**GOD’S WORD FOR SINGLES (#4)**

***Distractions Decide Destinies***

The not-yet married, or the once married who are now single, live in the most technologically advanced generation in history. Do you know what that means? It means we also live in the most distracted era of all time. The exploding inventions that have given us the internet, the smart phone, the digital myriad of entertainment choices, and all the other gizmos, gadgets, thingamajigs and doohickies add up to one giant flashing billboard that distracts us from what is valuable in life. Beware!

Let me make a case from the Bible for you to look at your present situation of being unburdened by family as that of a present-moment blessing, not an everlasting curse. Considering your present singleness allow me to prove my point that: *Distractions Decide Destinies*.

In the Lord’s Parable of the Sower He warned us about those who become the thorny soil. *“Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity”* (Lk. 8:14). That trifecta of “*cares, riches, pleasures*” are Christ’s way of saying distractions that pull us away from God. Each one has the power to blind us from what is truly valuable (read Col. 3:1-4) and lure us into what is but bling and trinkets. He later took that same thought and worded it this way: “*Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses*” (Lk. 12:15). Or more to His point: “*You cannot serve two masters… You cannot serve God and mammon*” (Matt. 6:24). That is Jesus shouting to you, “*Distractions decide destinies*!”

I pray you are a God-fearing Christian. That means this: *“we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal”* (2 Cor. 4:18). Paul is saying disciples are not easily distracted by the lure of this world. We see things from a different viewpoint. We look at everything, even marriage and family, as possible distractions from our heavenly goal. While marriage can be a powerful help as we become “*heirs together of the grace of life*” (1 Pet. 3:7), it can also be a powerful hindrance as well. Paul said so. Read it yourself:

“*32 But I want you to be without care. He who is* ***unmarried*** *cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. 33 But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please his wife. 34 There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The* ***unmarried*** *woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. 35 And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord* ***without distraction****”* (1 Cor. 7:32-35).

I’ll be the first to shout from the mountaintop that marriage is filled with incredible joy. I love being married. It is the greatest physical and emotionally satisfying blessing I’ve had in this life. It is truly the great illustration Paul made it out to be in describing Christ and His bride, the church (Eph. 5:22-33). I could wish this blessing of happiness upon all of you. Some of you who are widows, or widowers, know what I’m saying, for you have experienced it too.

But I have seen many, many marriages, even very good ones, become the very distraction that leads souls away from God. Paul was dead serious when he said “*he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please his wife… But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please her husband.”*  That did not mean they were living sinful lives by caring about their mates. It simply meant they had family responsibilities that kept them from doing other valuable things for the Lord and His kingdom.

However, it also served as a warning that it could lead to a downfall to their soul. During that “*present distress*” there could be danger in putting your marriage and family ahead of confession of Christ. If the authorities made you choose between Christ and your mate, or your child, what would you do? Some yielded, just as Jesus predicted when He said, “*a man’s enemies will be those of his own household, for he who loves father…mother…son…daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me*” (Matt. 10:34-37). Singleness had its advantages then, and it has its advantages now.

Brother or sister, think of what you are free to do right now that those who have family obligations don’t have time to do. If you want a list, read Romans 12:6-16. Ministry. Teaching. Exhorting. Giving. Leading. Mercy. Affection. Diligence. Fervency. Service. Rejoicing. Praying. Benevolence. Hospitality. Rejoicing (again). Weeping. Association. And the beat goes on.

If that list doesn’t get your motor running, read Matthew 25:31-46. “*Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ 40 And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’*

Being single, whether never married or no longer married, brings both opportunities and distractions. It brings distractions when you focus all your desires and attention upon overcoming your loneliness, causing you to forget your greater calling to serve the Lord. It brings opportunities by allowing you freedom to give service to the Lord that those who are married cannot fully give due to their family obligations. Peter had a wife (I Cor. 9:4), Paul didn’t (I Cor. 7:7). As Paul himself said in that very context: “*But each one has his own gift from God.*” Did you hear bachelor Paul? Singleness is a “***gift from God***!” My brother, my sister, you are not a second-class citizen, but a desperately needed servant. Distractions & Opportunities Decide Destinies.

What is your destiny? - All my love. Rick