

Series: Together Toward Maturity

Inductive Bible Study Guide: 1 Corinthians 7:25-40



Step 1: Observation – What does the passage say?

Read **1 Corinthians 7:25-40** carefully, more than once. Paul gives practical, Spirit-led counsel about marriage, singleness, and how to live with undivided devotion to God.

Observation Prompts:

- Who is Paul addressing in this section?
 - What reasons does he give for his advice?
 - What key themes or repeated phrases do you notice?
 - What attitude does Paul encourage toward marriage and singleness?
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Read the passage and note what you see:

Who is Paul addressing at the beginning of this section (v.25)?

What principle does Paul give in verses 26–28 about marriage during “the present distress”?

What reasons does Paul give for remaining as you are (vv.29–31)?

What is Paul’s concern for those who marry versus those who remain single? (vv.32–35)

What instruction does Paul give about widows in verses 39–40?

Step 2: Interpretation – What does the passage mean?

Paul’s goal is not to burden believers but to help them live with **freedom, contentment, and undivided devotion to the Lord**. He offers wisdom for different situations — marriage, singleness, engagement, and widowhood — encouraging believers to focus on faithfulness rather than status.

Questions to Explore:

What might “the present distress” in verse 26 refer to, and how does it shape Paul’s advice?

Why does Paul say it’s good to remain as you are (vv.26–27)? How does this connect to his earlier teaching in verses 17–24?

What does Paul mean that “the time is short” and “the form of this world is passing away”? (vv.29–31)

What is Paul’s main concern for those who marry? (vv.32–35) What does he mean by “undivided devotion to the Lord”?

What does Paul teach about freedom in marriage decisions (vv.36–38)? How does he balance freedom and faithfulness?

Why does Paul say a widow is “free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord”? (v.39) What principle does this give for believers today?

Word Study Suggestions:

- **Present distress (v.26):** refers to hardship, persecution, or instability facing believers in Corinth.
 - **Anxieties (v.32):** Greek *merimnaō* — to be divided or pulled in different directions.
 - **Undivided devotion (v.35):** wholehearted focus on serving Christ without distraction.
 - **Only in the Lord (v.39):** marriage to a fellow believer, aligned with God's will and purpose.
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Step 3: Application – How should I respond?

This passage invites us to live with an **eternal mindset** — valuing devotion to Christ above all else. Whether married, single, or widowed, we are called to serve God with focus, faithfulness, and contentment.

Personal Reflection:

Am I living with an eternal mindset, or am I overly focused on temporary things?

How do I view my current situation — as a limitation or as a place to serve God fully?

If married, how can I pursue undivided devotion to Christ while faithfully loving my spouse?

If single, how can I use this season to deepen my devotion and service to the Lord?

What does it mean for me to make decisions “in the Lord” — seeking His will above my own desires?

Summary Truths:

- Singleness and marriage are both gifts from God, to be lived in faithfulness.
- The world is temporary — our focus should be on eternal priorities.
- Marriage brings blessings and responsibilities, while singleness offers freedom for service.
- God’s will is that His people live in peace, purity, and purpose, not pressure or anxiety.
- Whatever our status, we are called to live with undivided devotion to the Lord.

Optional Memory Verse:

“The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord.”
— 1 Corinthians 7:32 (ESV)

Prayer Prompt:

“Lord, thank You that You call me to serve You right where I am. Whether single or married, help me live with an undivided heart. Teach me to seek Your kingdom first and to live for what truly lasts.”

For Further Study:

- Matthew 6:33 — Seek first the kingdom of God
- Philippians 4:11–13 — Learning contentment in every circumstance
- Luke 10:38–42 — Mary’s example of devotion over distraction