

Wait for the Lord to Move You
1 Corinthians 7:17-28

Good Morning.

Many people have a skewed view when it comes to discerning whether or not the Lord is pleased with something in our lives.

We have been programmed by the world, the flesh, and the modern church movement to gauge success using carnal methods rather than seeking the Lord's heart.

We hear people say, look how the Lord is blessing that church because of the numerical growth, or other comments like that.

Don't get me wrong, numerical growth can be a sign that God is blessing a church; but that is certainly not always the case.

Some of the largest churches in the world, as well as the fastest moving religions, neither know nor worship Jesus Christ, as God in the flesh.

If something seems like a failure to the world; but the Lord uses those things for His plans and purposes; *are they successful?*

Think of what the Lord said in ***Hosea 1:2, When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: "Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry, NKJV***

If we belong to the Lord because we were bought with a costly price; *doesn't it stand to reason that we should follow His plan?*

And if the Lord clearly calls us to do something; are we a failure if the results don't seem successful when judged by the world's standards?

Serve the Lord obediently and leave the results up to Him!!!

Please open your Bibles to *1 Corinthians 7* as we continue

Last time, Paul went from teaching our bodies are to be used for the Glory of God, to speaking on marriage; he **replied** to some specific questions; not giving a complete **theology** of marriage.

We learned, “The gift of celibacy is a wonderful gift; but not everybody has the gift of celibacy; nor is it a **commandment**.”

Paul said we should not view our body as only belonging to us; first it belongs to the Lord, and then it belongs to our spouse.

Each spouse in the marriage to be mindful of the needs of the other; not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually also.

Someone has said, “*Marriage is relatively easy to begin, but it is almost guaranteed to be a challenge to stay with for the long term if **neglected**.*”

It takes surrendering to the Holy Spirit to accomplish a healthy marriage or any other healthy relationship.

Today, we will hear Paul teach on the importance of remaining in the place we were in, when we get saved, until we are 100% convinced the Lord is moving us!

And always remember, as His followers, we are to obey the Lord, but leave the results up to Him!

I. As you were called.

Read *1 Corinthians 7:17-20*

This is a continuation from last time where we learned to remain in the marital status they were in when saved; but there are two extremes when it comes to answering a calling from the Lord.

One extreme says, *“Well if the Lord is calling me to do something, He will come and pry me off of my couch and make me move in His direction.”*

This person is not proactive at all when it comes to following the plans God has for them; neither is this person looking for opportunities, or open doors, because they are usually apathetic.

The other extreme says, *“I know the plans the Lord has, so I am going to help God make them come true at any and all costs”*.

This is the person who sees the Holy Ghost floating in their Cheerios, and because they are impatient waiting on the Lord they can be in danger of getting ahead of God in their life.

This is similar to Sarah giving Abraham her maidservant in order to have a child and help God fulfill His promise to them

Paul’s point here is that No matter if you are married, single, divorced, widowed, or remarried; the Lord can work in your life.

Similar to last week, to answer whether they should leave their current situation to serve the Lord; takes a surrender to the Spirit

G. Campbell Morgan said, “*Marriage may be a distraction. Sorrow may become a distraction.*

Joy may become a distraction, or commerce, or the world. Then we are to turn our back upon all these things.”

You hear people make statements like, when this happens in my life, then I will begin to serve the Lord; but the Lord has you in the right place; right now, to serve Him.

The main idea here is to serve Jesus full on right where you are.

God in His sovereignty has saved you at the perfect moment in time, in the current situation you were in, to be used for His **glory**, for your good and for the good of others.

Many times, we believe moving or changing something within our lives will fix an issue we are experiencing;

But the main issue is, even if we change other things, we will always take ourselves with us when we move.

Notice *vs. 18*, Paul asks, “***Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised.***”

Paul is obviously not only speaking of a physical circumcision, because they could not be undone.

gotquestions.org said, “Circumcision was the physical sign of the covenant God made with Abraham.

Wiersbe said, “Paul made it clear that the Christian is not subject in any way to the Old Testament legal system, nor can it do him any good spiritually.

“Jesus Christ alone is sufficient for our every spiritual need, for all of God’s fullness is in Him.” (Warren Wiersbe)

Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. NKJV

Neither circumcision nor un-circumcision matters when it comes to serving Christ; neither does a person’s marital status matter; we should simply serve the Lord, as we were called!

II. Vocational change.

Read ***1 Corinthians 7:21-24***

We have studied Paul’s views on slavery before and we know slavery during the Roman Empire was vastly different than any type of slavery we understand today.

Roman slavery had nothing to do with race or people groups.

Some slaves could be released by the time they were thirty years old; and some could even gain citizenship.

Some slaves did hard labor in agriculture, manufacturing, or domestic duties, as we might imagine; however, many others served as “doctors, teachers, writers, accountants, etc.”

Luke, who was a Gentile and wrote the *Gospel of Luke* as well as the *Book of Acts*; was a former slave as well as a physician.

Employees in the ancient world were similar to being a slave, except with the ability to quit and move to other employment.

Here, Paul said, “*Let each one remain with God in that calling in which he was called*”...

John Trapp said, “*That is, supposing that he was in an honest course of life;*

... for we read in the Acts that the conjurers burnt their books, and unlawful courses of life must not be adhered to after men have once given up their names to Christ.” (Trapp)

If a slave became a Christian, they should not kick and scream trying to change their situation just because they were saved.

This doesn’t mean a person cannot desire other things in life; but, this is speaking of contentment and serving the Lord where you are at the time of salvation until the Lord **moves** you.

You are to live out Christ in the vocation where God has called you in Christ; until He very clearly opens another opportunity

Stay in that situation because your Christian faith sanctifies your vocational calling, until you are completely sure the Lord wants to move you.

Most of us have heard the idiom, “*The grass is always greener on the other side*”, it basically means...

“When someone is not satisfied with their own lot in life and always assumes that there are better things in other places.”

Someone has said, “*If the grass looks greener, it is probably Astro turf*”.

And of course, I like the movie that came out in 1978 titled, “*The Grass Is Always Greener Over the Septic Tank*”.

The principle of remaining in the calling God has called you to applies to marriage, circumcision, or being a slave or free.

We can seek God’s best and be used by Him right where we are.

When the Lord calls us to move and then we **hesitate**, we are out of the will of God. When He tells us to wait, and if we move **ahead** anyway; we are also out of the will of God.

Being at a job you don’t like is sometimes God’s will, but there are times where the Lord will lead you to move on as well.

The key to knowing when to move is all about the Lord’s timing; don’t get ahead of God, but don’t lag behind Him either.

I read an article that spoke about leaving a specific job and I would like to share some of the points that I got from the article

Discerning the Lord's will about leaving a certain job:

1. If the job where you currently work is **sinful** or completely carnal in nature, the Lord probably wants you to leave.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. NKJV

Now, there may be a rare occasion where the Lord keeps you at a sinful job for a time; but, most times as a follower of Christ, the world will pull us down rather than us pulling them up.

A good test to ascertain if the Lord wants you in a sinful place of employment is to ask yourself if you would be okay taking the Lord to work with you;

Because your body is the temple of the Lord who is in you and you take Him everywhere you go.

2. If the job where you currently work is not challenging or **utilizing** your gifts and talents, the Lord may move you.

Although the Lord came to give you abundant life, His goal is not your happiness; it is your transformation.

Sometimes our unhappiness at a job is due to our struggling with someone in authority over us.

There are not many perfect jobs out there where we would have 100% what we want; we are all accountable to someone as well.

Struggles are sometimes the Lord's will for us to grow and mature.

But if the reason for our unhappiness is because our gifts and talents are not being utilized, the Lord may be moving you.

3. A better job offer can be the Lord's way of **moving** you.

God expects His followers to be responsible and most of us need to work.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

2 Thessalonians 3:11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. NKJV

Sometimes the Lord moves us is a new opportunity; but sometimes, new opportunities can be a carrot on a string from the evil one to distract us as well.

The Lord is the One who opens and closes doors of opportunity.

Revelation 3:7 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens" NKJV

If we really sense the Lord is moving us, wait until He closes the door on our current situation and opens the doors for a new one!

Don't try to open or close the door yourself!

III. Being single has its advantages.

Read *1 Corinthians 7:25-28*

Paul refers to unmarried people as virgins, even though they may or may not technically be virgins.

Paul says, "*I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment*"

I love how the Bible uses the wisdom and personalities of its different writers; even though we understand the Bible was God-breathed by the Holy Spirit...

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2 Timothy 3:17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. NKJV

However, the Lord used 40 different authors over a period of 1,500 years to write His Word, the Bible.

These authors lived in different places and at different times, with different cultures.

Paul is not any less inspired here, but because he deals with different life-situations, he was not giving a commandment; yet he specifically was offering wisdom for those in Corinth.

Notice Paul says, “*It is good for a man to remain as he is*”

Paul is speaking to the never-married person and recommends they **remain** unmarried in order to be available to all the Lord has for them to do as a single person.

Notice the answer; *because of the present distress*.

There was some kind of local problem in the city of Corinth for Christians, and because of this trial, Paul says remaining single has its advantages.

What is the advantage of remaining single?

- In a time of persecution, a wife and family needs a lot of attention that a single person could give to the ministry.

We may say, “*Torture me, and I will never renounce Jesus.*” *But what if we were threatened with the torture of our wife or our children?*

Here in America, we might not have to worry about that sort of persecution as a Christian, but these sorts of threats were ever too real for Christians in the first century.

- Single people have more flexibility to go to difficult places with the Gospel.

If you sense God's call to take the Gospel to a place where you may suffer persecution or severe hardship, you may want to remain single.

- Single people have more freedom to devote themselves fully to God and His service. Time to serve.
- Single people have more freedom to give sacrificially to the Lord's work.

Raising a family is expensive!

So what is the advantage of remaining married after salvation?

At a time of great distress, your family needs you more than ever, so *“Don't abandon your wife and children now!”*

Adam Clarke said, *“These persecutions and distresses are at the door, and life itself will soon be run out.*

*Even then Nero was **plotting** those grievous persecutions with which he not only afflicted, but devastated the Church of Christ.”*

However, marriage provides **companionship**, helps with loneliness and can provide physical satisfaction as well.

Marriage is the God-given context to raise godly children.

Marriage and children also provide opportunities for witness to those without Christ.

Notice, *“**Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed.**”*

“Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife”

Again, the Lord can use us right where we are, and we should not be so quick to change our station in life.

Then notice, ***“If you do marry, you have not sinned”***

Paul was not forbidding marriage; he was teaching those who will get married, will have trouble in the flesh.

Paul felt that the greater advantages were found in being single, but he knows that each one has his own gift from God.

While marriage is God’s plan for most people, He has gifted some to remain single so that they can serve Him without the encumbrances that necessarily go along with marriage.

If you can remain single and be devoted to the Lord in purity, stay single. Paul never said being married or single is more spiritual than the other.

Re-read ***1 Corinthians 7:28***

Wiersbe said about ***vs. 28***, ***“This did not mean that nobody should get married; but those who do marry must be ready to accept the trials that will accompany it.”*** (Wiersbe)

IV. Practical Application.

Paul was teaching on the importance of remaining and serving the Lord where we are until we are 100% convinced the Lord wants moves us.

When the Lord calls us to move and then we **hesitate**, we are out of the will of God. When He tells us to wait, and if we move **ahead** anyway; we are also out of the will of God.

For a conclusion, I want to talk about getting ahead of God in our lives.

Getting ahead of God, or lagging behind Him can really hurt us.

The Lord is not in a hurry and His timing is always perfect.

Lamentations 3:25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him.

Lamentations 3:26 It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. NKJV

God usually has a much slower time frame and a much slower way of working things out in our life than we do.

Getting ahead of God's timing in a particular area of my life, and I find out very quickly that everything falls apart and unravels.

Here are some examples of where you can get yourself into major trouble with the Lord as a result of not properly relying on His perfect timing:

Marry the wrong person because you did not want to wait for God's perfect timing and person; and you could end up finding yourself in a miserable and unfulfilled marriage.

Take a new job because you could not wait for God to provide the job He had for you and you could end losing valuable years in reaching the call that God has set up for your life

And if you try to make one of the Lord's promises for your life to happen before God is ready, then you will cause major delays and disruptions to occur.

God does not work on our set timetable –

I believe the reason God likes to make us wait from time to time is to not only test our faith in Him...

But He makes us wait to properly prepare us for what He is making us wait for, and to develop the fruit of patience and determination in us.

If you can learn how to wait on God's timing on when to move and when not to move, you will end up **successful** in His economy and that is all that really matters.

God's ways and timings are absolutely perfect – and no man and no fallen world is going to tell Him how to sovereignly run things, both with our world and our own individual lives.

Without question, one of the hardest things for many Christians to do with the Lord is to wait on His timing to make certain things happen in their lives.

But the Lord's timing is always perfect; He is never early, and He is never late.

We need to learn to trust the Lord, as we wait on Him as well.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

Proverbs 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. NKJV

If we remain where we are until the Lord moves us; the moves will always be according to His will and will work out for our good and His **glory**.

If we belong to the Lord because we were bought with a costly price; *doesn't it stand to reason that we should follow His plan?*

Serve the Lord obediently and leave the results up to Him!!!