

## 1 Corinthians 7:1-16

### Verse 1:

--Paul now begins to address several topics that the church apparently wrote and asked him about. Each section begins with: **Now concerning**. . .

**7:1:** the married state

**7:25:** virgins

**8:1+4:** idols and food offered to them

**12:1:** spiritual gifts

**16:1:** collections in the church

**16:12:** Apollos

--We don't know all that was happening there in Corinth. It seems like they were confused about a bunch of things: Singleness, Marriage itself, Sex in marriage, Divorce, etc.

--Paul begins by ratifying one of his themes here and something he no doubt wrote about before. It is **good for a man not to touch a woman**—that being sexually.

--Paul here is definitely not forbidding marriage. In fact, in **1 Timothy 4** he says that anyone so doing is actually teaching a doctrine of demons!

--Paul is simply restating something that they had misunderstood—that singleness is good in and of itself. They did not *have* to be married.

**\*Matthew 19:11-12: But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: for there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."\***

--The single life is one with unique joys and opportunities that are pleasing to God and we all live it at different points.

### Verse 2:

--**Nevertheless**. . . Paul here makes it clear that marriage also is good. Particularly because of **sexual immorality**—the sense being *immoralities*—as it appears there were numerous sexual problems in this church as a direct result of their misunderstanding of marriage.

--Paul then says that each man should have a woman and each woman have a man. Notice—Biblical marriage is always between one man and one woman.

--Now, this may sound a bit crude, as if the only benefit of marriage is sex. That is not what Paul is doing here. His point is twofold:

1) Those who are trying to live single and find themselves in sexual immorality should realize that you do not have the gift of singleness. You should be married.

2) In marriage God has provided a suitable place and ready supply for sexual desire. God asks us to remain virgins until we are married because He knows it is best to keep that door closed until you have that safe, protected, and trusted provision. \*Culture that is trying to stir up sexual desire in all the wrong places and times.\*

--Notice as well: Your ***own wife & own husband***. Don't seek anything outside of that. Doing so is despising God's provision for your life. \*Pornography is a wicked and filthy plague!\*

**\*Proverbs 6:25: Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids.\***

### **Verse 3-4:**

--Again, Paul is addressing issues they asked him about.

--First, I will say the Scriptures address the issue of sex because it is a human issue. This is immediately applicable to all cultures for all time.

--Second, I think we should take note of the *way* Paul addresses these topics through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He is not gratuitous or jokingly crass or outlandish. He speaks directly, simply, and clearly.

--**(3)** He makes it clear that in a marriage relationship there is a mutual debt of affection that is owed to one another. This is not: *You owe me!* But is: *I owe you!*

--This makes perfect sense because if you are your spouse's provision you should not willingly or even ignorantly keep back. \*(This is also not to say other actions are not involved such as loving and respecting one another. It is just that Paul is dealing with direct issues here.)\*

--**(4)** What Paul does here in these two simple sentences is really masterful. This is clearly inspired by the Holy Spirit.

--(1) Without being gratuitous at all—How many crazy pastors are saying ridiculous things about sex in sermons, series, and books to “demystify” or show we are “relevant”—Paul instructs husbands and wives on what is okay in their sexual interaction.

--The husband's body is servant to the wife and the wife's body is servant to the husband. That means there is to be *mutual agreement* in however the other person's body is interacting with you own. \*Way too much abuse goes on even in marriages particularly with men who have sinful expectations that they acquired outside their marriage's provision!\*

--(2) This makes our provision our spouses body—*and no other body!*

--No one actually needs any more provision than one other body for sex. You only need more for lust which is endless and no one can measure up!

--Also, anyone outside the marriage asking for the use of your body, you can just say: This body is my spouses!

### Verse 5:

--Understanding this mutual dependence and provision—which should build healthy intimacy and companionship in a marriage—Paul says: ***Do not deprive one another!*** \*Sex is *never* to be used as a manipulation tool.\*

--If there is any exception at all—it is that of seeking the Lord in a special ***consent***—an agreed upon time period. \*For the purposes of prayer and not pursuit of materialism.\*

--Why? Because the more distance you keep Satan will tempt you both! Satan will do everything he can to get you in bed *before* marriage and everything he can to keep you out of bed *after* marriage.

--This command will press you to work on your character issues that are keeping you apart and make you like Christ. \*If you want to keep your marriage together—no one should be living for weeks and months without marital intimacy. You are in direct disobedience.\*

### Verses 6-7:

--Paul's concession is in regard to their mutual consent to separate for a time of seeking the Lord. Doing so is not mandatory.

--The whole point is that that is not supposed to be any celibacy *within* marriage.

--Paul again admits that celibacy is good in and of itself and he wishes that others could be like him—may have been married in the past but is apparently currently living a single life for the Lord. \*Both singleness and marriage have their pros and cons.\*

--Either way—Paul recognizes the individuals state is related to what ***gift*** they possess. The word for ***gift*** is that of a spiritual gift. The type that cannot be commanded—like the gifts of evangelist, pastor-teacher, tongues, mercy can only be received and not commanded.

### Verses 8-9:

--The ***unmarried*** is likely *widowers* as there was no active Greek word for such at the time. Also, Paul's pattern here has been to address both the men and women in the process so it makes contextual sense—even so it is unmarried who are addressed either way.

--Again, this is not simply a—get married if you cannot control yourself issue—but Paul speaking to the issues they wrote. Apparently, some were trying to stay celibate *in marriage* and others were thinking they were more spiritual not getting married and solving their sexual desires *outside marriage*. Both were wrong!

--If these Corinthian believers found sinful sexual expression or desire they were to realize they did not have the gift of celibacy and God was not calling them to such. So they were to marry and place that desire in its proper God-given place.

--This was better than ***to burn***—which carries connotations of being on fire, cleansing, and also judgment.

--All of this of course does not exclude the rest of what the Bible says on marriage. We don't just *have* a spouse for sex. We are called to *love & respect* them as well.

### Verse 10-11:

--Here Paul makes it clear what is commanded—what was taught by Christ while He was on earth—and what he is saying as led by the Spirit of Christ’s teachings as in: **6, 12, 25, 40.**

--Jesus spoke very directly about divorce in: **Mt. 19; Mk. 10; Lk. 16:18.**

**\*Matthew 5:31-32: Furthermore it has been said, “Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.” But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.\***

--So we see there are really three Biblical ways a marriage can be dissolved—none of which God loves but He gives as a concession to the hardness of our hearts here on earth!—which are sexual immorality, death (**Rom. 7:1-3 + 1 Cor. 7:39**) or what he speaks on here which is abandonment.

--I will freely admit that the issues of divorce and remarriage are some of the most difficult and painful that any person, pastor, and church will have to work through. It is not always easy to figure out what is really going on, let alone what the Lord wills. But if we want to please Him, this is one of the major passages we have to work through.

--**But even if she does.** . . is not an exception just instruction on something Paul knew had happened and would continue to happen.

--If a believing partner leaves for no Biblical reason—the instruction to them is that they are to remain unmarried or in repentance be reconciled to their spouse.

--Marriage is a gift from God. Not a right we can demand. It can be lost by wrongs. Those who would wrong their spouse and marriage by departing without a Biblical reason can still honor God in repentance by remaining single and chaste.

### Verses 12-14:

--Now Paul is going to address what those in mixed-faith marriages should do.

--First, notice Paul does not say if anyone *wish* to *take* an unbelieving husband or wife! Paul says if anyone **has** an unbelieving husband or wife. Paul makes this clear at the end of the chapter: ***she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord!***

--We are not to marry unsaved persons willingly as we know they do not share the most important things in our life: fellowship with God, purpose in God, morals in God, etc. To willingly do so is a rebellious abandonment of God in your life. \*If that is you, realize and repent!\*

--Second, not all conversions were “household” conversions where people would take on the faith of the father or parent.

--We also see here the clear command that a believer is not to seek divorce because their spouse is unsaved. \*If we loved them as unsaved should we not be able to love them better now as saved people?\*

--Paul wants them to be clear that just because one member of the family is unsaved it doesn't mean that their relationship—or the offspring of that relationship—are unclean.  
--Their spouse and their children are still *sanctified* or *set apart* for God's purposes. Their marriage and family are still pleasing to God.

**Verses 15-16:**

--Even so, Paul also hits the other side of the coin here. There are many who, sadly, when their spouse is saved and changed—are not happy about the changes in their lives.

--So, Paul says if the unbelieving spouse desires to leave the marriage. The saved spouse is not to battle to keep them from divorcing them. If they depart (many wouldn't even give a bill of divorcement in those days but would simply leave) allow them to do so.

--The believer is not in bondage to that marriage and is called to live in peace—with or without them.

--**(16)** The discussion here is how is this verse to be applied? As a hopeful exhortation? Or as a corrective and admonishing question? I think that it is both because the *peace* from the previous verse relates to both.

--If the unsaved spouse is willing to stay—we are to live with them in peace and they should see our lives in Christ as a continual witness (**1 Peter 3**).

--If the unsaved spouse wants to leave—we are to allow them to leave in peace and not battle them to love us with something they do not possess, and in that case, how do we know they will ever come around and be saved? We don't!

--Also, can I just throw in by application: If you are living with a saved but unspiritual spouse and they are willing to live with you in peace, then do so and know that you are pleasing the Lord. Your marriage and children are still sanctified.