LESSON EIGHT

Built Different

"A Disciple Lives for Eternity"

SCRIPTURE | 1 Corinthians 7:25–40

MEMORY VERSE

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT

Built different: disciples live with eternity in view, aligning with God's purposes, not their own.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM

Discipleship Distinctive: Christian Mission

GROUP TIME

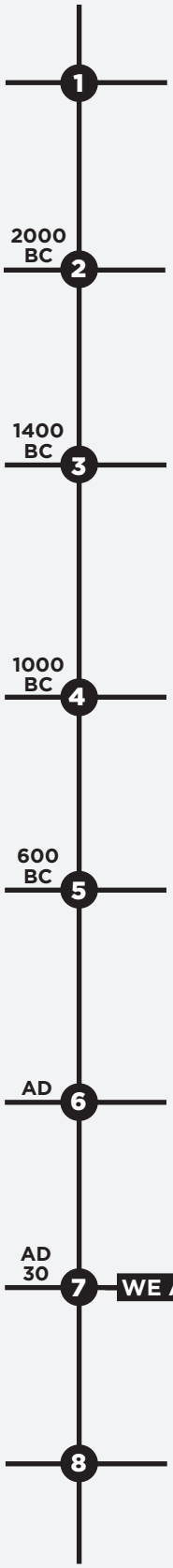
5 minutes	**Welcome**
5–10 minutes	**Attention Grabber**
10 minutes	**Story / Context**
25 minutes	**Discussion**
5–10 minutes	**Closing & Prayer**

PRAYER FOCUS

- **Baptism Weekend –** This weekend people are responding to the Spirit and boldly proclaiming the new life they have in Christ. Pray that they continue walking in alignment with Jesus's mission and carrying an eternal perspective. Pray for their protection from Satan's attack.

<u>BEGIN</u> this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of his Word, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your study.

GOD'S STORY TIMELINE



1. God Creates the World and Promises a Rescuer *(Genesis 1-11)*
God created everything good and placed humans in a garden to live in close relationship with Him. But Adam and Eve chose to trust themselves instead of God, and sin entered the world. Relationships, creation, even our connection to God was broken. Yet even in judgment, God promised that one day, a descendant of Eve would crush the serpent and bring healing.
+This points to Jesus as the promised Rescuer who defeats sin, Satan, and death.

2. God Calls a Family and Makes a Promise *(Genesis 12-50)*
God chose a man named Abram (later Abraham) and gave a covenant to him: that he would have a large family, receive a land, and be a blessing to all nations. Though Abraham and his descendants were deeply flawed, God continued His promise through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
+This points to Jesus as the true offspring of Abraham, through whom all nations are fully blessed.

3. God Rescues His People and Forms a Redeemed Nation *(Exodus-Deuteronomy)*
Generations later, Abraham's descendants were enslaved in Egypt. God raised up Moses to rescue them from oppression and slavery. God called His people into a relationship with Himself. He made a covenant with them, gave them the law, and instructed them in worship. He was forming a people who would live differently and show the world what it looked like to belong to Him.
+This points to Jesus as the greater Moses, who rescues us from slavery to sin and writes God's law on our hearts.

4. God Gives a Home and Promises a King *(Joshua-2 Chronicles)*
God brought His people into the promised land under Joshua's leadership. Over time, they asked for a king like the other nations. It was a disaster. But God graciously gave them David, with whom he made another covenant: one of David's descendants would rule forever. Solomon built the temple, but after his death, the kingdom split into two and began spiraling into idolatry and injustice again.
+This points to Jesus as the forever King from David's line, who reigns with justice and peace.

5. God Removes His People and Reminds Them of His Promise *(Ezra-Nehemiah)*
Because of their rebellion, God allowed His people to be conquered and taken into exile. First, it was the Northern Kingdom, Israel (to Assyria), then the Southern Kingdom, Judah (to Babylon). The temple was destroyed, and the glory of the kingdom faded. Yet God continued to speak through the prophets, reminding the people of His promise to restore them, give them new hearts, and send a Rescuer.
+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the new covenant, restores hearts, and fulfills every prophecy.

6. God Sends His Son and Fulfills His Promise *(Matthew-John)*
At just the right time, God sent Jesus into the world—born of a virgin, fully God and fully man. He perfectly obeyed the law, pointed us to the Father, and laid down His life as a sacrifice for our sins. On the third day, He rose again, proving that He is the Savior, the King, and the fulfillment of every covenant promise God has ever made.
+Jesus is the center of the story—all of Scripture leads to Him.

7. God Sends His Spirit and Builds His Church *(Acts-Jude)*
After rising from the dead, Jesus ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to empower His followers. The early Church spread the good news of Jesus across the Roman world—planting churches, welcoming both Jews and Gentiles, and learning to live as God's new covenant people. Though imperfect, the Church carries Jesus' mission forward today.
+This points to Jesus as the risen King who gives the Spirit to dwell in us and send us on mission.

8. God Restores All Things and Dwells with His People *(Revelation)*
The story isn't over. One day Jesus will return to judge evil and make all things new. There will be a new heaven and new earth, where God's people from every tribe and nation will live with Him forever. There will be no more pain, no more death, and no more sin—just joy, justice, and unbroken peace.
+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the story to its perfect and eternal culmination.

1 GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

LEADER TIP

To grab your participants' attention, start your lesson by telling a story related to the lesson's main idea. We have provided you with three options in this section, but feel free to develop your own.

OPTION 1: FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

Florence Nightingale was born in 1820 into a wealthy British family. A woman of her social position was expected to marry well and live a respectable domestic life, but Nightingale believed her life was meant for a different purpose. For her, comfort, social expectation, and personal purpose were in conflict. She rejected the path most expected of her and gave herself to nursing, hospital reform, and public health at a time when nursing was not considered respectable work for someone of her class.

Her decision wasn't just about rejecting marriage or choosing a career. It was about ordering her life around what she believed she had been called to do.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Why is it hard to make decisions that disappoint cultural or family expectations?*
- *How can a larger purpose change the way someone thinks about their life? (Consider areas like comfort, marriage, work, or success.)*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
Florence Nightingale's life shows how a larger purpose can reorder the choices people are expected to make. In 1 Corinthians 7:25–40, Paul called believers to live with eternity in view and to pursue undivided devotion to the Lord. A disciple is built different because they align their lives with God's purposes rather than simply following comfort or cultural expectation.

OPTION 2: MARY AND MARTHA (LUKE 10:38–42)

When Jesus entered the home of Mary and Martha, Martha was anxiously toiling in an effort to be hospitable. That would have been expected and honorable in that setting. She was not doing something meaningless. She was serving a guest in her home. Mary, however, sat at Jesus's feet and listened to His teaching, taking the posture of a disciple.

The problem was that Martha wasn't serving Jesus, she was serving herself, or at least the cultural expectations placed on her. Martha was distracted and troubled by many things, but Mary chose what was better, because Jesus was present and His word needed to be received. The issue is not vocation versus ministry or action versus contemplation. The issue is whether a person can recognize what faithfulness requires in the moment God has placed before them.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Would you be more like Mary or Martha in this setting?*
- *How do we discern what faithfulness requires in a particular season or moment?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
Mary and Martha remind us that faithfulness is not simply doing what is expected; it is giving attention to what matters most before the Lord. In 1 Corinthians 7:25–40, Paul called believers to live with eternity in view and to pursue undivided devotion to Christ. A disciple is built different because they align their lives with God's purposes rather than simply following comfort, pressure, or cultural expectation.

OPTION 3: THE LOAD-BEARING FOUNDATION

A foundation is not another room in the house. It does not compete with the kitchen, the bedrooms, the living room, or the front porch. But every room depends on it. If the foundation shifts, everything built on top of it is affected. Doors stop closing correctly. Floors begin to slope. Cracks start to show in places that seem far away from the original problem.

This is a helpful way to think about the mission of Christ. Following Jesus is not one responsibility among many, sitting beside marriage, parenting, work, singleness, friendships, and decisions about the future. Christ is the foundation beneath it all. When His purposes are central, they do not make ordinary life less important. They give ordinary life its proper focus and emphasis.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *What happens when something important is built on the wrong foundation?*
- *How would your thinking about work change if Christ's purposes were truly foundational? (Consider additional life categories of marriage, parenting, singleness, or future plans.)*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
A foundation gives the house stability and shape. In 1 Corinthians 7:25–40, Paul called believers to live with eternity in view and to pursue undivided devotion to the Lord. A disciple is built different because God's purposes become the foundation beneath every good gift, responsibility, and decision.

2 SET THE STAGE

LEADER TIP

This section provides the historical, cultural, and literary context needed to properly interpret and apply the text.

OUTLINE

I. Greetings and Thanksgiving (1:1–9)
II. Problems in the church (1:10–6:20)
  A. Divisions and factions (1:10–4:21)
  B. Gross immorality (5:1–13)
  C. Litigation before pagan courts (6:1–11)
  D. Fornication with prostitutes (6:12–20)
III. Replies to questions from the Corinthians (7:1–14:40)
  A. Questions about marriage (7:1–40)
  B. Limitations of Christian liberty (8:1–11:1)
  C. Veiling of women in public worship (11:2–16)
  D. Disorderly behavior at the Lord's Supper (11:17–34)
  E. Exercise of spiritual gifts (12:1–14:40)
IV. The Resurrection of the Body (15:1–58)
  A. Centrality of Christ's resurrection (15:1–20)
  B. Sequence of resurrection events (15:21–28)
  C. The resurrection and suffering (15:29–34)
  D. Nature of the resurrection body (15:35–49)
  E. The believer's victory over death (15:50–58)
V. Conclusion (16:1–24)
  A. Collection for the believers at Jerusalem (16:1–4)
  B. Paul's plans for visiting Corinth (16:5–9)
  C. Exhortations, instructions, and salutations (16:10–24)[1]

CONTEXT

In the first half of 1 Corinthians 7, Paul addressed marriage, singleness, intimacy, separation, and mixed marriages from the perspective of honoring God in whatever life situation a believer is called to. In verses 25–40, he continued speaking about marriage and singleness, but he widened the lens to the larger horizon that should shape every decision. The "present crisis," the shortness of time, and the passing nature of the world in its present form mean disciples cannot make life choices based only on comfort, desire, social pressure, or cultural expectations. Paul was not against marriage, and he was not saying singleness automatically makes someone more spiritual. His concern was undivided devotion to the Lord. A disciple is built different because God's purposes become the foundation beneath every good gift, responsibility, and decision.

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS

Apart from Christ, we live as though this present world is ultimate. We build life around comfort, desire, relationships, possessions, cultural expectations, and future plans, while remaining blind to eternity and unable to give God our undivided allegiance.

[1] F. Alan Tomlinson, "1 Corinthians," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1811.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

Jesus entered this world to bring us into God's eternal kingdom. Through His death and resurrection, He frees us from living for temporary things as though they are ultimate and reconciles us to God. Because we belong to Christ, we can receive every good gift with gratitude while ordering our lives around His purposes, His mission, and His coming kingdom.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM: CHRISTIAN MISSION

Christian mission begins with the truth that history centers on Christ. He is making and gathering disciples, sending His disciples to bear witness with their whole lives, making all things new. Because the future is certain, disciples learn to make present decisions with a longer horizon than comfort, romance, money, reputation, cultural norms, or family expectations.

This rhythm trains disciples to ask missionary questions about everyday life. And we see this kind of thinking in play in 1 Corinthians 7:25–40. How does this relationship help me seek Christ's kingdom? How can this season make me more available to love, serve, and bear witness? What expectation am I following without ever asking whether it fits God's purposes? A disciple is built different because they live with eternity in view, hold good gifts with gratitude, and arrange their lives around the will of Christ.

3 LOOK AT THE BOOK

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find exercises you can use to lead your group through Observation, Interpretation, and Application. As the leader, work through all the exercises below to ensure you understand the text well.

1 Corinthians 7:25–28 The second half of the chapter turns to "virgins," meaning those who were unmarried and likely considering whether they should marry. Paul said he had "no command from the Lord" but gave "a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy." This does not mean his counsel was not authoritative or merely personal preference. It means Jesus did not give a specific recorded command about this exact situation during His earthly ministry, so Paul gave apostolic guidance shaped by the Spirit, wisdom, mercy, and faithfulness to Christ.

Paul's counsel was shaped by what he called "the present crisis." Interpreters differ on the exact nature of this crisis. It may refer to a particular season of pressure in Corinth, a broader distress facing believers, or the difficulty of living faithfully in the time between Christ's resurrection and return. Whatever the precise situation, Paul believed the Corinthians needed to make decisions with sober awareness of eternal perspective. Life in this present age is unstable, pressured, and temporary.

Because of that crisis, Paul said, "It is good for a man to remain as he is." He applied this to both the married and the unmarried. The married should not seek divorce, and the unmarried should not be consumed with finding a spouse. This continues the principle from the previous section: disciples do not need a change in status before they can honor Christ. Faithfulness began where they were.

Paul was careful not to turn his counsel into a law. "But if you do marry, you have not sinned." Marriage was not treated as disobedience, spiritual weakness, or a lesser form of discipleship. Paul's concern was pastoral realism. Those who marry "will face many troubles in this life," and Paul wanted to spare them unnecessary hardship. Marriage is good, but it is not simple. In a pressured world, marriage brings real responsibilities, vulnerabilities, and concerns.

1 Corinthians 7:29–31 Verses 29–31 give the theological center of this section: "The time is short." Paul was not encouraging panic or detachment from ordinary life. He was reminding the Corinthians that the present age is temporary, and Christ's return gives every earthly situation a different weight. Eternity changes the way disciples hold the things of this life.

Paul then used a series of striking statements: those who have wives should live "as if they do not," those who mourn "as if they did not," those who are happy "as if they were not," those who buy something "as if it were not theirs to keep," and those who use the things of the world "as if not engrossed in them." These lines can sound strange if read as though Paul is telling people to neglect marriage, deny grief, suppress joy, or despise possessions. That is not his point.

The repeated "as if not" language teaches disciples to hold earthly realities without making them ultimate. Marriage matters, but marriage is not ultimate. Grief is real, but grief is not ultimate. Joy is good, but joy is not ultimate. Possessions can be used, but they are not permanent.

The Christian life is not withdrawal from the world, but life in the world with eternity in view.

Paul explains why: "For this world in its present form is passing away." The present order is not meaningless, but it is temporary. Disciples should not build their lives as though the present form of the world will last forever. Christian mission grows out of this horizon. If history is moving toward Christ and His kingdom, then every good gift, relationship, responsibility, and decision must be ordered under that greater reality.

1 Corinthians 7:32–35 Paul then explained why singleness can carry unique advantages for devotion to the Lord. His desire was that the Corinthians be "free from concern." The unmarried man is concerned about "the Lord's affairs," while the married man is concerned about "the affairs of this world," including how he can please his wife. Paul said the same is true for unmarried and married women. The unmarried woman can be concerned about the Lord's affairs, while the married woman rightly gives attention to her husband and household.

Paul was not criticizing marriage. The concerns of marriage are not sinful concerns. A husband should care about his wife. A wife should care about her husband. Marriage creates real obligations of love, attention, provision, and service. Paul's point is that marriage necessarily divides attention in a way singleness does not. The married person's devotion to the Lord is expressed through marital responsibility, while the unmarried person may have greater freedom for direct attention to the Lord's work.

Verse 35 clarifies Paul's motive: "I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you." Paul was not trying to trap the Corinthians in a rule or place a burden on them. He wanted them to live "in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord." This phrase is central for the lesson. Paul's concern was not that everyone choose the same life situation but that every disciple ask how their life can be ordered toward the Lord.

This is where Christian mission becomes especially clear. Paul was not presenting singleness as emptiness or marriage as distraction in a negative sense. He was asking believers to consider how their life situation can serve undivided devotion to Christ. A disciple's decisions are not governed merely by social expectation, romantic desire, fear of loneliness, or the pressure to build a culturally approved life. They are governed by the Lord's purposes.

1 Corinthians 7:36–38 This section is one of the more debated parts of the chapter. The NIV reads the situation as an engaged man wondering whether he is acting properly toward the woman he is pledged to marry. Some interpreters understand the passage differently, as referring to a father or guardian deciding whether to give his daughter in marriage. Either way, the main issue is whether marriage should proceed in a particular situation.

Paul again refused to treat marriage as sin. If the couple married, "they are not sinning." This is important because some Corinthians may have believed remaining unmarried was always the more spiritual choice. Paul did not allow that conclusion. Marriage can be a faithful decision.

At the same time, Paul said the person who has settled the matter, who is under no compulsion, has control over his own will, and decides not

to marry "also does the right thing." He did not rank one person as holy and the other as unholy. He gave room for wise discernment. Marriage may be right in one situation, while remaining unmarried may be right in another.

Verse 38 summarizes the balance: "He who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does better." The word "better" should be read within Paul's argument about the present crisis, the shortness of time, and undivided devotion. Paul was not saying marriage is morally inferior. He was saying that, given the pressures and priorities he described, remaining unmarried provided a greater freedom for focused service to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 7:39–40 Paul closed by addressing widows. A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives, but if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, "but he must belong to the Lord." Marriage for a believer is not merely a personal or romantic decision. It is a discipleship decision. The one she marries must be in the Lord because marriage joins lives, commitments, worship, and direction.

Paul then added that, in his judgment, she was happier if she remains as she was. Again, this is not a command against remarriage. Paul explicitly said she was free to marry. But he believed remaining unmarried allowed a widow greater freedom and contentment in the Lord, especially in light of the larger concerns of the chapter.

The final line, "and I think that I too have the Spirit of God," should not be read as uncertainty or arrogance. Paul was reminding the Corinthians that his judgment was not merely cultural opinion. His counsel was Spirit-shaped wisdom for believers trying to live faithfully in complicated situations.

The whole passage teaches disciples to make decisions with eternity in view. Paul honored marriage, singleness, and remarriage, but he refused to let any earthly status become ultimate. The present world is passing away, and the Lord deserves undivided devotion. A disciple is built different because they align their lives with God's purposes rather than arranging everything around comfort, desire, or cultural expectation.

1 CORINTHIANS 7:25–40

7 Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26 Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. 27 Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife. 28 But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

29 What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; 30 those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; 31 those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

32 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. 33 But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—34 and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. 35 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.

36 If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if his passions are too strong and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. 37 But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. 38 So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does better.

39 A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. 40 In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people to discuss the Observation and Interpretation questions.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: PAUL'S COUNSEL ABOUT MARRIAGE

Read 1 Corinthians 7:25–28. What did Paul say to those who are married and those who are unmarried?

Suggested Response: Paul said that, because of the present crisis, it was good for a person to remain as they were. If someone was pledged to a woman, he should not seek to be released. If someone was free from such a commitment, he should not look for a wife. But Paul also said if someone did marry, they had not sinned.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: LIFE ON LIMITED TIME

Read 1 Corinthians 7:29–31. What did Paul say about the time people have in this world?

Suggested Response: Paul said the time was short. He said those who had wives should live as if they did not, those who mourned as if they did not, those who were happy as if they were not, those who bought something as if it were not theirs to keep, and those who used the things of the world as if not engrossed in them. He said this world in its present form is passing away.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: UNDIVIDED DEVOTION TO THE LORD

Read 1 Corinthians 7:32–40. What concerns did Paul describe for the unmarried and the married? What did he say about remarriage?

Suggested Response: Paul said the unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs, while the married man is concerned about the affairs of this world and how he can please his wife. He said the unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs, while the married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world and how she can please her husband. Paul said his goal was undivided devotion to the Lord. He also said a widow was free to marry, but the man she married must belong to the Lord.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: WISDOM FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION

How should Paul's words about "the present crisis" shape the way believers think about marriage and singleness?

Suggested Response: Paul was giving pastoral wisdom for a pressured situation. He was not saying marriage is wrong or that singleness automatically makes someone more faithful. He was reminding believers that life in this present age is temporary and often difficult, so major decisions should not be driven only by desire, pressure, or cultural expectation. Marriage and singleness can both be faithful situations when they are brought under the Lord's authority.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: LIVING WITH ETERNITY IN VIEW

What did Paul mean when he said "the time is short" and "this world in its present form is passing away"?

Suggested Response: Paul was not telling believers to neglect marriage, deny grief, reject joy, or despise possessions. He was teaching them to hold all earthly realities with eternity in view. Marriage, sorrow, happiness, possessions, and ordinary responsibilities are real, but they are not ultimate. Because this present world is passing away, disciples should not arrange their lives around temporary things as though they will last forever.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: UNDIVIDED DEVOTION TO THE LORD

What does undivided devotion to the Lord mean for the way disciples make decisions about responsibilities?

Suggested Response: Paul was teaching that disciples should not make major life decisions based only on desire, comfort, fear, or cultural expectation. Marriage and singleness both bring real opportunities and real responsibilities, but neither should be the center of a disciple's life. Undivided devotion means the Lord's purposes come first, and every good gift is ordered underneath Him. Disciples ask how their life can serve Christ's mission rather than simply asking what arrangement would make them feel most secure or fulfilled.

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find questions to choose from that will help your group consider how God calls them to respond to the text. Help your group set measurable action steps.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

QUESTION 1: In 1 Corinthians 7:25–28, Paul gave counsel in light of "the present crisis." What pressures and expectations influence the way you live?

Suggested Response: My decisions may be influenced by comfort, fear, family expectations, financial pressure, loneliness, cultural timelines, or the desire to have a life that looks successful. Paul reminded us that disciples should make decisions with the Lord's purposes in view, not just the pressure of the moment.

As your group responds, use follow-up questions to guide below surface-level responses. Encourage transparent responses.

QUESTION 2: In 1 Corinthians 7:29–31, Paul said "the time is short." What temporary things are easiest for you to treat as the center of life?

Suggested Response: I may treat marriage, family, career, money, possessions, comfort, grief, happiness, or future plans as though they are the center of life. These things are real and important, but they cannot carry the weight of being ultimate. Paul called disciples to hold them with eternity in view.

QUESTION 3: What does it mean to live with eternity in view? How can living with eternity in view change the way you handle expectations? (Consider asking the question with other categories: grief, joy, possessions, expectations, or future plans.)

Suggested Response: Living with eternity in view means orienting my life around eternal things rather than temporary things. It does not mean ignoring grief, rejecting joy, dismissing expectations, or pretending possessions do not matter. It means engaging with these things without letting them rule me. Grief does not get the final word, joy does not become my god, expectations are not the strongest influence, possessions are not mine forever, and future plans are held in open hands under the authority of Christ.

QUESTION 4: In 1 Corinthians 7:32–35, Paul talked about undivided devotion to the Lord. What most often divides your attention from Christ?

Suggested Response: My attention can be divided by worry, relationships, career goals, family pressure, entertainment, comparison, financial concerns, or the desire to control the future. Some of these things are good responsibilities, but they become dangerous when they pull my heart and attention away from the Lord's purposes.

QUESTION 5: What does your family expect your life to look like? How does that pressure or lack of expectations affect you?

Suggested Response: I may feel pressure to make decisions about relationships, marriage, singleness, career, money, parenting, retirement, or lifestyle based on what feels normal or expected. Paul challenges me to ask whether my decisions are ordered around Christ's mission or simply around the life people assume I should want.

QUESTION 6: Paul made clear that eternity is real and Christ's mission matters. With this in mind, what needs to change about the way you are using your life?

Suggested Response: I may need to reconsider how I use my time, money, relationships, home, work, freedom, or future plans. Living with eternity in view does not mean ignoring ordinary life. It means asking whether my ordinary life is promoting God's purposes or mostly arranged around comfort, security, and what I want next.

QUESTION 7: How can our group help one another live with eternity in view?

Suggested Response: As a group, we can remind one another that this world in its present form is passing away, pray for wisdom in major decisions, encourage undivided devotion to the Lord, and challenge one another when comfort or cultural expectations become too powerful. We can help one another hold good gifts with gratitude while keeping Christ and His mission at the center.

4 CHALLENGE

LEADER TIP

End your study time with one final challenge and prayer. Your final challenge should pull together everything you covered in this lesson and call your participants to action.

A disciple is built different because eternity gives shape to the life they are living right now. Paul did not ask believers to reject marriage, joy, grief, possessions, or ordinary responsibilities. He called them to see all of life under the greater reality that "the time is short" and "this world in its present form is passing away."

This week consider what is organizing your life.

- What good gift, responsibility, or desire has started to carry too much weight in your heart?
- Where are comfort, cultural expectation, or personal preference shaping your decisions more than Christ's mission?
- If eternity is real and Christ's mission matters, what needs to change about the way you are using your time, relationships, resources, or plans?

God's purposes do not make ordinary life meaningless. They give ordinary life direction. Marriage, singleness, work, grief, joy, possessions, and future plans can all become places of undivided devotion when they are brought under the authority of Christ.

Let's pray.