

# **“Principles Of A Godly Marriage - In The Hard Times!”**

## **1 Corinthians 7:1-24**

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**Teaching Aim:** To realize the marriage relationship is the only God approved means for individuals to find sexual fulfillment. To realize couples need to be sensitive to the physical and emotional needs of each other. To understand coming to Christ is not a legitimate reason to divorce your unbelieving spouse. To encourage Christians to make the most of whatever circumstances they were called in to glorify God!

### **DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)**

#### **Part I: God’s view of sexual unions within the marriage relationship (1 Cor. 7:1-9)**

1. Paul has been responding to the comments found in the letter delivered by members of Chloe’s household (**1:11**); most likely Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (**16:17**). Now Paul specifically begins to answer the questions found in this letter one by one (**vs. 1**). Perhaps the first question Paul addressed was, *“In light of all the sexual immorality in Corinth, is it better for a Christian to remain celibate, even within the marriage relationship?”* How did Paul respond? (**See vv. 1-2**) Does Paul’s advice still apply to us today? If so, how?
  
2. How can we know from **verse 2** that God does not approve of either homosexual or polygamous marriages? (**See Gen. 2:24; Rom. 1:24-32; Lev. 18:22,29; 20:13**) In our day homosexuality is quickly becoming the norm. The LGBTQ movement is considered by the left and the media to be politically correct and the way of the future; they are mandating that we permit this lifestyle. What does God think of this movement and lifestyle? How should Christians respond to the indoctrination of our families by those who favor this lifestyle?
  
3. What is Paul referring to in **verse 3** when he says, *“render...the affection due”*? (See Commentaries) What do you think of when you hear the word *“affection?”* How do we see *“this godly principle”* being abused today? Today sex is often used as a weapon within the marriage relationship for one spouse to gain advantage over the other. Should it be? According to **verses 3-5**, is it a sin for one spouse to withhold sex from the other for a prolonged period of time without mutual consent? Why?

4. In **verse 4** Paul writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *“The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. (NIV)”* What does Paul mean?
  
5. What are the only reasons Paul gives for a married couple to deprive each other from sexual intercourse (**vs. 5**)? How long should this deprivation last? Why? NOTE: According to the Bible, women are also not to have sexual relationships during their monthly period. (See **Lev. 15:20-25; 18:19**)
  
6. Some people are *“called”* to celibacy while others are *“called”* to married life (**vv. 7-9**). (See **Matt. 19:12**) Did Paul have the calling (*and gift*) of celibacy in his life? What advantage is there to an individual remaining celibate? What conclusion did Paul come to in **verse 9**? Are you called to a celibate lifestyle or to married life? Why?

## **Part II: Keeping your marriage vows when you are unequally yoked (1 Cor. 7:10-16)**

1. What group of Christians did Paul address in **verses 10 & 11**? In **verses 10 & 11**, Paul relays a command Jesus had taught on earth; what was it? (See **Matt. 5:31-32; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18**)
  
2. Was Paul stepping out and sharing his own opinion in **verses 12-16** or did he write his comments under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? What did Paul mean when he wrote, *“I, not the Lord, say...”*? Is it possible Paul was speaking about a topic Jesus did not address during His earthly ministry?
  
3. Apparently some Corinthians had come to faith in Christ and were now wondering if they should divorce their unbelieving spouses. This should not surprise us since the Jews were forced to divorce their pagan wives in the Old Testament. (See **Ezra 10:1-3, 10-11; Neh. 13:23-25**) What was Paul’s response to their inquiry? (See **vv. 12-13**)

4. According to **verse 14**, why is it important for a believing spouse “to hang in there” and be faithful to his or her unbelieving spouse, even today? How is the unbelieving spouse “sanctified?” What is the meaning of “sanctification?” (See Dictionary) Give some examples of how a home can be changed when even one partner in the marriage is a believer. Why would the children be “unclean” if there were no believing parents? How can one believing parent change a child’s life?
  
5. What is the only exception clause that Jesus allowed for divorce? (**See Matt. 5:31-32; 19:3-9**) What is meant by “marital unfaithfulness?” What English word does the Greek “porneia” sound like? In **verse 15** Paul adds a second exception clause that Jesus didn’t cover; what is it? Does this exception give a Christian the right to make the life of his or her unbelieving spouse miserable so that they will leave? Why or why not? According to **verse 15b & 16**, why did God say it was okay for the unbelieving spouse to leave? What is the only other biblical reason for ending a marriage? (**See 1 Cor. 7:39-40; Rom. 7:1-3**)

**Part III: Making the most of your current situation (1 Cor. 7:17-24)**

1. What is the essence of Paul’s message to the Corinthians in **verses 17-20**? R.C. Sproul wrote, “The very word vocation comes from the Latin “vocare”, “to call.” Our vocation is a calling; it is from God.” Do you look at your job as a calling from God? How about your marriage? How can you better reflect the love of God at your job? (See **Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:23-24**) What are some ways that the Christian can better represent Christ to an unbelieving spouse? (**See Eph. 5:22-29**)
  
2. During Paul’s day, it is estimated that some 60 million people were slaves in the Roman Empire; slavery was the backbone of the Roman economy. (Note: This kind of slavery was not the kind of human trafficking we generally think of when we think of early American slavery; these slaves could buy their way out of it.) What kind of advice did Paul give to the Corinthian slaves in **verse 21**? According to **verse 22**, why did he encourage the slaves to be content in their current situation? Should we be content where God has called us today? Why or why not? What surprising news did Paul give to those who considered themselves free (**vs. 22b**)? When did you first realize that you are a slave to Christ? Slaves are expected to obey the commands of their earthly masters. Why are slaves a good illustration of what Christians should be today? Who is our Master?

3. What do we learn about ourselves from **verse 23**? The imagery in **verse 23** is that of a slave auction. What previously held every believer in bondage before coming to Christ? (See **Rom 3:23; 5:8-9; 6:7-8; Jam. 2:10**) What price did Christ pay for our freedom? (See **Eph. 1:7; 2:13-18; 1 Pet. 1:18-19**) What can we learn about God's love from the price He paid? After seeing the freedom we have in Christ, why do you think so many people go back to their old sinful lifestyles? Is it possible some of these individuals were never saved in the first place? (See **2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 5:22-24; Luke 6:43-45**)
4. According to Paul, what is key to being able to remain faithful in whatever circumstances we are called in (**vs. 24**)? Why is it critical that we remain "*with God*" in these circumstances? How has God helped you to get through the difficult times in your past? Do you find God's past intervention an encouragement to you as you face new difficulties today? Why? How can you use your past experiences with God to help other people in their struggles today?

#### **MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!***

- Some people are called to a celibate lifestyle while God calls others to be married. Both lifestyles are good in God's sight and can be used for His glory!
- Marriage is the only God ordained means to sexual fulfillment!
- God desires married couples to come together frequently in sexual union, not out of selfish gain, but "*affectionately*" with both spouses being sensitive to the needs of the other!
- There are only three Biblical reasons to end a marriage: 1) Marital unfaithfulness; 2) An unbelieving spouse deserting a believer; and 3) The death of a spouse!
- The key to being able to get through the difficult times in life is to "*remain with God!*"
- Believers should make the most of whatever circumstances the Lord called them in to glorify God!