

Good Order and Undivided Devotion
1 Corinthians 7:25-40

1. Specific relational concerns that may or may not have immediate contextual parallels

a. Dear Abby

- i. Pauline Esther Friedman Phillips ("Abigail Van Buren"/Dear Abby)
 - (1) Born in Sioux City, IA July 4, 1918, of Russian-Jewish immigrant parents, died Minneapolis, MN Jan. 16, 2013
 - (2) Twin sister to Eppie Lederer (who called her "Popo") with whom she shared a wedding anniversary: July 2, 1938 (Eppie's husband, BTW, as the founder of Budget Rent-a-Car.)
 - (3) Debut - January 9, 1956 as "Dear Abby" in the San Francisco Chronicle
 - (4) 3000 to 25,000 letters each week
- ii. Paul is no "Dear Abby" but he is responding to the real questions of real people in real life situations with grace and truth from God Himself through the Holy Spirit.

b. Specific scenarios posed by the Corinthians

- i. "Now concerning"
 - (1) Indicates a new topic from the letter.
- ii. Proposed scenarios
 - (1) People trying to decide whether or not to get married
 - (2) People in relationships who want to make the most of their time for Jesus
 - (3) People confronting the urgency of passion and wanting to do the right thing
 - (4) People (women in particular) who have lost their husbands to death and are considering remarriage

c. Specific contextual concerns proposed by Paul

- i. The "present distress" - social context
- ii. "Worldly troubles" - economic context
- iii. "Personal anxiety"
 - (1) - emotional context
 - (2) "being pulled in two directions"

2. Paul's Primary Concerns (7:35)

1 Corinthians 7:35 (ESV) *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.*

a. Good Order

- i. Honest conduct
 - (1) Behavior not subject to criticism by unbelievers
 - (2) The point here is that Christians have the best cause and the best call for conduct becoming of moral excellence.
 - (3) **The world should never be able to rightly say they conduct**

themselves in a manner morally or ethically superior to Christians who are following the teachings and life of Jesus.

- ii. Where Paul desires to see honest conduct among believers
 - (1) In worship - discipline
 - (a) **1 Corinthians 14:40 (ESV)** But all things should be done decently and in order.
 - (b) **Colossians 2:5 (ESV)** For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.
 - (2) In private - self-control
 - (a) **2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV)** *for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*
 - (3) In theology - sound doctrine
 - (a) **2 Timothy 4:3 (ESV)** *For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions*
 - (4) In public - morality/ethics
 - (5) In relationships - fidelity
 - (6) Toward Christ - discipleship

- iii. **Good order is living the life Christ lived through faith in Him in the power of the Holy Spirit before the world.**

b. Undivided Devotion to the Lord

- i. Undivided/Devotion
 - (1) **Luke 10:38-42 (ESV)** *³⁸ Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."* ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, *"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴² but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."*
 - (a) Martha: Divided
 - (b) Mary: Devoted
 - (2) Definitions
 - (a) Devotion: to sit by with intention, focus
 - (b) Undivided: unencumbered by distractions
- ii. What are the distractions today that keep you from sitting intentionally, attentively at the feet of Jesus?
 - (1) Examples
 - (a) Work?
 - (b) Family?
 - (c) Finances?

- (d) Other relationships?
 (e) Habitual Sins?
- (2) Do you remember what the wise men did when they discovered the King of the Jews laying in a manger?
 (a) They worshiped
 (b) Gave Him gifts
 (c) Departed

3. Why does Paul insist on good order and undivided devotion to the Lord? ([John 14](#))

- a. **Because Jesus Christ is God come in flesh to reveal Himself to you and convince you He loves you.**
- i. *John 14:7-11 (ESV) If you had known me, you would have known the Father also. From now on you do know him and see him. ⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.*
 - ii. *Philippians 2:6-7 (ESV) ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*
- b. **Because Jesus Christ is the only way to true peace with God.**
- i. *John 14:6-7 (ESV) ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”*
 - ii. *Romans 5:1 (ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- c. **Because Jesus Christ takes all your sin and guilt upon Himself and offers His life and his death on the cross in your place**
- i. *1 Peter 2:24 (ESV) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*
 - ii. *2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
 - iii. Implications
 - (1) He offers His life
 - (2) He offers His death
 - (3) Accept His offer
- d. **He has a place prepared for you and us waiting for you to join Him in eternal joy and glory**

- i. **John 14:1-3 (ESV)** ¹ “*Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.* ² *In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?* ³ *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*
- ii. More than a plan to control your life, His plan is to satisfy the deepest longing of your soul to be loved and have a place with Him forever
 - (1) Linda’s perpetual question about heaven and the people she loves indicates the hearts desire to belong to someone forever.
 - (2) Jesus Christ is God’s answer to that longing!