



## **Singleness for the Sake of the Kingdom**

### **Matthew 19:10-12**

- 1. It is good to be single (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:1).**
- 2. It is a gift to be single (1 Cor. 7:2-9).**
- 3. It is beneficial to be single (1 Cor. 7:25-31).**
- 4. It is freeing to be single (1 Cor. 7:32-35).**

In the past few weeks, we have found ourselves in Matthew 19, looking at what Jesus says about marriage and divorce. Today, we will continue in Matthew 19 with verses 10-12, where Jesus deals with the issue of singleness. This is an issue that we, as a church need to hear. For the most part, our church is geared towards families. When people ask me how many people are attending Rock Valley Bible Church, I typically answer in terms of families. I usually say something like, "we have about 30 families attending church." I don't think that is a bad approach. After all, God has established the family unit as a crucial building block in society as well as in the church. It is appropriate for us to focus upon families. It is appropriate to think in terms of families.

The Scripture places a great emphasis upon the role of husbands and wives, and upon the role of fathers, mothers, and children. This has been true since the institution of the law. The fifth commandment is given to children. They are told to honor their parents. In the seventh commandment, we are told not to commit adultery, which deals with husbands and wives. The tenth commandment also touches upon the husband-wife relationship. The famous passage in Deuteronomy 6, "Hear O Israel! ..." instructions parents to so talk of the law that they would speak it to their children at all times (rising, walking, retiring at night). This is speaking about parenting. I could continue on and on with God's focus upon families. But, there is very little in the Bible that explicitly speaks about the role of single people. In fact, these three verses in Matthew (verses 10-12) are the only record we have of Jesus speaking about those who aren't married. Fortunately, in 1 Corinthians 7, Paul speaks a great deal about singleness, so we will spend much of our time there this morning, as well.

Though there is relatively little biblical teaching on singleness, the issue is an important issue for us. We may not have many single people in our congregation. But, there are some. And we who are married, need to have a proper perspective on those who aren't married. Too often I have seen those who are married look down upon those who are single, as if they haven't yet arrived in life. I've seen it. Perhaps you have seen it. A single man or single woman is introduced to a married person. When it comes out that this individual isn't married, the initial reaction is **pity**, as if they were a second class citizen. Sometimes they are asked, "Why aren't you married?" as if to say, "What's wrong with you? What's your **problem**?" There are plenty who try to play matchmaker, attempting to **pressure** them to get married. In all of this, there is this subtle undercurrent of communication that says, "It's not good that you don't have a husband or a wife. Hopefully you can come and join us married folk in marital bliss. It is then that you will be complete. It's then that you can enjoy true happiness." And this is not right. Marriage isn't the end-all of existence. Jesus himself, the most perfect man ever to live, was single. The apostle Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament, was single. He certainly lived a full and happy life. Furthermore, Jesus said that in the age to come, there will be no marriage. We will be like angels (Matt. 22:30). Marriage isn't our ultimate state at all.

Marriage itself doesn't make people happy, fulfilled, or satisfied. There are plenty of married people who aren't happy. There are plenty of single people who are living with great joy! There is only one way to live a joyful, God-honoring life. It's not found in earthly relationships. It's found in a heavenly relationship. When you repent of your sin and come to know and love Jesus Christ, you find true happiness. So, let's do away with the notion that those who aren't married are living half-hearted lives.

Those of us who are married have much to learn in terms of our attitudes and actions toward those who are without a spouse. My message today on singleness is appropriate for all of us who are married. Furthermore, many of us who are married have children who aren't yet married. There will probably be a period in their life when they will be unmarried adults. I'm talking about from the time they reach marrying age to the time they get married. In that day, your children need to have a proper perspective of their singleness. They need to know about its benefits and its dangers. As a parent, you need to understand what singleness is all about, that you might help them prepare for that day. The children among us can also learn much about what awaits them. I trust that you are convinced that this message is crucial for you to hear, regardless of your marital state.

So let's look at what Jesus has to say about singleness. It is worthy to note that Jesus didn't bring up this issue on His own. His disciples brought it up when they heard Jesus teach on what marriage ought to be. His comments need to be understood in this context which starts in verse 3. In verse 3, we find the Pharisees testing Jesus by asking Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?" (verse 3). Jesus responded with His view of marriage: one man with one woman forming a strong union for life.

And He answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created the from the beginning made the male and female, and said, 'for this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'? Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." (Matt. 19:3-6).

This answer didn't fully satisfy the Pharisees, who wanted to hear about divorce, not marriage. So, they pressed the issue, saying, ...

"Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?" (Matt. 19:7).

Jesus responds by saying that divorce comes from sin, and that there is only one permitted reason for you to divorce your spouse...

He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." (Matt. 19:3-9)

Moses permitted divorce, but divorce isn't the best plan. God's intention for marriage is for no divorce. But, in the case of sexual immorality, Jesus allows for divorce. The times of Jesus were much like our times. Divorce was common in Jesus' day. One of the most prominent teachers in the generation before Jesus was a man named Hillel, who taught that you could divorce your wife for any reason at all. And Jesus was a voice in the wilderness saying that marriages ought not to be broken. Marriages ought to be kept together.

The disciples put forth what they thought about Jesus' teaching. The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry" (Matt. 19:10). In other words, they were saying that the commitment of

marriage that Jesus put forth was sky high. They knew that difficulties would certainly come in a marriage. They knew how many had dealt with those difficulties by simply divorcing their wives. But, if divorce wasn't an option, Jesus' disciples thought that it would be best to be single. Rather than facing the prospect of a marriage in which there was no way out, they thought that it was better not to get married in the first place. Perhaps they thought of the verse in Proverbs that says, "It is better to live in a corner of a roof, than in a house shared with a contentious woman" (Prov. 21:9). Imagine tenting out on the roof of your house. It would certainly be miserable. But, if married to a contentious woman, this would be better! Perhaps Jesus' disciples thought of another verse, "A constant dripping on a day of steady rain and a contentious woman are alike" (Prov. 27:15). A constant dripping is annoying and can get to be quite unbearable. But so also is a contentious women. These disciples were thinking of the difficulties that such a marriage would form. If you couldn't divorce, then certainly (they thought) it would be "better not to marry" (verse 10).

Jesus responds to the concern of His disciple with His perspective on singleness. He said, "Not all men can]accept this statement, but [only] those to whom it has been given. At the end of verse 12, Jesus says the same thing. He said, "He who is able to accept this, let him accept it." [\[1\]](#)

Jesus responded in this way because there is some truth in what the disciples had said. Singleness is a good thing, but as we will soon see, it is not for everyone. The opening pages of Genesis declare that marriage is a good thing. Therefore, marriage should not be totally avoided. So, rather than telling the disciples that they were right or wrong, Jesus gives His perspective to straighten them out. This comes in verse 12,

"For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it."

Jesus gives three categories of eunuchs:

1. Those who were born this way. These were those who were born with a birth defect. They were born without any male procreative organs. As such, they would have no desires for marriage.

2. Those who were made eunuchs by men. In the ancient world, this was a common practice. A king would often have a multitude of wives. In order to care for such a group of women, men were castrated, so that there would be no sexual temptation among those in charge of taking care of a harem.

3. Those who made themselves eunuchs. Jesus is talking about those who willingly kept themselves from marriage. Jesus isn't talking about those who are castrated (for Jesus already spoke about these already). Jesus is talking about those who knew that they had a right to be married, but for the sake of another goal, they forsook marriage. What's the goal? Jesus clearly states it there in verse 12, "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."

The eunuchs of the first two categories had no choice in the matter. But, these eunuchs in the third category chose to be eunuchs. Rather than having their energies focused upon a spouse and children, these people focused their energies upon the kingdom of God. They were willing and able to do whatever God calls them to do. They were willing and able to go wherever God calls them to go. There was nothing encumbering them. There was nothing that limits what they do. There was no wife holding them down. There was no husband holding them down. Their possessions were few so they could relocate to wherever ministry is needed. The apostle Paul chose this path for himself. Many others have chosen this path. Jesus here is holding this up as a good thing. And I do as well.

## **1. It is good to be single (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:1).**

Certainly, there are some things that you will never experience if you are never married. You'll never experience the joy of the one-flesh relationship with another person. In that relationship, thoughts and dreams are shared, and burdens and sorrows are shared. You'll never experience the joy of seeing one of your own children grow up and give you honor as they mature into godly people. But, God has promised to make up for what you will lack. Not all can accept it, but those who can find it good to be single. If you look over to verse 29, you might get a sense of what awaits these people. Jesus said, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life."

Those who leave all of the comforts of this life for the sake of the kingdom, will receive more than they ever left. This is certainly true of those who forsake

marriage to serve Christ as well. God will make up any loss that they might feel that they incur. Listen to Isaiah 56:3b-5,

[Let not] the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree." For thus says the LORD, "To the eunuchs who keep My sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, And a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off."

If you're single, you may never have children. You may never enjoy the joys of marriage. But, God will "give you an everlasting name which will not be cut off" (verse 5). And I say the reward that God gives is worth far more than any earthly pleasures that you may enjoy for a season in your few married years. So let's be done with the notion that single people aren't living until they get married.

Not all people can remain single. Look at the end of verse 12, "He who is able to accept this, let him accept it." In other words, it is a gift to be single. We shouldn't push marriage on everybody who isn't married. The apostle Paul gives us a great perspective on this whole matter in 1 Corinthians, chapter 7. (It is where we will spend the rest of our morning.) In this chapter, Paul responds to some of the questions that those in Corinth had for Paul concerning marriage, divorce, and singleness. We've looked at this passage with respect to marriage and divorce. We'll look at it this morning with the lens of singleness.

We find Paul saying the exact same thing that Jesus did. He begins by saying that it is good to be single (1 Cor. 7:1). Look at verse 1, "Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman." I remember hearing a man speak about the time when a young man came to his house to take his daughter out on a date. As this young man was welcomed in the door, his daughter was upstairs getting ready. As they waited, the father took time with this young man to read this verse with him. It's good advice. Parents, you ought to be telling this to your children. You ought to be preparing them and teaching them of the benefits of sexual purity. Single people, you ought to embrace this as well.

In these words, Paul is certainly alluding to the sexual relationship among men and women. He said that it is a good thing for men and women to stay apart from each other and not come together. It is a good thing to be single. We need to get this into our heads. Just because God said that it wasn't good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18), and just because God said, "He who finds a wife finds a good

thing" (Prov. 18:22) doesn't mean that those who aren't married are in a bad situation. Paul said clearly that it is a good thing to be single. Singleness is not a curse. Singleness is not a state of unhappiness. It is good to be single. Paul then follows up this thought with exactly what Jesus said.

## **2. It is a gift to be single (1 Cor. 7:2-7).**

Beginning in verse 2, Paul continues,

But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control. But this I say by way of concession, not of command. Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that. (1 Cor. 7:2-7)

Paul says that in light of the tremendous pressure that the society in Corinth was putting on people, it is permissible to get married. In some cases, it was necessary. I've said it before, and I'll say it again. The cure for sexual immorality is sexual activity, as long as the activity is within the bounds of marriage. That's what verses 2-5 are all about. Then, in verse 6, Paul writes, "But this I say by way of concession, not of command." In other words, Paul doesn't command people to be married. He simply recognizes that marriage helps to prevent immorality, and therefore he does not oppose it. Verse 7 is where I want us to spend a few moments. He says, "I wish that all men were even as I myself am." Paul was not married. He had a right to be married, but chose not to. He longed that others would follow his example. But in no way would Paul force this upon people, as some were doing in Ephesus. Paul told Timothy of those who were teaching "doctrines of demons, ... forbidding marriage" (1 Tim. 4:1-3). Paul didn't force singleness. Paul didn't make any absolutes about this. He never commanded marriage or singleness. But, he did put forth his preference. He preferred for others to be single. And yet, he knew that not everyone could handle it.

In the last half of verse 7, Paul writes, "However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that." This is our point. It is the point of

Jesus. It is the point of Paul, "It is a gift to be single (1 Cor. 7:2-7)." There are those who can live in sexual purity without being married. This is called a gift. It is something that God gives to people. What is this gift? It is the ability to be satisfied in being single. It is the ability to be sexually pure in being single.

You might be single, but desire to be married. There's nothing wrong with that desire. It is not sin. It is not something to feel bad about. But, you need to trust that God in His sovereignty will bring the one into your life who can be your husband or wife. Until that time, you need to be content. Until that time, you need to be pure, because Paul places a high priority on purity. This comes in verses 8-9.

In verse 8, Paul essentially repeats his teaching, "I say to the unmarried and to the widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I." (i.e. it is good to be single). In verse 9, Paul continues, "But if they do not have self-control, let them marry" (i.e. it is a gift to be single -- not all can do it). But then, Paul gives us the most important statement. He says, "It is better to marry than to burn" (verse 9). Notice that Paul isn't saying that it is better to be married. Neither does Paul say that it is better to be single. Rather, he directs his attention upon purity. "Purity is the best thing." If you can remain pure in the midst of an evil and adulterous society, then it is good to be single. If you can't remain pure in the society, then, it is good to be married. But, the premium in these decisions is purity. It is difficult in our society to remain pure. We live in an age of pictures. We live in the age of video, internet, and magazines. The advertisers will freely appeal to our sexual appetites using these images.

Parents, you need to be talking with your single children in your home. Teach them what purity means. Teach them how to fight against sin. It is difficult in our society to remain sexually pure, but back in Paul's day, Corinth was worse. I heard one man say that our society *emphasizes* sexuality, but the society in Corinth *worshipped* sexuality. There was a temple in Corinth that was populated with 1,000 prostitutes that would come into Corinth each night to ply their trade in the name of worship. Corinth was a city of commercialized love. In Corinth, a "Corinthian girl" was a prostitute. The Beach Boys sang, "I wish they all could be California girls." And some men of Corinth certainly sang the song in their sexual lusts, "I wish they all could be Corinthian girls."

But, Paul told those in Corinth to "flee immorality" (1 Cor. 6:18). And if marriage was the way to achieve purity, then marriage was good. And if singleness was the way to achieve purity, then singleness was good. But, "purity was the best thing."

Let's move on to our next point, which is found in verse 25. From verses 10-24, Paul gives instructions to the married. As our focus this morning is upon those who aren't married, we need to skip down to verse 25.

### **3. It is beneficial to be single (1 Cor. 7:25-31).**

Let's pick it up beginning in verse 25,

Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is. (1 Cor. 7:25-26)

I have picked this word, "beneficial" carefully. Paul anticipated the distress that was coming upon those in Corinth (as verse 26 mentions). He knew of the antagonism that the gospel would cause. He knew of the difficulties that this would cause for those who were married. When he first planted the church in Corinth, Paul was fearful for his life and considered leaving town because of the danger. But, he received a vision from the Lord in the night saying, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:9-10). The danger was real. And not everybody in Corinth had the divine seal of immunity upon them like Paul did. Rather, his converts lived in danger. In verse 26, Paul called it, "the present distress." These Corinthians were going to go and confront the culture head on. They were going to face difficulties and trials.

When Paul planted other churches, he told the young converts, "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). The same would be true of those in Corinth. It was somewhere around 15 years after Paul penned this letter that Nero burned Rome and accused the Christians of doing it. That act set off a world-wide persecution of Christians that would last for 250 years. It was a tremendously difficult time for Christians. Philip Schaff wrote, "History reports no mightier, longer and deadlier conflict than this war of extermination waged by heathen Rome against defenseless Christianity. It was a most unequal struggle, a struggle of the sword and of the cross; carnal power all on one side, moral power all on the other. It was a struggle of life and death" <sup>[2]</sup>. Paul's point was that it is of benefit to you to endure suffering as a single person, rather than as a married one.

In verse 27, Paul continues to describe what he is getting at.

Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you should marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you. (1 Cor. 7:27)

Paul puts clearly that it isn't a sin to get married. But, it is beneficial not to be married. Because those who are married will have trouble in this life, especially when they are parted from their wives and children. The tribulation will be hard to bear. When Richard Wurmbrand, founder of Voice of the Martyrs, was first imprisoned, he didn't know what happened to his wife, nor his son. I'm sure as he faced torture in a Romanian prison for 8 ½ years, his heart was concerned for them. His imprisonment was intensified because of this.

John Bunyan described the difficulty so well. He preached the gospel in England in, and he was imprisoned for doing so. Bunyan could easily endure the suffering in prison. But what really tore him up was his family that was outside, especially his daughter who was blind.

"...the parting with my wife and poor children hath oft been to me in this place as the pulling the flesh from my bones, and that not only because I am somewhat too fond of those great mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the many hardships, miseries and wants that my poor family was like to meet with, should I be taken from them, especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had besides; O the thoughts of the hardship I thought my blind one might go under, would break my heart to pieces. ... Poor child, thought I, what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world? Thou must be beaten, must beg, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow upon thee. But yet recalling myself, thought I, I must venture you all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you. O, I saw in this condition I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his wife and children; yet thought I, I must do it, I must do it." [\[3\]](#).

Though our society doesn't imprison us for sharing the gospel, and though society doesn't persecute us, the sense is still there. With a family, we are less likely to take risks for the kingdom. Such is the reality when distress and trouble come upon those who stand for the gospel in a society like the early church endured in Corinth. This is what Paul alludes to in verse 29 and following...

But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away. (1 Cor. 7:29-31)

When you have a husband or a wife, and when you have possessions, it glues you down to this world. It is beneficial to you to be freed of those things. That takes place when you are single. Let's look at one last point. ...

#### **4. It is freeing to be single (1 Cor. 7:32-35).**

But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. (1 Cor 7:32-34)

Marriage brings about certain commitments. You have a husband (or a wife) who you need to serve. Often, there are children who will demand your attention as well. With a family comes more mouths to feed and more bodies to clothe and more cars to get them around. It demands more attention upon your job to provide for them. It gives more worries, as you think about their future. Let's face it, the one who is not married has fewer commitments in this life. It is freeing to be single. I remember when I was single, I had the opportunity to minister to college students on the campus of U. C. L. A. Several evenings a week, I devoted myself to these college students. There were times when I remember driving home many times at 1:30 in the morning, after spending time down on the campus with guys I was discipling. It was amazing how quickly these students matured in their faith. In many ways, it was due to their freedom in pursuing God. In fact, I have thought about college ministry and compared it to the ministry we are facing today (i.e. family ministry). I believe that four years of intensive, college ministry is equivalent (in many ways) to a generation of ministry in the local church. This is true for most part, because students are single and free.

But the sad fact is that many single folks use their singleness for their own pleasures. They get off into their own things and their own activities. And few there are who devote themselves wholly to Lord while they are single. Oh, there are exceptions. And I praise the Lord for those exceptions. I think in my mind right now of single people who I know are using their time well. Every time the doors of the church are opened, they are there, learning and fellowshiping with God's people. Every opportunity that they have to serve, they serve. You name it, and they are doing it. Youth group, administration, choir, worship, counseling. I see these people taking tremendous opportunity to be undistracted in their devotion to the Lord. For them, verse 35 is true:

And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord. (1 Cor 7:35)

Far from being restrained, these people are free. Far from feeling bound because they aren't married, these people are liberated to serve! They are enabled to give "undistracted devotion to the Lord."

Our children have a Bible video at home that they like to watch. It has Bible verses put to tunes, and children sing and act out the verses. One of these verses is Hebrews 12:1 which says, "Let us lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." In this video, the kids are all involved in a race, and one of the kids has snorkeling gear on. She has a mask, a snorkel, flippers, and a life jacket. There is no way that this little girl will win. And as the race begins, she is attempting to run against the other children with flippers on! But, as she sheds the encumbrances, she picks up speed and ends up coming from behind to win the race. Hebrews 12:1 is speaking about sin and encumbrances. I'm not saying that a wife is sin. But a wife can be an encumbrance, in that she distracts from undivided attention to the Lord. That is Paul's point.

John Wesley is a great illustration of this verse. For the most part, he kept himself from women. In so doing, he was enabled to ride over 250,000 miles on horseback to preach the gospel all over England and also America. He should never have been married. But he finally did when he was 48 years old. And it was a big mistake. Before they were married, he and his wife agreed that he would keep his same traveling and preaching schedule. It worked for a time. But after a bit, she was fed up with the unsettled lifestyle. She was jealous, and she publicly

embarrassed him on several occasions. And after four years of marriage, they separated. John Wesley had charted his course and should have remained single in undistracted devotion to the Lord, but his marriage was a distraction.

Children can be distracting as well. Bringing up children is a 24/7 discipleship task. For many of you, this is a hindrance. But, realize that our children are also your ministry. But for those of you without children, or with children out of the house, you have a freedom that others don't have. This is the same principle as it is with being single. Yvonne has been planning the schedule for Keepers at Home. For those of you who don't know, Keepers at Home is our program we run for the young girls. We involve our mothers in teaching their girls what it means to be a godly mother. As she has planned these things, I've pressed her to involve the older women in our congregation (who don't have children distracting them). If this is you, you have massive years of experience to pass on to the young ladies of Rock Valley Bible Church. With no children at home anymore, there is a freedom that you have that others don't have. What a wonderful thing it would be for you to commit to help in training the young girls in this congregation. This would be a great ministry, which you are freed up to do.

The same is true for those of you who are mature in faith, having walked with the Lord for 20, 30, or 40 years. Those of us who are young in the faith need to learn from you. So, I encourage you to be available and use your free time to be devoted to the Lord in ministering to others. The principle is the same. The fewer distractions you have in this life will enable you to give less distracted devotion to the Lord, as you are freed up to minister to others.

Perhaps some of you should put up a sign in your house: "Childless for the sake of the kingdom." Or, "Empty nesters for the sake of the kingdom." Or, "Retired for the sake of the kingdom." Perhaps some of you will choose to be "Eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom."

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For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] The big exegetical question in verse 11 is this: to which statement does Jesus refer? Is Jesus referring to His strong statement about marriage? Or, is Jesus referring to the statement that the disciples just made? Certainly, the statement of Jesus was hard, especially when one considers the culture in which Jesus said

these things. But, the disciples' statement was equally hard since they proposed that it is best not to marry. So, to which statement does Jesus refer? I believe that the clue comes in verse 12, when Jesus begins to talk about those who aren't married. It makes no sense for Jesus to begin speaking about eunuchs, if He was referring to His own statement on marriage. But, it makes considerable sense if Jesus was referring to the declaration of the disciples, who said, "If marriage is like this, it is better not to marry."

[2] History of the Christian Church, Vol. 2, p. 33

[3] Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, paragraphs 327, 328