"BEWARE OF DISTRACTIONS"

I Corinthians 7:29-35

7-2-2023

INTRODUCTION: *V. 32, 35b

***Look out for anything that would distract you from living fully for Christ!**

I. Don't let any human RELATIONSHIP distract you from the Lord (v. 29, 32-34)

II. Don't let any human EMOTION distract you from the Lord (v. 30a)

III. Don't let any earthly POSSESSION distract you from the Lord (v. 30b)

IV. Don't let any earthly OCCUPATION or ENJOYMENT distract you from the Lord (v. 31)



CONCLUSION: *V. 35

"BEWARE OF DISTRACTIONS"

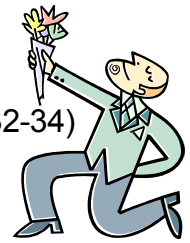
I Corinthians 7:29-35

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***Look out for anything that would distract you from living fully for Christ!**



I. Don't let any human <u>RELATIONSHIP</u> distract you from the Lord (v. 29, 32-34)

II. Don't let any human <u>EMOTION</u> distract you from the Lord (v. 30a)



III. Don't let any earthly <u>POSSESSION</u> distract you from the Lord (v. 30b)



IV. Don't let any earthly <u>OCCUPATION</u> or <u>ENJOYMENT</u> distract you from the Lord (v. 31)



CONCLUSION: *V. 35

"BEWARE OF DISTRACTIONS"

I Corinthians 7:29-35

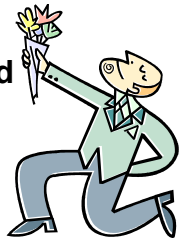
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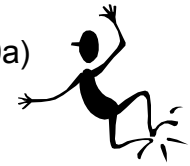


***Look out for anything that would distract you from living fully for Christ!**

I. **Don't let any human _____ distract you from the Lord** (v. 29, 32-34)



II. **Don't let any human _____distract you from the Lord** (v. 30a)



III. **Don't let any earthly _____ distract you from the Lord** (v. 30b)



IV. **Don't let any earthly _____ or _____ distract you from the Lord** (v. 31)



CONCLUSION: *V. 35

"BEWARE OF DISTRACTIONS"

I Corinthians 7:29-35

7-2-2023

INTRODUCTION: *V. 32, 35b

Slight distractions (diversions of our attention) can bring serious consequences.

ILLUS: Driving a car and something catches your eye so you end up smacking into the truck in front of you.

The key point (theme) of verses 29-35 is found in verse 32: ***"But I would have you without carefulness."*** And in verse 35: ***". . . that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction."***

Satan's plot to hinder your service for Christ may not come as an outright attack on your bible beliefs; may not come as some seducing harlot. . . but simply and innocently as something good, right, and proper that will come into your life to divert your focus and tie up your time and interest (it may be a girl, job, course of study...).

Distractions come in different colors, shapes, and sizes, because what turns your head may not turn mine.

Distracted People:

--Martha (Lk. 10:40) (by lesser priorities)

--Demas (love for the world)

--John Mark (the going got tough)

***Look out for anything that would distract you from living fully for Christ!**

I. Don't let any human RELATIONSHIP distract you from the Lord (v. 29, 32-34)

v. 29

"The time is short" - The season of time during which the Corinthians would be experiencing a *"present distress* [calamity]" has been limited or cut brief.

Therefore, in light of the special difficult circumstances these people faced (and would face), it was advantageous for them to not to anything which would cripple or hinder their service for Christ.

Note the context in verses 25-28 where Paul advocates singleness as preferable if such a *"gift"* (v. 7) is possessed by a man or woman.

Some rethinking on verses 27-28:

The word *"loosed"* may be specifically referring to one who was never married (not a divorced individual).

1) The context is describing the unmarried (*"virgins"* - v. 25) (not divorcees particularly)

2) The word *"loosed"* - the perfect voice employed here in a non-technical sense to emphasize a state of singleness (i.e. free from the bonds of marriage)

3) The teaching of Jesus - the one who remarries commits *"adultery"*

4) Paul's one exception: (death of a spouse allows for remarriage - v. 39)

Marriage will bring (to one degree or another) ***"trouble*** [lit. tribulation] ***in the flesh"*** (v. 28) ("Trouble literally means 'pressed together, or under pressure.' Marriage presses two people together in the closest possible ways. The two become one, but they are still two personalities, two distinct people with their own likes and dislikes, their own characteristics, emotions, temperaments, and wills. Each partner has some degree of anger, selfishness, dishonesty, pride, forgetfulness, and thoughtlessness. That is true even of the best marriages. When one partner is an unbeliever, or is immature, self-centered, temperamental, or domineering, every conflict is magnified. Marriage involves conflicts, demands, hardships, sacrifices, and adjustments that singleness does not. Marriage is ordained of God, good, holy, and fulfilling; but it does not solve all problems. It brings more." John MacArthur, p. 181).

Marriage is not necessarily a guaranteed cure-all from: loneliness or lust (lack of sexual control).

In verse 29, Paul is certainly not saying that husbands should:

--leave their wives (this would violate vv. 10-11)
--ignore their wives
--neglect their marital obligations (v. 3-5)
--not love their wives (I Cor. 13)
--not provide for their wives (Eph. 5)
--not meet the emotional, physical needs of their wives (Eph. 5)

What he is saying is that your wife should not hinder your devotion and service for Jesus Christ.

Many wives and husbands will give their spouse an ultimatum: "It's me or your Jesus...who do you want?"

Reply: "I love you and I love the Lord, but my first love is for the Lord. It is He who has given me a love for you; I must be faithful to Him to be all I can be for you!"

Don't let marriage become an excuse for why you are not living for God like you should.

Don't marry someone who will distract you from serving the Lord.

V. 32

This is Paul's point: Don't worry about anything in this world! Don't be overly concerned or "careful" (anxious) about the things of this world (I Jn. 2:15-17).

Getting back to his key thought in this context, Paul now restates some of the benefits of being single.

A contented single man who does not have a wife to worry about can concern himself exclusively with the Lord's work. He does not have a wife to please, and he can live with a single goal of pleasing Christ.

"It is easier for a single person to be single-minded in the things of the Lord" (MacArthur, p. 184).

When you are not absorbed in the things that belong to you, you can be free to be absorbed in the things which belong to Christ!

What things belong to Christ? His people (His Church); His Word (His Gospel).

The people who should be serving the Lord the most (i.e. singles) are often the people who serve the Lord the least.

Of necessity a married man (one who is "worth his salt") must concern himself with

some things in the world, particularly putting a roof over his family's head, food in their mouths, and clothes on their backs.

V. 33

A husband must seek to please his wife.

V. 34

"Holy" - lit. set apart or sanctified totally unto the Lord.

A virgin's body and spirit are dedicated and devoted only to God. Set apart for His work.

Like the husband, the married woman should not live so as to merely please herself, but to please her husband.

II. Don't let any human EMOTION distract you from the Lord (v. 30a)

Emotions are more controllable than we may think or have been led to believe.

EX: God commands us to love (therefore, we can control this emotion).

[NOTE: Love (*agape*) is not a mere emotion. It includes emotion, but is primarily an act of the will, a choice to meet a need whether you feel like it or not!]

"They that weep" - Those who experience pain and sorrow (grief) should not allow their hurt emotions to take over their life.

They should weep, but still press on and move forward for Christ as though they were not in deep sorrow.

When we experience:

earthly loss (ex: death of loved ones)
earthly failures (ex: loss of job)
earthly misfortunes (ex: loss of property or possessions)
earthly ailments (ex: loss of full health)

--We need a faith that will move us ever onward and upward for our Lord.

"They that rejoice" - Good times are as much of a danger to our being distracted as bad times. When life's waters are calm, when the sun is shining, and the soothing breezes of life blow blessings our way, beware that we do not grow complacent in our walk with Christ.

To rejoice in good circumstances and to grow gleefully confident and self-sufficient in the situation we find ourselves in is to open ourselves up to thinking we *"stand"* when we had better *"take heed lest [we] fall*"!

What God is calling for is an even-keeled, steady, consistent, balanced control of our emotions so that we keep plodding for Jesus through times of deep grief and times of ecstatic joy (both negative and positive emotions must be controlled).

III. Don't let any earthly POSSESSION distract you from the Lord (v. 30b)

"They that buy" - Those who have the dollars to buy this world's goods should not cling to those goods as if they were in permanent ownership of them.

We who have "goods" (furniture, appliances, cars, houses, clothing, recreational items, etc.) should not live as though these things were our permanent treasure or security.

You ought to live as thou you *"possessed not"* = as though you were not the permanent owner. We are only stewards (managers) put in trust with the possessions of this world.

We live with possessions, but must not live for possessions.

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Do you possess possessions, or do the possessions possess you?

How much time do you spend:

--thinking about your possessions?
--polishing and maintaining your possessions?

How much thought do you put into:

--planning how to acquire more possessions?
--protecting your possessions?

How tightly do you grip the cloth, plastic, metals, rocks, animal skins, dirt and wood of this world? (most everything tangible is made of these materials).

Are you tight-fisted or do you give (of your possessions)? How generous are you? Do you take and take? Or do you ever relinquish--not just your junk and clutter--but your unused, seldom used, or often used treasures and "pride & joys"?

Finances ($) can be a big distractions! (Keep I Timothy 6 in mind! Note v. 6-10, 17-18).

Lay up *"treasures in Heaven*"

IV. Don't let any earthly OCCUPATION or ENJOYMENT distract you from the Lord (v. 31)

When you "use" the things of this world, do you seek to fully use them to the utmost, to the point that they absorb all your time, thought, and energy?

We ought to use the resources God gave this world, but we must never become obsessed (engrossed) with material things so that we abuse them.

*How much are your distracted by the STUFF of this life?

EX: Being in India and seeing poor Christians who --because of their poverty-- were not as distracted in serving Christ as we are in America.

--Drive your car; don't worship your car
--Wear your clothes; don't worship your clothes
--Comb your hair; don't worship your hair (I Pet. 3)
--Mow your lawn; don't worship your lawn
--Clean your house; don't worship your house

This *kosmos* in its present form (***"fashion"***) is going to pass away!

The Lord (through Peter) addressed the transiency of this world in II Peter 3:10-13).

Our affection must be set on things above (Col. 3:1-2 - *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth."*)

INSERT POEM: "What Disturbs You More?"

CONCLUSION: *V. 35

V. 35

"This I speak for your own profit" - for your own benefit; for your own good.

"Not that I may cast a snare upon you" - My goal, says Paul, is not to cast a rope around your necks or put binding restrains or restrictions on you like the Roman Catholic church does to its nuns and priests.

"But for that which is <u>comely</u>" - Paul gives this encouragement to singles so that they will be <u>well-fitted</u>, <u>well-ordered</u>, <u>properly suited</u>, unhindered servants of Christ.

Someone asked a talented concern violinist how she became so good at playing the violin. Her reply: "Planned neglect. I planned to neglect anything and everything that was not related to my goal."

"Attend" - to be ready for service at the Lord's altar (cp. 9:13).

"Attend" - this word was used of a servant who had no other job than to attend to his king.

"Without distraction" - *aperispastos* - lit. without something drawn around a person (like a noose; so as to keep him immobile, tied up, <u>hindered</u>).

Actually, anything we do in life (outside of attending the Lord) is a distraction. All of us have distractions. The question is: Do they have you?? Do distractions control your time, thought, and energy so that your service for Christ is limited?

Nothing is wrong with relationships, emotions, possessions, occupations, or enjoyments ("We are to hold marriage in the highest honor [Heb. 13:4], to *"rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep"* [Rom. 12:15], and not despise earthly possessions. Our *"heavenly Father knows that [we] need all these things"* [Mt. 6:32]. But we should not overvalue those things, knowing that they are <u>passing away.</u>" John MacARthur, p. 183).

These things can be wrong, however, when they dominate our minds and behavior and distract from Christ and His work.

Perhaps something in this world is distracting you from. . .

--Reading, meditating, and memorizing God's Word.

--Spending quality and quantity time in God's presence

--Assembling on Wednesday nights or Prayer Time Sunday mornings

--Witnessing to the lost; utilizing your gift for the benefit of God's people

I feel concerned when we excuse our distraction, lest God remove that excuse. EX: "I can't come to church, I have to work" (He may remove the job from you.) EX: "I don't have time to spend with God -- the kids keep me too busy." (God forbid, He may remove your excuse!)

A lot of things can <u>distract</u> the best of Christians. Have you become preoccupied with your:

<u>beauty</u>

body
clothes
hobbies
sports
recreation
travel
food
comforts
cars
career
family & friends
savings & investments
college education

SONGS: "It is Well"; "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus."