

- Song 136 and Prayer

- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- “Singleness—A Gift”: (10 min.)

7:32, 35, 38

Throughout the years, many Christians have come to appreciate that singleness has unique advantages that may allow them to expand their ministry, widen out in their love for others, and draw closer to Jehovah.

FOR MEDITATION: If you are single, how can you make the most of your circumstances?

How can others in the congregation encourage and support single ones?

[Pictures on page 2]

Witnessing tour across Australia, 1937; Gilead graduate arriving at her assignment in Mexico, 1947

[Pictures on page 2]

Preaching in Brazil; attending the School for Kingdom Evangelizers in Malawi

- (1 Corinthians 7:32) Indeed, I want you to be free from anxiety. The unmarried man is anxious for the things of the Lord, how he may gain the Lord's approval.
- (1 Corinthians 7:35) But I am saying this for your personal advantage, not to restrict you, but to move you to what is appropriate and to constant devotion to the Lord without distraction.
- (1 Corinthians 7:38) So also, whoever marries does well, but whoever does not marry will do better.

1Co 7:32—Single Christians can serve Jehovah free from the anxieties associated with married life (w11 1/15 17-18 ¶3)

(1 Corinthians 7:32) 32 Indeed, I want you to be free from anxiety. The unmarried man is anxious for the things of the Lord, how he may gain the Lord's approval.

*** w11 1/15 pp. 17-18 par. 3 Make the Most of Your Singleness ***

3 A single person often has more time and greater personal freedom than a married person does. (1 Cor. 7:32-35) These are unique advantages that may allow him to expand his ministry, widen out in love for others, and draw closer to Jehovah. A number of Christians, therefore, have come to appreciate the benefits of singleness and have decided to “make room for it,” at least for a time. Others may not have initially planned for singleness, but when their circumstances changed, they prayerfully reflected on their situation and realized that with Jehovah's help they too could be settled in their heart. Thus, they accepted their changed circumstances and made room for singleness.—1 Cor. 7:37, 38.

- (1 Corinthians 7:32-35) Indeed, I want you to be free from anxiety. The unmarried man is anxious for the things of the Lord, how he may gain the Lord's approval. 33 But the married man is anxious for the things of the world, how he may gain the approval of his wife,

34 and he is divided. Further, the unmarried woman, as well as the virgin, is anxious for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in her body and in her spirit. However, the married woman is anxious for the things of the world, how she may gain the approval of her husband. 35 But I am saying this for your personal advantage, not to restrict you, but to move you to what is appropriate and to constant devotion to the Lord without distraction.

- (1 Corinthians 7:37, 38) But if anyone stands settled in his heart and has no necessity, but has authority over his own will and has made the decision in his own heart to remain unmarried, he will do well. 38 So also, whoever marries does well, but whoever does not marry will do better.

1Co 7:33, 34—Married Christians are “anxious for the things of the world” (w08 7/15 27 ¶1)

(1 Corinthians 7:33, 34) 33 But the married man is anxious for the things of the world, how he may gain the approval of his wife, 34 and he is divided. Further, the unmarried woman, as well as the virgin, is anxious for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in her body and in her spirit. However, the married woman is anxious for the things of the world, how she may gain the approval of her husband.

*** w08 7/15 p. 27 par. 1 Highlights From the Letters to the Corinthians ***

7:33, 34—What is meant by “the things of the world” for which a married man or woman is anxious? Paul is referring to the mundane things in life with which married Christians need to be concerned. These include food, clothing, and housing, but exclude the bad

things of this world, which Christians shun.—1 John 2:15-17.

- (1 Corinthians 7:33, 34) But the married man is anxious for the things of the world, how he may gain the approval of his wife, 34 and he is divided. Further, the unmarried woman, as well as the virgin, is anxious for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in her body and in her spirit. However, the married woman is anxious for the things of the world, how she may gain the approval of her husband.
- (1 John 2:15-17) Do not love either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; 16 because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one’s means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world. 17 Furthermore, the world is passing away and so is its desire, but the one who does the will of God remains forever.

1Co 7:37, 38—Christians who remain single in order to pursue spiritual goals “will do better” than married Christians (w96 10/15 12-13 ¶14)

(1 Corinthians 7:37, 38) 37 But if anyone stands settled in his heart and has no necessity, but has authority over his own will and has made the decision in his own heart to remain unmarried, he will do well. 38 So also, whoever marries does well, but whoever does not marry will do better.

*** w96 10/15 pp. 12-13 par. 14 Singleness—A Door to Undistracted Activity ***

14 A single Christian who uses his unmarried state to pursue selfish goals is not doing

“better” than married Christians. He is remaining single, not “on account of the kingdom,” but for personal reasons. (Matthew 19:12) The unmarried man or woman should be “anxious for the things of the Lord,” be anxious to “gain the Lord’s approval,” and be in “constant attendance upon the Lord without distraction.” This means devoting undivided attention to serving Jehovah and Christ Jesus. Only by so doing are unmarried Christian men and women doing “better” than married Christians.

- (Matthew 19:12) For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs on account of the Kingdom of the heavens. Let the one who can make room for it make room for it.”

Digging for Spiritual Gems:

1Co 7:11—Under what circumstances might a Christian consider marital separation? (lvs 251)

(1 Corinthians 7:11) 11 But if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled with her husband; and a husband should not leave his wife.

*** lvs p. 251 Endnotes ***

At times, some Christians have decided to separate from their mate even though no immorality has taken place. (1 Corinthians 7:11) In the following situations, a Christian may consider separation.

- Willful nonsupport: A husband refuses to provide for the family materially, to the point

that the family is left without money or food.—1 Timothy 5:8.

- Severe physical abuse: Physical abuse to the point that a mate feels that his or her health or life is in danger.—Galatians 5:19-21.

- Absolute endangerment of a person’s relationship with Jehovah: A husband or a wife makes it impossible for the mate to serve Jehovah.—Acts 5:29.

► Chapter 11, paragraph 19

➤ *** lvs chap. 11 p. 154 par. 19 After the Wedding Day ***

19 What about today? Although we are no longer under the Law of Moses, Jehovah’s view of adultery has not changed. Just as we would never worship a false god, we should never be unfaithful to our mate. (Psalm 51:1, 4; Colossians 3:5) If we were, we would dishonor both our marriage and our God, Jehovah.—See Endnote 26.

- (1 Corinthians 7:11) But if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled with her husband; and a husband should not leave his wife.
- (1 Timothy 5:8) Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith.
- (Galatians 5:19-21) Now the works of the flesh are plainly seen, and they are sexual immorality, uncleanness, brazen conduct, 20 idolatry, spiritism, hostility, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, dissensions, divisions, sects, 21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and things like these. I am forewarning you about these things, the same way I already warned you, that those who practice

such things will not inherit God's Kingdom.

- (Acts 5:29) In answer Peter and the other apostles said: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men.

➤ (Psalm 51:1) Show me favor, O God, according to your loyal love. Blot out my transgressions according to your great mercy.

➤ (Psalm 51:4) Against you—you above all—I have sinned; What is bad in your eyes I have done. Therefore, you are righteous when you speak, You are right in your judgment.

➤ (Colossians 3:5) Deadened, therefore, your body members that are on the earth as respects sexual immorality, uncleanness, uncontrolled sexual passion, hurtful desire, and greediness, which is idolatry.

➤ See Endnote 26.

➤ *** lvs pp. 250-251 Endnotes ***

➤ 26 DIVORCE AND SEPARATION

➤ Jehovah intended for a husband and a wife to stay together for as long as they live. (Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:15, 16; Matthew 19:3-6; 1 Corinthians 7:39) He allows divorce only when a mate is guilty of adultery. In such a case, Jehovah gives the innocent mate the right to decide whether he or she will get a divorce.—Matthew 19:9.

➤ At times, some Christians have decided to separate from their mate even though no immorality has taken place. (1 Corinthians 7:11) In the following situations, a Christian may consider separation.

- Willful nonsupport: A husband refuses to provide for the family materially, to the point that the family is left without money or food.—1 Timothy 5:8.

- Severe physical abuse: Physical abuse to the point that a mate feels that his or her health or life is in danger.—Galatians 5:19-21.

- Absolute endangerment of a person's relationship with Jehovah: A husband or a wife makes it impossible for the mate to serve Jehovah.—Acts 5:29.

1Co 7:36—Why should Christians marry only when "past the bloom of youth"? (w00 7/15 31 ¶2)

(1 Corinthians 7:36) 36 But if anyone thinks he is behaving improperly by remaining unmarried, and if he is past the bloom of youth, then this is what should take place: Let him do what he wants; he does not sin. Let them marry.

*** w00 7/15 p. 31 You Can Remain Chaste in an Immoral World ***

Young people, then, should not rush into marriage when they first experience an awakening of sexual impulses. Marriage requires a commitment, and living up to such a responsibility calls for maturity. (Genesis 2:24) Better it is to wait until one is "past the bloom of youth"—the period when sexual feelings run strong and can distort one's judgment. (1 Corinthians 7:36) And how unwise and sinful it is for an adult desiring to marry to get involved in immoral relations simply because a prospective marriage partner is not available

- (Genesis 2:24) That is why a man will leave his father and his mother and he will stick to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

- (1 Corinthians 7:36) But if anyone thinks he is behaving improperly by remaining unmarried, and if he is past the bloom of youth, then this is what should take place: Let him do what he wants; he does not sin. Let them marry.

What has this week's Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week's Bible reading?

Bible Reading:) 1Co 8:1-13
(4 min. or less) •

(1 Corinthians 8:1-13) 8 Now concerning food offered to idols: We know we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 If anyone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know it as he should know it. 3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by him.

4 Now concerning the eating of food offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world and that there is no God but one. 5 For even though there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many "gods" and many "lords," 6 there is actually to us one God, the Father, from whom all things

are and we for him; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are and we through him.

7 However, not all have this knowledge. But some, because of their former association with the idol, eat food as something sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8 But food will not bring us nearer to God; we are no worse off if we do not eat, nor better off if we eat. 9 But keep watching that your right to choose does not somehow become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone should see you who have knowledge having a meal in an idol temple, will not the conscience of that one who is weak be emboldened to the point of eating food offered to idols? 11 So by your knowledge the man who is weak is being ruined, your brother for whose sake Christ died. 12 When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you are sinning against Christ. 13 That is why if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat at all, so that I will not make my brother stumble.

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video Scriptures Properly Introduced, and then discuss study 4 of the Teaching brochure.

• **Talk: (5 min. or less) w12 11/15 20—**
Theme: Do Those Who Choose to Remain
Single Receive the Gift of Singleness in a
Mysterious Way? (th study 12)

*** w12 11/15 p. 20 Questions From Readers

Questions From Readers

Do Jesus' words found at Matthew 19:10-12 suggest that those who choose to remain single have received the gift of singleness in a mysterious way?

▪ Consider the setting in which Jesus made his remarks on singleness. When Pharisees came to him and brought up the subject of divorce, Jesus made clear Jehovah's standard for marriage. While the Law allowed a man to write out a certificate of divorce for his wife in case he discovered "something indecent" in her, this was not the case from the beginning. (Deut. 24:1, 2) Then Jesus stated: "Whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, and marries another commits adultery."—Matt. 19:3-9.

On hearing this, the disciples declared: "If such is the situation of a man with his wife, it is not advisable to marry." In reply, Jesus said: "Not all men make room for the saying, but only those who have the gift. For there are eunuchs that were born such from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs that were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs that have made themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of the heavens. Let him that can make room for it make room for it."—Matt. 19:10-12.

Literal eunuchs were those who were born such because of birth defects or who were made that way by accident or mutilation. However, there were also those who freely made themselves eunuchs. Though eligible for marriage, they exercised self-control and remained single "on account of the kingdom of the heavens." Like Jesus, they chose the state of singleness so that they could devote

themselves to Kingdom service. They were neither born with the gift of singleness nor granted such a gift. They actually made room for it. That is, they deliberately acquired the gift.

Building upon what Jesus said, the apostle Paul explained that while all Christians—single or married—can serve God acceptably, single ones who are 'settled in their heart' about their status "do better." How so? Married people must divide their time and energy to please and care for their mate. On the other hand, single Christians can apply themselves to the Lord's service without that obligation. They consider their position a "gift" from God.—1 Cor. 7:7, 32-38.

Thus, the Scriptures tell us that a Christian does not receive the gift of singleness in some mysterious way. Rather, he cultivates it by remaining unmarried so as to advance Kingdom interests without distraction. Many today have resolved in their heart to stay single for this reason, and others do well to be a source of encouragement to them.

- (Matthew 19:10-12) The disciples said to him: "If that is the situation of a man with his wife, it is not advisable to marry." 11 He said to them: "Not all men make room for the saying, but only those who have the gift. 12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs on account of the Kingdom of the heavens. Let the one who can make room for it make room for it."
- (Deuteronomy 24:1, 2) "If a man marries a woman but she does not please him because he found something indecent about her, he must write out a certificate of divorce for her, hand it to her, and dismiss her from his house. 2 After she leaves his house, she may go and become another man's wife."

- (Matthew 19:3-9) And Pharisees came to him intent on testing him, and they asked: "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife on every sort of grounds?" 4 In reply he said: "Have you not read that the one who created them from the beginning made them male and female 5 and said: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh'? 6 So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together, let no man put apart." 7 They said to him: "Why, then, did Moses direct giving a certificate of dismissal and divorcing her?" 8 He said to them: "Out of regard for your hard-heartedness, Moses made the concession to you of divorcing your wives, but that has not been the case from the beginning. 9 I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the grounds of sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery."
- (Matthew 19:10-12) The disciples said to him: "If that is the situation of a man with his wife, it is not advisable to marry." 11 He said to them: "Not all men make room for the saying, but only those who have the gift. 12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs on account of the Kingdom of the heavens. Let the one who can make room for it make room for it."
- (1 Corinthians 7:7) But I wish all men were as I am. Nevertheless, each one has his own gift from God, one in this way, another in that way.
- (1 Corinthians 7:32-38) Indeed, I want you to be free from anxiety. The unmarried man is anxious for the things of the Lord, how he may gain the Lord's approval. 33 But the married man is

anxious for the things of the world, how he may gain the approval of his wife, 34 and he is divided. Further, the unmarried woman, as well as the virgin, is anxious for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in her body and in her spirit. However, the married woman is anxious for the things of the world, how she may gain the approval of her husband. 35 But I am saying this for your personal advantage, not to restrict you, but to move you to what is appropriate and to constant devotion to the Lord without distraction. 36 But if anyone thinks he is behaving improperly by remaining unmarried, and if he is past the bloom of youth, then this is what should take place: Let him do what he wants; he does not sin. Let them marry. 37 But if anyone stands settled in his heart and has no necessity, but has authority over his own will and has made the decision in his own heart to remain unmarried, he will do well. 38 So also, whoever marries does well, but whoever does not marry will do better.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 37

• **Make a Success of Your Singleness: (15 min.)** Play the video. Then ask the following questions: What challenge do many single Christians face? (1Co 7:39) How is Jephthah's daughter a fine example? What does Jehovah give to those walking in integrity? (Ps 84:11) How can members of the congregation encourage single ones? What are some avenues of service available to single Christians?

What challenge do many single Christians face?

- (1Co 7:39) (1 Corinthians 7:39) 39 A wife is bound as long as her husband is alive. But if her husband should fall asleep in death, she is free to be married to whomever she wants, only in the Lord.

How is Jephthah's daughter a fine example?

What does Jehovah give to those walking in integrity?

- (Ps 84:11) (Psalm 84:11) 11 For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield; He gives favor and glory. Jehovah will not hold back anything good From those walking in integrity.

How can members of the congregation encourage single ones?

What are some avenues of service available to single Christians?

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

jy chap. 61

CHAPTER 61

Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy

(Matthew 17:14-20) When they came toward the crowd, a man approached him, knelt down to him, and said: 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, because he is an epileptic and is ill. He falls often into the fire and often into the water. 16 I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him." 17 In reply Jesus said: "O faithless and twisted generation, how long must I continue with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me." 18 Then Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was cured from that hour. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said: "Why could we not expel it?" 20 He said to them: "Because of your little faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a

mustard grain, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

(Mark 9:14-29) When they came to the other disciples, they noticed a large crowd around them, and there were scribes arguing with them. 15 But as soon as all the crowd caught sight of him, they were astonished, and they ran up to him to greet him. 16 So he asked them: "What are you arguing about with them?" 17 And one of the crowd answered him: "Teacher, I brought my son to you because he has a speechless spirit. 18 Wherever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and loses his strength. I asked your disciples to expel it, but they were not able to do so." 19 In response he said to them: "O faithless generation, how long must I continue with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me." 20 So they brought the boy to him, but at the sight of him, the spirit at once threw the child into convulsions. After falling on the ground, he kept rolling about, foaming at the mouth. 21 Then Jesus asked the father: "How long has this been happening to him?" He said: "From childhood on, 22 and often it would throw him into the fire and also into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." 23 Jesus said to him: "That expression, 'If you can!' Why, all things are possible for the one who has faith." 24 Immediately the child's father cried out and said: "I have faith! Help me out where I need faith!" 25 Jesus, now noticing that a crowd was rushing toward them, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "You speechless and deaf spirit, I order you, get out of him and do not enter into him again!" 26 After crying out and going through many convulsions, it came out, and the child seemed to be dead, so that most of the people were saying: "He is dead!" 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up, and he stood up. 28 So after he entered into a house, his disciples asked him privately: "Why could we not expel it?" 29 He said to them: "This kind can come out only by prayer."

(Luke 9:37-43) The following day when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. 38 And look! a man called out from the crowd, saying: "Teacher, I beg you to take a look at my son, because he is my only one. 39 And look! a spirit seizes him, and suddenly he cries out, and it throws him into convulsions with foaming at the mouth, and only with difficulty does it leave him after bruising him. 40 I begged your disciples to expel it, but they could not." 41 In response Jesus said: "O faithless and twisted generation, how long must I continue with you and put up with you? Bring your son over here." 42 But even as he was approaching, the demon hurled him to the ground and violently threw him into a convulsion. However, Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy and gave him back to his father. 43 And they were all astounded at the majestic power of God. While they were all astonished at all the things he was doing, he said to his disciples:

Paragraph 1 on Page 146

(Mark 9:16) So he asked them: "What are you arguing about with them?"

Paragraph 2 on Page 146

(Mark 9:17, 18) And one of the crowd answered him: "Teacher, I brought my son to you because he has a speechless spirit. 18 Wherever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and loses his strength. I asked your disciples to expel it, but they were not able to do so."

Paragraph 3 on Page 146

(Matthew 17:17) In reply Jesus said: "O faithless and twisted generation, how long must I continue with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me."

Paragraph 4 on Page 146

(Mark 9:21, 22) Then Jesus asked the father: "How long has this been happening to him?" He said: "From childhood on, 22 and often it

would throw him into the fire and also into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us.”

Paragraph 1 on Page 147

(Mark 9:23, 24) Jesus said to him: “That expression, ‘If you can!’ Why, all things are possible for the one who has faith.” 24 Immediately the child’s father cried out and said: “I have faith! Help me out where I need faith!”

Paragraph 2 on Page 147

(Mark 9:25, 26) Jesus, now noticing that a crowd was rushing toward them, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: “You speechless and deaf spirit, I order you, get out of him and do not enter into him again!” 26 After crying out and going through many convulsions, it came out, and the child seemed to be dead, so that most of the people were saying: “He is dead!”

(Matthew 17:18) Then Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was cured from that hour.

Paragraph 3 on Page 147

(Mark 9:28, 29) So after he entered into a house, his disciples asked him privately: “Why could we not expel it?” 29 He said to them: “This kind can come out only by prayer.”

Paragraph 4 on Page 147

(Matthew 17:20) He said to them: “Because of your little faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard grain, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

◇ What situation does Jesus find upon returning from the mountain?

◇ Why were the disciples unable to expel the demon from the boy?

◇ How powerful can our faith become?

• Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)

- Song 42 and Prayer