

# Twelve Challenges Churches Face

## A study guide for the book by Mark Dever

### Chapter 5

---

#### BEFORE READING

##### Read:

- Read 1 Corinthians 7.

##### Answer:

- Define “asceticism.”
- Do you think that asceticism is a problem in twenty-first century Christianity? If so, how?

#### DURING READING

##### GETTING SERIOUS – pages 66-68

- How would you respond to someone who asserted that Paul’s words in some of these verses are not inspired and authoritative?
- Are Paul’s words in this section *applicable* today? Why?
  - What is the “present crisis” to which Paul refers?
  - What does it mean that “the time is short?”

##### MARRY, AND STAY MARRIED – pages 68-71

- Does Paul believe that “it is good for a man not to touch a woman?”
- What is Paul’s primary concern behind his instructions on sex in marriage?
- Briefly explain Paul’s approach to sex in marriage and how it differs from asceticism.
  - When is abstinence appropriate in marriage?
- Seven reasons are listed for why God gave the gift of marital sex. List and explain them.
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. \_\_\_\_\_
  6. \_\_\_\_\_
  7. \_\_\_\_\_
- Summarize the basic instruction given to...
  - ...a believer married to an unbeliever.
  - ...a married believer.
  - ...a divorced believer.

### **SOME SHOULD NOT MARRY – pages 71-74**

- Summarize the mindset of Greek culture toward the body and soul.
  - In what erroneous approaches to the body did this result?
- Paul lays out four reasons for some not to marry. List *and explain* them.
  - Reason #1 - \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Reason #2 - \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Reason #3 - \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Reason #4 - \_\_\_\_\_.
- Is Paul teaching asceticism? Why or why not?
- Who is gifted for singleness?
- What concern should mark the single person? If single, does this characterize you?

### **OUR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES – pages 74-77**

- How should our circumstances in the here and now be viewed?
  - How does that perspective help us live in the here and now?
- What is ultimate?
  - Do our present circumstances impact that?
- What diminishes the power of passing circumstances?
  - How is Jesus best displayed in the church?
  - How does that impact our approach to diversity?
  - What does that say to the principle of a “homogeneous congregation”?

### **AFTER READING**

#### **Answer:**

- Where are you tempted to think asceticism is the solution to your problems?
- How might your approach to marriage, singleness or another circumstance need to change?

#### **Apply:**

- What applications will you make from this chapter?

#### **Pray:**

- Write out a prayer in response to what you’ve learned.