

Theme: The key to true spirituality is not either marriage or being single, but rather determining God's call and gifts for us, and following biblical mandates for our lives.

## I. Introduction – Our Gnostic Problem

### A. The Church's Struggle With Gnosticism

1. Gnosticism – matter is evil
2. Therefore body is inherently evil
3. Led to one of two outcomes
  - a. Libertinism – do what you want – does not matter!
  - b. Asceticism – punish the evil body!

### B. Gnostic tendencies in Corinth

1. Chapter 5-6 – incest and fornication?
2. Chapter 8-10 – eat meat sacrificed to idols?
3. Chapter 15 – Bodily resurrection?
4. Chapter 7 – marriage, sex, single?

## II. Gnostic View of True Spirituality in Relationships

### A. Libertinism – “Everything is permissible”

1. 1 Cor 6:12-13 – All sex is ok – body does not matter
2. 1 Cor 5:1-2 – Proud! – Gnostic libertinism at work

### B. Asceticism – deny bodily pleasure

1. 1 Corinthians 7:1 – compare NASB; ESV
2. Marriage/sex are physical & unspiritual; If married – no sex
3. 1 Cor 7:3-5 – apparently avoiding sex in marriage
4. Some may have even been divorcing!

## III. Biblical View of True Spirituality in Relationships

### A. Recognizes that some are called & gifted for single service

1. Some serve God as singles (1 Cor 7:7)
  - a) Most do this for a time!
  - b) Some are called to never marry
  - c) They are not deficient because of this
2. Singleness has certain advantages (32-35)
  - a) Free to focus on God alone
  - b) Free to do anything God desires
  - c) Free from fear in persecution
3. Singleness has certain restrictions
  - a) There can be NO sex outside of marriage (2,9)
  - b) A temptation to selfishness

### B. Recognizes that marriage and sex are gifts of God

1. Marriage is God's gift (Gen 2:24; Mt 19:5; Eph 5:31)

- a) High view of marriage – Eph 5; Heb 13:4
  - b) Only heretics forbid – 1 Tim 4:1-3
2. Marriage is for most people (Gen 1:28)
- a) Creation mandate – fill the earth
  - b) Only possible in marriage – all else is sin!!
3. Advantages of marriage
- a) Marriage provides companionship (Gen 2:18)
  - b) Marriage can provide children
  - c) Marriage allows for sexual fulfillment (vs 2-5)
4. Restrictions of marriage
- a) Marriage brings divided interests (1 Cor 7:32-35)
  - b) My body no longer belongs to me (1 Cor 7:2-5)
  - c) Precludes other close intimate relationships in future

#### IV. True Spirituality: How Can I Serve God Best?

##### A. Recognize that this is a matter of gifting

- 1. 1 Cor 7:7 – Different *χαρισμα*
  - a) Same word as other gifts!
  - b) Singleness and marriage are gifts!
- 2. Neither is superior to the other

- a) Both are equally “spiritual”
- b) Great saints in both groups
  - i. Single – Jesus, Paul, Augustine
  - ii. Married – Moses, Peter, Luther

##### B. Determining my gift in this area

- 1. Can I serve God better married or single?
  - a) What sort of work do I do?
  - b) Do relationships enhance or hurt my walk?
- 2. Am I willing to meet the requirements for singleness?
  - a) Willing to follow biblical guidelines regarding sex?
  - b) Willing to struggle against selfishness?
  - c) Willing to use my freedom to serve God & others?
- 3. Am I willing to meet Scriptural requirements for marriage?
  - a) Willing to give up my independence for another?
  - b) Willing to give rights over my body to another?
  - c) Willing to stay married - divorce is not an option!

#### V. Communion

##### Married or Single - Is One More Spiritual?

1 Corinthians 7:1-9  
 November 6, 2005  
 Response: Communion  
 Benediction: Hebrews 13:20-21

<sup>1</sup> It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife.<sup>2</sup> And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?

1 Corinthians 5:1-2

1 Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry.  
1 Corinthians 7:1 (NIV)

1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.  
1 Corinthians 7:1 (NASB)

1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman."  
1 Corinthians 7:1 (ESV)

32 I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs-- how he can please the Lord. 33 But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world-- how he can please his wife-- 34 and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world-- how she can please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.  
1 Corinthians 7:32-35

29 What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; 30 those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; 31 those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.  
1 Corinthians 7:29-31

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.  
Genesis 2:24

5 and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.'  
Matthew 19:5

31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." Ephesians 5:31

<sup>4</sup> Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.  
Hebrews 13:4

1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.  
1 Timothy 4:1-3

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."  
Genesis 1:28

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."  
Genesis 2:18

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