# DISCUSSION GUIDE

**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

## **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.*

## **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.*