

“I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord’s work and thinking how to please him. But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. His interests are divided.” 1 Corinthians 7:32-34 NLT

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Everything shifted for Paul when Jesus confronted him on a donkey ride to Damascus. He lived a fairly normal, Pharisaical life. Probably married himself, but more importantly, he was a DRIVEN man. Driven, not by the idea of getting married, building a house and home, having little Sauls running around the first century, not so modern flat in Jerusalem, but by his JOB. His primary function as a glorified scribe, not a priest, with all the power and authority at his disposal was to protect the law, the temple and the priestly system with his whole being. Ever since Ezra decided to pluck these obscure journalists and copywriters out of the back office and gave them a new found prominence on par with Israel’s Kings, judges, prophets and priests - these men grew in power over 500 years until the time of the Messiah. Paul’s late-life crisis flipped his mission, along with his passion toward Jesus. His marriage, kids, friends (if he had any) were long gone by the time of his conversion. In that way, he was free to focus solely on mission without any distractions of family. And, that was probably the best thing for Paul and us that could have happened. Best quote, “a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities AND how to please his wife.” We’ve come so full circle to a place where family matters, our children knowing Jesus matters, our legacy of how we do life matters. We are not “free” from concerns of this life, as Paul advised, we are free to let Jesus be lord IN those concerns and do life, family and mission well! I don’t want to say Paul is wrong, but his calling and gift of “freedom” is not free to me at all.

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Dad,

Honestly, if I would have had it “my” way, I wouldn’t have had marriage, family or children at all! I would have preferred Paul’s prescription to do life without “distractions.” However, you wanted me to find restoration and even transformation IN marriage, IN family, IN our children. These were and have never been distractions for me, but a way to truly find my character, gifts and calling THROUGH being a husband and father. Lessons and loves I would have never learned otherwise. It’s not the homestead and cattle that matter on Little House on the Prairie, it’s the deep relationships forged in reality that has taught me how to love other humans, in and out of the body of Christ.

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root