

# 1 Corinthians 7 - Celibacy, Marriage, and Sexual Immorality

1Co 7:1-40 ESV **Now concerning the matters about which you wrote:** "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman."

Corinth had a pagan religion that promoted sex with prostitutes - it was a very promiscuous city...so They wrote to Paul --- "**It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman**"

- in some cases YES (as in the case with sexual immorality)
- in other cases NO (as in the case with married people).
- So Paul teaches God's heart about **Celibacy, Marriage, Sex and Sexual Immorality**

In this chapter there is a call to understand the proper place of sex

2 But because of **the temptation to sexual immorality**, each man should *have his own wife* and each *woman her own husband*.

**We are sexual creatures**, created this way by God - and sex is good - but it shows that **sex has a proper place (if there is sexual immorality, then there are times that it is not proper)**

**So if sex is good, what is "Sexual Immorality?"**

Heb 13:4 ESV Let marriage be held in **honor** among all, and let *the marriage bed* be undefiled, for God will **judge** the *sexually immoral and adulterous*.

- Sex is either HONORED or JUDGED Marriage is contrasted to sexual immorality
- One solution to sexual temptation is marriage (**the other is self control - look at it later**)

The place of sex in marriage (it is not unspiritual to have sex)

3 The husband should give to his wife her **conjugal rights**, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 For the wife does not have **authority over her own body**, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 **Do not deprive** one another, **except perhaps by agreement for a limited time**, that you may **devote yourselves to prayer**; but then come together again, **so that Satan may not tempt you because of your *lack of self-control***.

**(Conjugal rights / authority over spouse's body)** Sex is not to be **withheld** / and sex is to be **exclusive**

- Notice that these commands are mutual and it forces respect for one another
- Notice that NOT behaving rightly with sex in marriage opens the way for Satan to tempt you
- Seems Satan's tactic is to get married couples to WITHHOLD and DEPRIVE sex - while getting those who AREN'T married to have sex (Satan's scheme it to try to destroy God's perfect plan)

The Calling to be Single

6 Now as a **concession, not a command**, I say this. 7 I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own **gift from God**, one of one kind and one of another. 8 To the **unmarried** and the **widows** I say that it is good for them to **remain single as I am**. 9 But if they cannot **exercise self-control**, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

### **This is a concession not a command**

- 1 Tim 4:1-3 Paul said it was a doctrine of demons to forbid marriage
- 1 Tim 5:11-14 - Paul says the younger widows should marry

### **To remain single is a gift**

- Not everyone has this gift - it is a gift to remain single

### **Self Control is mentioned here as well**

- If they cannot exercise self-control, **they should marry** (2nd time SELF CONTROL is mentioned)

### **Marriage / NOT sexual immorality is the solution**

- It is better to marry than to burn with passion

### Let's talk a little about Self-Control

1Th 4:2-8 ESV For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your **sanctification**: that you **abstain from sexual immorality**; 4 that each one of you know how to **control his own body** *in holiness and honor*; 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles **who do not know God**; 6 that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has **not called us for impurity, but in holiness**. 8 Therefore whoever **disregards** this, **disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you**.

1. The will of God is our **sanctification**...(described here as abstaining from sexual immorality)
2. He elaborates further and says each one of us should know how to have **SELF CONTROL**
3. We can do this because **WE KNOW GOD - we don't have to be controlled in the passion of lust**
4. You **transgress** against your brother when you engage in sexual immorality - the LORD avenges
5. God has called us to Holiness
6. If you disregard this - **you are disregarding God** who gives us **His Holy Spirit**

### To Christian Marriages - permanence/covenant - Work to preserve and reconcile

**10 To the married** I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife **should not separate** from her husband 11 (*but if she does*, she should **remain unmarried or else be reconciled** to her husband), and the **husband should not divorce** his wife.

- The wife SHOULD NOT, but IF SHE DOES - remain unmarried or be reconciled
- The husband SHOULD NOT divorce his wife
  - **Why - we have the spirit of Christ, the wisdom of Christ, the mind of Christ**
  - **In theory, EVERY PROBLEM CAN BE WORKED OUT**
- It should make you think twice about the seriousness of marriage - **it's not like joining planet fitness** then stop going when you get tired of it

In Matt 19 The disciples thought that if they could not divorce for ANY reason, then it would be better not to marry - Jesus didn't disagree, he said that not everyone could accept this

## To those who are married to an unbeliever - eternal perspective - not your happiness

12 To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she **consents to live with him, he should not divorce her**. 13 If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and **he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him**. 14 For the unbelieving husband is **made holy** because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is **made holy** because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be **unclean**, but as it is, they are **holy**. 15 But **if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so**. In such cases the brother or sister is not **enslaved**. God has called you to peace. 16 For **how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?**

- There is an interest in the eternal well-being of the spouse and children
- To not be enslaved - not bound - has to do with marriage and divorce (Rom 7)
- How do you know whether you will save your spouse (disobedient husband can be won by wife)

## The power of contentment

17 Only let each person **lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him**. This is my rule in all the churches. 18 Was anyone at the time of his call **already circumcised?** Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his **call uncircumcised?** Let him not seek circumcision. 19 For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. 20 Each one should **remain in the condition in which he was called**. 21 Were you a **bondservant** when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) 22 For **he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord**. Likewise **he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ**. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men. 24 So, brothers, **in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God**.

- Are you discontent - or happy to lead the life the LORD has assigned, to which God has called you?
- Circumcision nor uncircumcision matter - keeping the commandments is the issue
- If you are a bondservant (you are FREE in the LORD) - if you are FREE - you are the LORD's BONDSERVANT) - in one sense our relationship to the LORD resolves these
- **No matter what your station** (married, single, divorced, widowed, remarried, whatever), **God can work in your life**.
- Not - "my life would be better if \_\_\_\_\_", instead - "whatever the condition, remain with God"

## Practical and common sense advice

25 Now concerning the betrothed, **I have no command from the Lord**, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26 I think that **in view of the present distress** it is good for a person **to remain as he is**. 27 Are you **bound** to a wife? Do not seek to be **free**. Are you **free** from a wife? Do not **seek** a wife. 28 **But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned**. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that.

**In view of the present distress - has to be taken into account here**

**An appeal to keep the LORD and the kingdom as top priority in our lives**

29 This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, 30 and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, 31 and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away. 32 **I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord.** 33 But the **married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit.** But the married woman is **anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.** 35 I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and **to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.**

**Again - the solution is marriage or self-control**

36 If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: **let them marry--it is no sin.** 37 But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but **having his desire under control**, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. 38 So then **he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.**

**Freedom has restrictions**

39 A wife is bound to her husband **as long as he lives.** But if her husband dies, **she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.** 40 Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

- Free to drive your car, but you have to do it on the road
- Free to marry who you wish, only IN THE LORD - don't marry to try to change someone

**Summary**

**Sex is put in its proper position**

- Honored in marriage, judged outside of marriage

**Marriage is honored**

- It is a covenant worth fighting for

**Singleness is honored**

- It is a calling where one can give oneself with full devotion to the LORD whereas the married are distracted

**Self Control relating to sex is upheld as the will of God**

**Contentment is upheld as a value for all**

**Christ as priority is for everyone, married, single, male, female, bond or free**

**What if you lived in sexual immorality, divorced your spouse, not live in self-control, defrauded or transgress another? There is forgiveness with God...**