



# Light from the Word

## Serving the Lord as a Single Person

All of us should be serving the Lord as a single person ...

*“But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; ...” (1 Corinthians 7:29)*

The human mind is an amazing part of God's creation. With our mind, we perceive and interpret the world around us. We take in signals sent by our five senses and attempt to make sense of them. We comprehend complex subjects by relating new ideas to what we already know. In order to make sense of the world around us, we categorize and label everything. Although those labels, distinctions, and categories can be helpful, we often can inadvertently place limits that hinder or even prevent true love and service. Jesus was a breaker of those barriers and distinctions like none other. The Apostle Paul expressed life in Christ like this:

*“(We) have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” (Colossians 3:10-11)*

We could add, “Neither married nor single”. The transforming power of Jesus removes old labels earned through sin, breaks down the barriers of racism and prejudice, and eliminates distinctions of wealth, privilege, and class. In Christ Jesus, there is no elevated status due to any human-imposed classifications. Serving the Lord as a single person is neither better nor worse than serving the Lord as a married person. In Christ Jesus, we find no need to create order through labels, but rather we find order through Christ-like love unhindered by human distinctions.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church,

reminding them that just as our physical bodies need every part, so the body of Christ has need of each member. None of us should think any part is any more or any less important than another.

*“... And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.” (1 Corinthians 12:12-21)*

Although in Christ Jesus there are no distinctions in status, value, or worth, there may be differences in role and purpose. Certain roles are best accomplished by a single person, and some responsibilities are best fulfilled by a married person. Some duties are suited to an older believer and others to a younger. But, outside of such roles, perhaps we are not defined by singleness or marriage as much as we tend to think. Perhaps serving the Lord as a single person is really not much different than serving the Lord in any other state.

We are all called to work together to build up the body of Christ in love. (Ephesians 4:16) By each contributing according to his God-given abilities, we can all grow to spiritual maturity. Similar to any living thing, a primary purpose of maturity is to bear fruit and reproduce. Reproduction is not a solitary endeavor, among living things or in the spirit. In the physical world, it nearly always requires two elements, and in the spirit, growth cannot take place without an intimate relationship with the Lord. Physical marriage is compared to Christ and the church, so that the church is called the Bride of Christ. If we are *all* called to bear fruit through a spiritual union with Him, why would the physical distinctions of gender, race, marital status, and class be important to the believer?

So, how can one serve the Lord as a single person? (*Regardless of your actual marital status*)

First, acknowledge the good things that

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## ...as a Single Person

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Christ has done in you. By acknowledging every good thing that is in us, we are able to overcome the self-imposed limits that are often masked as humility. If Christ has provided us with gifts and talents, they are for us to use willingly in His service – giving Him the credit – but never pretending that we have nothing to offer. If we are unable to acknowledge that the Lord has equipped us to serve Him, does it not demean Him? It truly is a false humility and keeps us from being fruitful.

*“That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.”*  
(Philemon 1:6)

Second, resolve to allow Jesus to break down any barriers in your mind that hinder you in effective service. Don't label yourself. Resolve to be content with life whether you are Greek or Jewish, rich or poor, single or married, or whatever other category may limit you. With such barriers removed, you will find many opportunities to engage your God-given talents in a way that provides our Master with a great return on His investment. Allowing those talents to flourish will bring great joy as you recognize the work of

the Holy Spirit accomplishing things that you could never do of yourself.

Third, die to self. Placing your own interests first will hinder your ability to serve the Lord. This is further complicated by a lack of experience when one is young in faith. Placing your own opinions above others who are wiser than you will lead to error. Having the humility to subject your understanding to those who are older and more experienced will save much trouble. Indeed, submitting to others who are sound in faith is good practice for submitting your thinking to the Lord. If you are willing to crucify your flesh and permit the will of the Lord to prevail in your life, then you will be fruitful. Even Jesus acknowledged that He could do nothing of Himself and subjected His will to that of the Father.

*“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”*  
(John 5:30)

Perhaps we can all be content with what we have and who we are, and thus more effectively serve the Lord. Perhaps the emphasis on marital status is something that hinders us and we should all notice it less. Perhaps the time is

short, and ...

*“... it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.”*  
(1 Corinthians 7:29-31)

## **Ecc. 3:11-14**

*He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.*

*I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.*

*And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.*

*I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.*