said when believers rise from the dead they will neither marry nor be given in marriage so marriage is not forever you know it's not as much as you love that special someone why?

[24 : 02] because the Bible is teaching us and Jesus is teaching something right there the closeness and intimacy of marriage will give way to what it pointed to communion with God so marriage will not be in heaven not because it's too solid too gross or too distinct because it's too flimsy so he's saying let those who have wives live as though they had none how do you be married to someone when you know it won't be forever?

be thankful serve your spouse as long as you possibly can until death love them but not too much because your spouse isn't your savior the worst thing you can do to your marriage is love your spouse too much what could happen?

what's so bad? it could distract you I find it very striking in Jesus' parable about the great banquet remember that great banquet come on there is quite a feast coming anybody that knew their Bibles knew they were talking about the Isaiah feast so he's talking this great feast is coming one guy says something about a mule or different things at work one guy says I have a wife and I can't come he's helping us to get at loving our spouse too much means we could miss the purpose of God we could miss that our first obedience belongs to him I see husbands who love their spouse too much such that they're afraid of them they want to please their wife so much that they disobey God I see wives who love their husband too much such that they become a needy squeaky wheel seemingly needing oil all day long the worst thing you can do for your marriage is love your spouse too much

the worst thing you can do for your singleness is want marriage too much but think about adversity he goes down let those who mourn as though they were not mourning here's the deal

I think those who mourn let those who mourn as though they were not mourning what's it mean it's meant to help us understand that mourning is just for this life so affliction will either make you better or bitter affliction and adversity will make you better if you trust God and his purposes for it if you're careful not to think too much about it not to let it consume you or make you think that you're a victim but affliction will make you bitter if you count up every slight and every slur every disappointment every disagreement if you let your life boil down to focus on it so mourn as though you are not mourning why?

because there's nothing you're suffering right now that will not be fixed with the resurrection he continues think about your possessions let those who buy as though they had no goods we've all heard the warning keep your possessions from possessing you and if you have many possessions you know the feeling it's great to have a house until the roof leaks it's great to have a car until the alternator or the transmission goes out it's great to have things until you have to do all the things to keep the things moving and so buy and sell as though you had no goods like you were when you were twenty something or newly married living like no future in sight what's he saying sit loose to your life sit loose to your marriage your possessions your life these things are passing away devote yourself to the main thing now what's that got to do with singleness well sometimes we operate like a single person needs to get married before they can begin serving the Lord after all people return to church after they get married and have a few kids and so that's when you begin serving the Lord but that's not true in these verses these verses actually say the opposite the one who has the advantage in serving the Lord is those who are single they have more ability to sit loose to their life and devote themselves to the main thing so what does it look like to live as though we had no wives and mourn as though we were not mourning rejoice as though we're not rejoicing buy as though we weren't buying 1 Peter 4

[28:41] I think gets right at it same context calling us how to think about our life together the end of all things is at hand almost the exact same phrase therefore be self-controlled sober minded for the sake of your prayers above all keep loving one another earnestly since love covers a multitude of sins show hospitality to one another without grumbling as each has received a gift use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's very grace whoever speaks is one who speaks oracles of God whoever serves is one who serves by the strength that God supplies in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to him belong glory dominion forever and ever amen I love that the end of all things all time is at hand so love show hospitality serve give your life away again and again so singleness is a gift because there's less trouble because there's no time to lose singleness is a gift finally because there's less distraction the previous point kind of flows into this one

Paul gets right to the point he looked down there in verse 32 he says I want you to be free from anxieties free from anxieties I want you to be free from concerns and responsibilities and obligations hope everybody's windows are up I want you to be free I don't want you to be anxious about the wrong things look what he says the unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord how to please the Lord the married man is anxious about worldly things how to please his wife the unmarried woman is anxious about pleasing the Lord but the married man is anxious about pleasing his wife it's so important to notice what the apostle Paul is doing here when we talk about marriage and singleness we often compare the blessings of marriage intimacy and friendship something like that with the difficulties of singleness loneliness but Paul is comparing the difficulties of marriage with the blessings of singleness this teaching flies in the face of our culture now on the one hand our culture doesn't really have a problem with singleness because singleness is an opportunity to spend your life on yourself and so it doesn't have a problem with that but wonderfully selfish culture but it does mock celibacy virginity purity the movie the 40 year old virgin maintains the premise that to be 40 years old and pure is laughable what else should we do but play it over a comedy and laugh another movie 40 days and 40 nights interesting parallel with the 40 and the scriptures talks about 40 days of purity as being unthinkable what's the takeaway of all that a life of purity is a life that's not worth living we see that in all the passion that backs up so much of the political politics around sexuality and our age this idea that if you constrain my sexuality or something like that my purity then you're constraining me and so we're going to fight about it something like that but it's all of it is backed by this a life of purity is a life that's not worth living a life

that's not expressed in the way

I want it to be a life that's not worth living and sadly sometimes the church can say little different sometimes the church can view marriage as the ideal and singleness as the unfortunate reality marriage as plan A singleness as plan B as if the single person is just halfway there half human the Bible doesn't talk like that obviously we should recognize so often among conservative Christians marriage is the norm but it doesn't mean it's the ideal you understand after all think about it Jesus was a fully human being completely pure remained single massively fruitful life wouldn't you agree the apostle

Paul while he may have been married before was single in his earthly ministry some say he traveled as many as 15,000 miles on foot mainly planting as many as 20 churches writing 13 letters a massively fruitful life so if you're single it's not plan B it's the will of God it's God's best now I must pause for a moment and say if you're single and you don't want to be it's not your fault it's not because you were not this or that not because you drove away that decent guy because you're too focused on school or something like that if you're still single and you don't want to be it's the will of God and you should know that God only has his best for you there are any circumstances that would bring him more glory you would already be in them so what is

God up to so what's a married person to do you know the married person's interests are they want to please God but they must please their spouse as well lest we be confused the apostle Paul is not denigrating pleasing your spouse as if you should all go home and literally not please your spouse anymore he's not saying that at all he's saying it's just necessary you should remain as you are you're in this circumstance so you should devote yourself to pleasing occupy yourself with the things a spatula melted in our dishwasher it started billowing out all this burning plastic smell and immediately I'm occupied and no longer with a sermon that's the way it works and so I cannot neglect that and nor should we but there is a warning label here don't tend to your marriage more than you tend to your soul

[35:44] I think many times we can think that what our marriage needs is for us to be in sync and so we spend so much of our time thinking about different love languages or different communication styles or different personality types or whatever but the danger is it's like herding cats you change as you age and so you're kind of chasing what is the latest thing that works and sometimes if we are in sync it may not be good after all Ananias and Sapphira were very in sync and it did not bode well for believe the best thing you can do for your marriage is read your Bible get up and pursue the Lord that's the best thing have you ever tuned an instrument it does little good I have guitars several guitars if I tuned one guitar off another guitar it would get me in tune with the other guitar the problem is

I did this the other week came and tuned my guitar with a master tuner not a tuning fork but a tuning pedal it was grossly out of tune that's what happens like if we just tune horizontally we may be in tune with one another but we may not be in tune with the Lord what we need is the Lord's great tuning fork or something like that you know we need to be tuned to him right so what's the single person to do the married person's interests are divided but the single person's are less complicated sometimes we act like the single person is at a disadvantage but in the things that really matter they're at an advantage according to the apostle Paul they're able to give themselves in a way that married people are not so if you're single the apostle Paul gets right to it when he says down there in verse 35 he says what should you be doing you should be securing your undivided devotion to the Lord you should devote yourself to the

Lord and seek to do the things that are pleasing to him this undivided devotion what's it what does it mean it just means it's not divided in the same way that worldly things are you know so many worldly things that began to occupy my mind after I got married well those things are not there for you and so you should be securing undivided devotion to the Lord and this is what I would say most of you who are single will get married and singleness will only be a season during your teenage years or college years or whatever until you get married I would encourage you spend your single years devoted to the Lord don't spend them chasing a girl spend them pining away for the Lord chasing the Lord loving him serving him it's so often we get in these seasons like this and you know we're eight we want to be ten ten we want to be thirteen thirteen want to be sixteen eighteen to twenty one to your old gray and you don't want to be any older anymore but the idea is we always want to be the next season well the best way to spend your life is to go all at it in the season you're in live for the

Lord where you are remain as you are I remember when I was in seminary kind of based on this passage we had this teacher named George Swab wonderful guy that was an OT professor and so he had ties that would match the day that he was preaching on so when he preached on creation is a wonderful beautiful time when he preached on the fall it black and ugly just a wonderful extroverted eccentric kind of guy and I remember him preaching on this passage and he said all these young men like myself I'm called to be married I'm stuck in this prison cell I've got to get out of and he said if you're not married you're not called to it yet so don't spend your life feeling called to something you're not called to right now order it appropriately spend your life spend your singleness because success in any season is living full out for Christ in the season it is John Piper says chapters in life are divided by various things age strength singleness marriage employment children at home children in college grandchildren retirement that's about it no chapter has all the joys finite life is a series of trade offs finding

God's will and living for the glory of Christ to the full in every chapter is what makes it a success not whether it reads like someone else's chapter but whether it has in it what only another chapter will bring that is wisdom stick it on your mirror now marriage may be a season that has ended for you maybe you lost a spouse it is hard to mourn as though you are not mourning maybe you are divorced I don't know whether singleness singleness will be a season for you or a season that will remain for the rest of your life however long it's length use it to serve the Lord it's wonderful the way the apostle Paul has everyone in view not like we suddenly get to ride the bench or something like that not that no one has that intent we use it serve the Lord I was hanging out with a couple rowdy men of the church this week a couple older men a couple younger men one of which was [41:14] Lewis Brown a man I've come to deeply respect when I met Lewis I knew he had several daughters and so I was asking him about marriage he said I've been married and divorced twice and I've found the common denominator you might still be pointing fingers not Lewis since then Lewis has become a dear brother I don't know where he is I don't want to look at him he just spends his life devoted to the Lord he has his challenges but he reads and studies he's an avid reader I love talking to him studies God's word he's faithful to gather quick to volunteer to help out eager to invest in younger men I want to be like him if you're single let other pursuits distract you from pleasing the Lord with all your heart you know we kind of come to the conclusion of this chapter incredible chapter it's also kind of the conclusion of this section of the letter

Paul's been talking about how do we deal with the fact that we're made male and female and all these things and looking back over there's one banner that's meant to hang over it all like all the way down from that you know that the situation that was going on in chapter five all the way down all the way to here one banner you're not your own anymore your body's not yours it belongs to the Lord your single wonderful your body belongs to the Lord embrace the purity that makes no sense to this culture if you're married your body belongs to your spouse please the Lord by giving it away that's what he's doing why because you're called to glorify the Lord with your body that's what hangs over this chapter whether we're single or divorced or married to an unbeliever or something like that there are different ways in which we are to live and yet all of us are to live to please the Lord to honor him to glorify him we were bought with a price therefore glorify

God with your body remain as you are but glorify God let us pray father in heaven we thank you for these verses we pray that anything that's helpful would be driven into our hearts anything that's unhelpful would be forgotten lord what we want most of all is to live like those who were bought to serve you in the strength you supply to pour out our lives and give away our hearts our affections to you to follow you help us God we pray in Christ's name amen you've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens Tennessee for more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at TrinityGrace Athens dot com to to to to to!

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