



That Independent Life

February 22nd, 2026

Main Passage: 1 Corinthians 7:8–9, 32–35

LEAN IN

1. When you hear the phrase **“That Independent Life,”** what emotions or thoughts come up for you?
2. Growing up, what messages—spoken or unspoken—did you receive about singleness and marriage from your family, church, or culture?
3. Do you tend to view singleness more as a **gift** or a **gap**? Why do you think that is?

LOOK UP

Read the Passage Together

1 Corinthians 7:8–9, 32–35 (NIV)

“Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion... I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided... I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.”

OBSERVATION – What does the text say?

1. What words or phrases stand out to you in this passage?
2. What does Paul repeatedly say about singleness?
3. What contrast does Paul make between single and married life?

4. What reasons does Paul give for his counsel?
5. **What is Paul *not* saying about marriage or singleness?**

INTERPRETATION – What does the passage mean?

1. Why do you think Paul calls singleness “good”?
2. What does Paul mean by “undivided devotion to the Lord”?
3. How does this passage challenge the idea that marriage is the ultimate goal of life?
4. **What does this text reveal about God’s priorities for human flourishing?**

What do we learn about God?

- What does this passage suggest about God’s view of relationships?
- What does it show about God’s care for our freedom and spiritual growth?

What do we learn about humanity?

- What does this passage reveal about human desires and struggles?
- How does it speak to our tendency to seek identity in relationships?

APPLICATION – *What’s my response?*

1. How are you encouraged, challenged, or convicted by this passage?
2. In what ways do you personally feel “divided” in your attention toward God?
3. How might your current life stage (single, married, dating, divorced, widowed) affect your spiritual focus?
4. **What would “undivided devotion” look like practically in your week?**

Reflective Questions

Use one or two of these additional scriptures as a springboard for discussion.

Scripture: Colossians 3:3

“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

- What does it mean that your life is “hidden with Christ”?
- How does this reshape how you think about identity and worth?

Scripture: Psalm 68:6

“God sets the lonely in families.”

- Where have you experienced spiritual family in your life?
- Where do you still long for deeper connection?

Scripture: Matthew 6:33

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

- What does it look like to seek God’s kingdom first in this season of your life?
- How might this shift your expectations around relationships?

Prayer

Invite the group to pray through these themes together:

Thanksgiving

- Thank God for creating us for relationships and community.
- Thank Him for the gift of identity in Christ.

Confession

- Confess ways we have sought fulfillment or worth in relationships instead of God.
- Confess fears, envy, or resentment related to singleness or marriage.

Surrender

- Ask God to help each person trust Him with their desires and future.
- Pray for undivided hearts and renewed devotion.

Intercession

- Pray for those in the group who are lonely, grieving, divorced, widowed, or discouraged.
- Pray that your church would truly function as a spiritual family.

Close with this prayer (or invite someone to read it aloud):

“Gracious and sovereign Father, remembering your big story of redemption is not only a great joy but a critical discipline. For so many different narratives compete for our hearts, days, energy and resources. Remind us today of the main storyline which unfolds in the Bible, connects all of history and reveals your generous heart. And help us, once again, to find our place in this story... Father, thank you that you have made us to be characters in and carriers of your great story of redemption. So let us live and so let us love. In Jesus’ name we pray, with gratitude and awe.”

- Pastor Scotty Smith (an excerpt from a published pastoral prayer)

STEP OUT - Practice

Choose 2–3 practices as a group:

1. Build Spiritual Family

Make a plan this week to **share a meal** with someone outside your usual circle (single, married, new to church, older, younger). Practice intentional community.

2. Serve with Availability

Look at current church opportunities (groups, outreach, serving teams). Each person commits to **one tangible way** to serve over the next month.

3. Personal Devotion Challenge

Commit to a **7-day “undivided devotion” rhythm**:

- 10–15 minutes daily in Scripture and prayer.
- Ask God each day: *“How can I seek Your kingdom first today?”*

Final Thought for the Group

Singleness is not a waiting room.

It is a calling to be fully alive in Christ, deeply connected in community, and wholeheartedly devoted to God’s mission.

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