

## 1 Corinthians Chapter 7

**1 Corinthians 7:1 "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: [It is] good for a man not to touch a woman."**

In the first 7 verses these verses elevate singleness, as long as it is celibate, but they in no way teach that marriage is either wrong or inferior.

This letter had to be written to an individual in the church in Corinth, because we notice that it was in answer to a letter that Paul had received. We know that this, like many other specific Scriptures, is not to be taken as doctrine, or even rules for the church at large, because it goes against what God said at the creation of man and woman. There would be no need for two genders, if God had intended this to be so. We must look at this carefully to understand.

This is probably written to an individual who is, perhaps, going to minister in God's work. Paul is just explaining to this person, that the fewer other obligations he has, the more time he'll have to devote to God's work. Paul was never married, and he understood the freedom from other obligations that went with not being married. Marriage is not a sin, however it is God's plan for populating the earth.

**1 Corinthians 7:2 "Nevertheless, [to avoid] fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."**

Paul is saying here, that if you desire to be married, it is better to go ahead and get married. You might be tempted to sin, if you desire a wife and do not have one.

There is a great danger of sexual sin when single. Marriage is God's only provision for sexual fulfillment. Marriage should not be reduced simply to that, however. Paul has a much higher view and articulates it (in Eph. 5:22-23). He is stressing the issue of sexual sin for people who are single.

Again I say, there is not sin in getting married. There is a sin when you live with someone you are not married to.

**1 Corinthians 7:3 "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband."**

When a man and woman get married, they then are to think of the needs of their spouse more than they think of their own needs. The above Scripture is just saying, be true to the wife or husband you have chosen. Love them and comfort them, so there will be no need for them to look for comfort elsewhere.

Married believers are not to sexually deprive their spouses. While celibacy is right for the single, it is wrong for the married. The practice of deprivation may have been most common when a believer had an unsaved spouse.

**1 Corinthians 7:4 "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."**

When we get married, we become one flesh and we are no longer two flesh. Husbands and wives should not be ashamed in the presence of their spouse. Their bodies belong not to one of them, but each belongs totally to the other.

By the marriage covenant, each partner is given the right over the spouse's body for the satisfaction of the other.

**1 Corinthians 7:5 "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."**

The meaning of incontinency: without self-restraint, especially regarding sexual activity

This is just saying for the two to comfort each other. They are not to refuse the closeness of husband and wife, unless they have agreed that they will refrain from personal contact, because they are fasting and praying.

The reason it is so important for the husband and wife to sleep together is because if they do not, their partner might stray to someone else for comfort. This is not just a physical togetherness with the husband and wife, but is a bond between them.

“That Satan tempt you not”: After a “time” of abstinence say for pregnancy, an illness, separation or for prayer and fasting, sexual desires intensify and a spouse becomes more vulnerable to sinful desire.

**1 Corinthians 7:6 "But I speak this by permission, [and] not of commandment."**

All that Paul has said here, is something that Paul wanted to share with others who were going into the ministry. It is a little of a personal testimony of himself. He realized that he was freer to go and minister, since he did not have the obligation of family. He was a eunuch by choice to serve God. Jesus spoke of this only once in the following Scripture.

Matthew 19:12 "For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from [their] mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive [it], let him receive [it]."

**1 Corinthians 7:7 "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."**

Paul was a eunuch by choice, and he felt the call of the ministry could be better answered with fewer distractions that way. Not all men are called to be eunuchs that are ministers of God. This is a special calling.

Eunuch: Tertullian, a second century Church Father, described Jesus himself and Paul of Tarsus as spadones, which is translated as "eunuchs" in some contexts. However, these statements can be interpreted as a metaphor for celibacy, especially given the broad meaning of the term spado in Late Antiquity.

As a single person, Paul recognized the special freedom and independence he had to serve Christ. But he did not expect all believers to be single, nor all who were single to stay that way, nor all who were married to act celibate as if they were single. Both singleness and marriage are God's gracious gifts.

**1 Corinthians 7:8 "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I."**

Paul was expecting the soon return of the Lord, and he thought there was not time to get entangled with anything that might slow down their work for the Lord. He is saying, if for any reason you are single, just stay that way and spend all your time for the Lord.

This verse makes it clear that the unmarried and widows are distinct. His first suggestion is that they stay single because of its freedoms in serving the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 7:9 "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn."**

This probably is speaking of those who want to be married, and are not, who are burned up with lust for the opposite sex. It would be much better to be married, than to be filled with lust.

The Greek tense indicates a command, since a person can't live a happy life and serve the Lord effectively if dominated by unfulfilled sexual passion, especially in the Corinthian society.

**1 Corinthians 7:10 "And unto the married I command, [yet] not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from [her] husband:"**

What Paul writes to these believers was already made clear by Jesus during His earthly ministry (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:5-8; Gen. 2:24; and Mal. 2:16).

Depart is a word used as a synonym for divorce, as indicated by the parallel use of the word "put away" (in verse 11).

He is just saying, if you are married, stay married. You can still work for the Lord married. Divorce is of man and not of God. God made one woman for one man. They two are to be one. To divorce and marry another does not fulfill the wishes of God.

**1 Corinthians 7:11 "But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to [her] husband: and let not the husband put away [his] wife."**

The union of husband and wife is to be a permanent arrangement. It is not to be like in our society today, jumping from one husband to the other. A person should not get a divorce for just any little whim. The Lord has made provision for those to get a divorce from the unfaithful spouse.

This is saying that if a Christian divorces another Christian except for adultery, neither partner is free to marry another person. They should reconcile, or at least remain unmarried.

**1 Corinthians 7:12-13 "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." "And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him."**

“To the rest”: Those not covered by the instruction of (verses 10-11). This is a simple way of saying that Jesus had not spoken on this and God had not previously given revelation on the matter, as Paul was then writing. Apparently, some Christians felt they should divorce their unsaved spouses, to live celibately or marry a believer.

The Lord had taught from the beginning not to be unequally yoked with those of unbelief. They should not have married a non-believer in the beginning. This house would have to be a house of confusion. One believing and the other does not, leaves a separation between them. It is possible, in time that this circumstance could change. If you love them enough to put up with the divided house, then Paul is saying, it is alright to stay. Marriages with mixed belief seldom last.

**1 Corinthians 7:14 "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."**

This does not mean that an unbeliever will go to heaven, because their spouse is saved. Sanctified in this instance, would be made clean. Not by the wife, but in the wife. This is not speaking of the child being saved in infancy, but is speaking of not having any curse of unbelief on the child from birth. This child would not be a bastard child, but would be of a union made acceptable to God through marriage where one parent is a believer. This cleanliness is of a ceremonial nature and is speaking of the family as being a Christian family, because one is a believer.

The sanctification is matrimonial or pertaining to family, not personal or spiritual and means that the unsaved partner is set apart for temporal blessing because the other belongs to God. One Christian in a marriage brings grace that spills over on the spouse, even possibly leading them to salvation.

The Christian need not separate from an unbeliever because of fear that the unbelieving spouse may defile the children. God promises the opposite. They would be unclean if both parents were unsaved, but the presence of one believing parent exposes the children to blessing and brings them protection. The presence of even one Christian parent will protect children from undue spiritual harm and they will receive many blessings, and often that includes salvation.

**1 Corinthians 7:15 "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."**

This would be covered in the spiritual adultery above. Moses permitted divorce, so that there might be peace in the family. The very fact that two people could not agree in their worship would be a very unsettling factor in a family. These two could not be one, if they had such varying commitments.

“Let him depart”: A term referring to divorce. When an unbelieving spouse cannot tolerate the partner’s faith and wants a divorce, it is best to let that happen in order to preserve peace in the family (Rom. 12:18). The bond of marriage is broken only by death (Rom. 7:2), adultery (Matt. 19:9), or an unbeliever’s leaving.

“Not under bondage”: When the bond is broken in any of those ways, a Christian is free to marry another believer. Throughout Scripture, whenever legitimate divorce occurs, remarriage is assumed. When divorce is permitted, so is remarriage. By implication, the permission for a widow to remarry (verses 39-40; Rom. 7:3), because the “bond” is broken, extends to this case where there is no more “bondage.”

**1 Corinthians 7:16 "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save [thy] husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save [thy] wife?"**

I have always believed that if a person lives a good Christian life around anyone (especially their spouse), it would have great influence on the non-believer. That, in my opinion, is what this is saying. Love them with the love of the Lord and live peaceably with them, and they will be won over to the Lord by your great devotion to your Lord.

Some may have been reluctant to let go of their unsaved spouse, who wanted out and was creating discord in the home thinking they could evangelize the spouse by hanging on for seeing that one converted. Paul says there are no such assurances and it is better to divorce and be at peace (verse 15), if the unsaved partner wants to end the marriage that way.

**1 Corinthians 7:17 "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."**

Paul is saying in this, if you were married when you were called, stay married. Serve God wherever you were when the Lord called you. Do not leave your spouse to serve the Lord. If you were called to the ministry while you were single, consider staying single and devoting all your time to the Lord. Paul is saying, if you were called in a certain circumstance, who is he to question God in that? Just serve where you were called, and how you were called.

Discontent was prevalent among these new believers in the Corinthian church. As noted up to this point (verse 1-16). Some wanted to change their marital status, some were slaves who wanted to be free, and some used their freedom in Christ to rationalize sinning. In a general response to that, this passage plainly repeats the basic principal that Christians should willingly

accept the marital condition and social situations into which God has placed them. And be content to serve Him there until He leads them elsewhere.

This is the first verse of three Paul states the principal of contentment which is required of all Christians. The other two are (verses 20 and 24).

## **1 Corinthians Chapter 7 Questions**

1. In verse 1 Paul says, it is good for a man not to \_\_\_\_\_ a woman.
2. Why does the author believe this is written to an individual?
3. Why were there two genders of people created?
4. What is Paul trying to convey to this individual here?
5. Was Paul ever married?
6. To avoid \_\_\_\_\_, let every man have his own wife.
7. If you desire to be married, it is better to go ahead and marry, why?
8. Who are the husband, or wife, to think of more than themselves in marriage?
9. They two shall become one \_\_\_\_\_.
10. What are the two reasons, in verse 5, that you could withhold love from your spouse for?
11. Why is it important for the husband and wife to sleep together?
12. Verse 6 says this message is from whom?
13. Paul wanted them all to be like whom?
14. Why?
15. Why did Paul tell the widows and unmarried to stay like him?
16. It is better to marry than to \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Who is the message from in verse 10?
18. Does the fact that you are married keep you from ministering?
19. The union of husband and wife is to be a \_\_\_\_\_ arrangement.
20. What two things are true grounds for divorce?

21. Who had taught not to be unequally yoked?
22. What should the man who has an unbelieving wife do, if she wants to live with him?
23. Two people living in a house where they have different beliefs, would be what kind of house?
24. The unbelieving husband is sanctified by what?
25. Does this mean the unbeliever will go to heaven?
26. The cleanliness is of a \_\_\_\_\_ nature.
27. A brother or sister is not under bondage in what case?
28. How could a wife save a husband?
29. How is each man to walk?