



## Discussion Guide

February 18, 2018

**Contrast:** *Distinctive Singleness*

**I Corinthians 7:17-35**

### Introduction:

*Read I Corinthians 7:17-35 together. As an unmarried man, the Apostle Paul is advocating for the single life, and he offers various reasons for that. Group leaders, be sensitive to the fact that you may have all different life situations represented in your group. Young singles who have never married, those single-again because of the death of a spouse or divorce. And of course, there may be married couples in your group. Whatever the mix, try to avoid a quick consensus as to the best state of marriage or singleness in life, and listen carefully to each other as group members may feel free and safe to share their thoughts and feelings about this teaching.*

### Discussion Questions

1. We had several single people who allowed Bart to share their insights on living as single Christians in a marriage and family dominated church culture. If you are single, what would you add to those insights? What are the downsides and upsides of being single from your standpoint? Married people, do you understand what they are saying?
2. Paul speaks of “remaining in the condition in which one was called to Christ.” How would you describe your life condition when you first became a Christian? Someone who came to Christ as a child will of course have a different story compared to an adult convert. Maybe a better way to say it is, when did your faith in Christ truly come alive and become your own? What was your life situation at that point? Did your situation stay about the same, or did you feel compelled to change it somehow because of your spiritual awakening?



3. Paul almost describes the state of marriage as being “brakes” on a life that is totally committed to Christ. Not bringing it to a stop by any means but slowing it down a bit with distractions. In contrast, he feels that single Christians are far more able to zoom into the lead in Christian work. As both single and married people, how do you react to that assessment? Is it fair to blame the responsibilities of marriage on a slow-down in the pursuit of serving Christ? Should more be expected of single Christ-followers?
4. In verses 29-31, Paul speaks of the urgency of sharing the good news of Christ with others and dedicating ourselves to total commitment to His cause. Not to be morbid, but how often do you stop and consider the tenuous nature of life – that it could come to an end at any moment? If you do consider that, how does it affect the way you go about your day and live your life in commitment to Christ?

### **Moving Forward:**

**Married Couples** – *explore ways you can open your home and life to singles who enjoy interaction with families, and who need encouragement. How can you make sure that married/family life never becomes a reason for inaction in Christian concerns?*

**Single People** – *your status gives you advantages in life and in the kingdom of God. There are freedoms you can leverage in God’s direction that married people are not as free to do. Are there ways you could be more active in living out your faith because of your “single” advantage, that you haven’t yet considered?*