

1 Corinthians 7 Study

Wm Tipton

We'll be breaking this chapter down into sections for this study. This is mainly to dispel some of the erroneous teachings out there in some parts of the 'church'.

Lets start right at the beginning.

1.0

Here we find that Paul is responding to questions that must have been asked of him by the Corinthians. This is a very key point because it sets the tone as to whether Paul is simply speaking in a vacuum with his instruction, or if he is reacting to specific situations he has been asked about.

1Co 7:1-40 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. (2) Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

Easy enough to understand. Paul is clearly saying that it is better for a man to remain a virgin, or even a widower if the case may be, better to not touch a woman at all if one has the willpower to live a celibate life.

But where one doesn't, as most do not, let each man have a wife, and let each woman have a husband, 'let them marry' so to speak, so that they are not tempted into fornication.

Contrary to the views of some, this verse is not making any statements to someone having someone else's wife. It is clearly speaking in such a manner as to promote a life of chasteness/celibacy where possible.

2.0

In this next passage we will deal with denying our spouse conjugal duty within the marriage.

(3) Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. (4) The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. (5) Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. (6) But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.

Again we have very straightforward instruction by Paul. Let the husband and the wife not withhold affection and sexual relations from one another. Our bodies are not our own, but belong to each other. It is part of the responsibilities of the marriage covenant that we pray that everyone who enters this holy union is ready to accept and carry out.

We can come apart for a time to devote ourselves to fasting and prayer, but this is ONLY to be done by mutual consent and only for periods of time that BOTH the man and woman can handle without being tempted. Clearly Paul had no commandment from the Lord in this matter, but spoke from his own experience, most likely.

3.0

From this we learn that Paul was surely a single man at this point, and many believe that he was a widower, which I tend to agree with.

(7) For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. (8) I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. (9) But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

It is quite clear that Paul understands that as human beings we were created with passions that are sometimes hard to impossible to control. If this werent the case, then the manner in which Paul opens this chapter is somewhat of an antiquated statement, being entirely meaningless altogether. If Paul says 'to AVOID fornication, the possibility of it, from our life, that we should marry, then its fairly easily discerned that Paul knows well the temptations of the flesh that can overwhelm and consume a person. This sentiment is reflected in the first few verses in his saying that its better to remain a virgin, or a widower, but so that we can avoid sexual sin, let each man and woman take a mate.

In verses 7-9 above he repeats this thought to the widows and what is most likely intended as widowers (“unmarried” there)

4.0

Now Paul moves on to those already married. Here we have a couple groups that Paul will deal with individually. To this first group Paul makes it known for whatever reason, most likely to re-enforce to those in Corinth that we are dealing with God's intent for marriage, not just man's wishes and desires.

To these who are equally yoked to another believer (as will be proven in section 5.0), Paul tells these who may have it in mind to depart their believing spouse for no just reason, that if they do to remain unmarried or reconcile.

(10) And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: (11) But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

Of course this passage must be harmonized with the whole so that we understand that where there is a breach of covenant, exceptions apply here as well, but we ask ourselves what believer would knowingly turn themselves over to a life of sexual sin. Knowing that we know men by their fruits, it is readily discerned that the man or woman who, not merely upon a sole occasion, but who has given themselves over to unbridled sexual immorality, that these cannot be the followers that they once claimed, but are like those seeds thrown in the rocks who may have started to appear, but were quickly overwhelmed their the world and its passions. Lacking remorse for their actions, not showing TRUE repentance, is accepted that these are probably not His to begin with, but simply “make-believers”.

5.0

In this passage changes his direction changes to those Unequally yoked to an unbelieving spouse. Here Paul shows that he has no commandment from the Lord as he had to those equally yoked.

(12) But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. (13) And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. (14) For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. (15) But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. (16) For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? (17) But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

Instead of repeating things already stated elsewhere, this [ARTICLE\(Putting away for abuse\)](#) will show our view about some of the issues in this passage and the conditional statement made by Paul above.

What Paul is dealing with above is directly tied into the opening statement in 7:1. He is responding to questions asked of him concerning whether it was lawful for these in Corinth to put away their spouses who were not believers. They seemed to feel that possibly their spouse was ‘unclean’ as a non-believer and so defiled the believer in some way. Paul tells them that this is not the case. The unbeliever is ‘sanctified’ by the believer and so they are not defiled in any way by remaining married.

Paul then addresses responsibility of the believing spouse to be available as a witness to the unbeliever. ‘How do you know if you wont save your wife’ ? A very good question indeed.

I hope you read the ‘Putting away for abuse’ article so that you also understand that there is condition in Paul's words. He understands that even though we may do our best in a marriage, sometimes the unbeliever is literally depraved and there really is nothing we can do about it. In such a case where this marriage is abusive then the believer most surely has rights to end that marriage.

Of course, we always want divorce to be the last resort, but in dangerous cases the last resort is quite often going to be the first.

6.0

In this passage Paul states to remain in whatever position one is in. I personally believe it may have been because of the situation then, but it may apply in general as well. Obviously if one is in a sinful situation, say a drug dealer or a

nite club dancer, there must be an immediate change, but Paul seems to be showing that whatever situation we're in, to be satisfied with that as long as it isn't anything sinful and unless God calls us to move.

(18) Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. (19) Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. (20) Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. (21) Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. (22) For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. (23) Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. (24) Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

7.0

This passage clearly is addressed to virgins.

The first thing we notice is that the word 'virgins/virgin' (in pink v. 7:25 and 7:28) here is in the feminine form. Given Paul's reference to both male and female readers here, it is fairly obvious that 'virgins' being in the female does not necessarily indicate that Paul must be talking to or about females...a point we need to bear in mind since it indicates that we need to look at the context itself to determine whether it is men or women being spoken to or about.

(25) Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. (26)

I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

Paul plainly states not having any commandment of the Lord, but is speaking using his own judgment, which we respect and obey because Paul, having received direct revelation from Christ, would be very much qualified to speak the mind of Christ even without commandment.

7.5

Starting in verse 27 we have a bit of an issue because it is not generally understood whether Paul is speaking about marriage in general, or confining his comments solely to virgins. Some believe it is (a)ONLY to virgins, others believe that (b)while it may be TO virgins specifically that the principles apply to all men and women in a similar scenario. My personal view is in agreement with the latter(b).

(27) Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. (28) But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

Paul shows in the passage above that neither marriage, nor abstinence is sinful. But during those times of Roman occupation and distress in the early church, Paul seemed to feel that it might be better to remain free of the added stresses of marriage.

==Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed==

Are you BOUND. Dont seek a divorce.

Unless Paul is telling them not to KILL their wives then this 'loosed' HAS TO BE talking about DIVORCE !

==Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife==

Are you LOOSED in ANY way which INCLUDES being DIVORCED (see above). Dont seek a wife.

===But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned===

But if you do marry you have not sinned.

8.0

This is probably a continuation of Paul's thoughts in 6.0 above. He speaks such that we should not be overly concerned with the things of this fading world that are destined to burn, but on the eternal things

(29) But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; (30) And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they

rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; (31) And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

9.0

Continuing on the state of unmarried virgins, Paul shows us that our attention is divided when we are married. We cannot ignore our spouse and even pretend that we honour God. And we cannot idolize a spouse. Our desires are split between what we need to do to please a spouse and to do the work of our Lord. Paul surely shows that remaining unmarried is of great benefit.

(32) But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: (33) But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. (34) There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. (35) And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

10.0

This speaks to fathers of virgins more than to the virgins themselves. Clearly this is speaking to certain cultures only as only some have marriages arranged by the father. It is neither sinful to give his daughter in marriage or not to. Let him decide for himself what he feels best for his own daughter. Of course, I personally believe that the daughter would surely have had a voice with her father who loved her.

(36) But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. (37) Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. (38) So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.

11.0

Here we have Pauls final responses to these in Corinth who had asked him these things about marriage. Paul lays out the very precept that the wife is bound to her husband by this 'law' created in the beginning with the very first couple for the life of her husband. Corinth was quite a sinful place, as corrupt as the pharisees themselves and just as quick to end a marriage or partake of sexual sins. Pauls response to them is a reminder that GOD Himself has created marriage to be for the life of our spouse and not lightly ended.

(39) The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. (40) But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

Widows who remarry are to take only a believing spouse, but Paul shows that she may be better off if she simply doesnt marry again.