

A Series of Devotions About Marriage Based on 1 Corinthians Chapter 7

FREE FROM CONCERN

1 Corinthians 7:32-35 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

In previous verses St. Paul has indicated that those who are married have issues that unmarried do not have. He wrote, “those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that.” (1 Corinthians 7:28) and in today’s verses he again writes, “I want you to be free from anxieties. . .to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 7:32,35)

Indeed, marriage and family can cause worry and anxiety. A husband stresses out how best to care and provide for his wife and children and his wife for her husband and family. We know that we can become burdened by caring for loved ones. Paul’s antidote for this is to “. . .live in this world as citizens of heaven. . .not engrossed in this world’s affairs.” (1 Corinthians 7:31) He says that one who is unmarried is less distracted in how they use their time in serving and pleasing the Lord.

Nowhere does St. Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 or in any other of his writings say that being married is displeasing to God. In fact, he states that remaining celibate requires a special gift from God. What these words in verses 32-35 do say is that we keep in mind the path in life that Mary and Martha took and Jesus’ comments He addressed to them, “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:41-42 – NIV)

You do not have to enter a monastery, the mission field, spend your whole day at church or remain a virgin in order to serve the Lord. What matters is that you not

become distracted from God's word and the sacraments by what is happening in your life. Luther's advice is appropriate, "keep them (God's word and the sacraments) holy and gladly hear and learn God's word."

Prayer: Lord, give me the heart of Mary to gladly hear and learn Your word and guard me so I am not like Martha who became distracted by the busyness of this world. In Jesus name. Amen.

Forth in the peace of Christ we go;
Christ to the world with joy we bring;
Christ in our minds, Christ on our lips,
Christ in our hearts, the world's true king.

King of our hearts, Christ makes us kings;
Kingship with Him His servants gain;
With Christ the Servant-Lord of all,
Christ's world we serve to share Christ's reign.

Priests of the world, Christ sends us forth
This world of time to consecrate,
This world of sin by grace to heal,
Christ's world in Christ to recreate.

Christ's are our lips, His Word we speak;
Prophets are we whose deeds proclaim
Christ's truth in love that we may be
Christ in the world, to spread Christ's name.
(LSB 920)