

I Corinthians 7:1-16

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I. Introduction

As we study this chapter, we need to keep two facts in mind.

- A. Paul is not here dealing with the subject of marriage in general, but is answering specific questions the Corinthians had asked him (v. 1)
- B. We need to remember that the instructions Paul gives in this chapter were in light of special conditions existing at that time and place (v. 26)
- C. Now, in answering the questions, Paul addressed his counsel to seven different groups of people
 - 1. Married (vv. 1-7)
 - 2. Unmarried & widows (vv. 8-9)
 - 3. Christian couples (vv. 10-11)
 - 4. Mixed couples (vv. 12-24)
 - 5. Singles (vv. 25-35)
 - 6. The parents of singles (vv. 36-38)
 - 7. Widows (vv. 39-40)

II. The Married (vv. 1-7)

- A. Singleness is good (v. 1). “It is good for a man not to touch a woman”
 - 1. Paul did not say it’s better or necessary, only that it’s “good,” nor is Paul saying “sex is bad” or evil
- B. Marriage is commended (v. 2), not commanded
 - 1. Because of the sinfulness of their city (don’t get married for sexual reasons only)
 - 2. It’s not the purpose of marriage
 - 1. Marriage is a “man” and “woman,” so God’s divine monogamy
 - 2. The two become one flesh
 - 3. This verse shows that the fulfillment of sexual needs within the marriage relationship is right, and fidelity to that relationship is enjoined upon each partner
- C. Married people should meet each other’s sexual needs (v. 3)
 - 1. If you are not willing to do that, don’t get married
 - 2. If you are single it’s good not to touch a woman, but if you are married, it’s not good to withhold sexual intimacy from your spouse
 - 3. The word “benevolence” refers to the conjugal or sexual rights
 - 4. The word “render” is a command in the present tense.
 - 5. Sexual intimacy should be a constant part of the marital union
 - 6. Proverbs 5:15-19 “Drink water from your own well – share your love only with your wife. Why spill the water of your springs in the streets, having sex with just anyone? You should reserve it for yourselves. Never share it with strangers. Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you. Rejoice in the wife of your youth. She is a loving deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts satisfy you always. May you always be captivated by her love”

- D. Marital partners belong to each other (v. 4)
 - 1. Both the husband and the wife are to lovingly give themselves to each other
- E. Married persons should not “rob” or defraud each other (v. 5)
 - 1. Sexual abstinence in marriage must be of mutual consent and for a set time
 - 2. For the purpose of fasting and prayer
 - 3. Intimacies should be resumed so Satan does not tempt you to fulfill your desires outside of your marriage
 - 4. Be careful you don’t drive your mate into the arms of another. Satan works to destroy your marriage
 - 5. Martin Luther – “Let the wife make the husband glad to come home, and let him make her sorry to see him leave”
 - 6. Paul quickly points out that both the single life and the married life are permitted and not commanded. It’s a question of God’s gift (v. 7)

III. Unmarried and Widows (vv. 8-9)

IV. Christian Couples (vv. 10-11)

- A. The Corinthians Christians thought it might be more spiritual to be single, so they were breaking up their existing marriages
- B. Paul says the Lord said, “No way”
 - 1. The wife or husbands are not to depart (divorce)
 - a) Divorce is not God’s will
 - b) Jesus teaching (Matt. 19)
 - 2. If you divorce, you can’t get married again (v. 11)
 - 3. You should seek to be reconciled (v. 11)
 - a) The myth of the grass is greener on the other side