

## 1 Corinthians 7 1-9

Good evening and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 7?

After addressing his concerns for them, we now come to the second section of Paul's letter to the church at Corinth. And from here on out through the rest of the book, Paul will give answers to the Corinthians regarding six specific questions they had asked of him in a previous letter.

### SHOW THE BELOW SUMMARY

Chapter 7 deals with marriage; chapters 8–10 deal with Christian liberty; chapter 11 describes church conduct; chapters 12–14 are all about spiritual gifts; chapter 15 declares the truth of the resurrection, and chapter 16 deals with giving and final exhortations. **CLOSE PIC**

Tonight's message is going to be a bit different, as the first part of chapter 7 helps give us the blueprint for marriage, and sex, God's way. And there's a lot to unpack in this chapter, so we're only going to study verses 1-9

Satan's great strategy, when it comes to sex, is to do everything he can to encourage sex outside of marriage, and to discourage sex within marriage. It is an equal victory for Satan if he accomplishes either plan.

The title of tonight's message is God's Gift for Marriage

Let's pray

If you recall, chapter 6 last week closed with a warning to the Corinthian believers to flee sexual immorality. And why? He says in verse 20, **For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body[fn] and in your spirit, which are God's.**

Jesus paid a steep price to purchase our body for God, and clearly He cares about what we do with these bodies.

Some of the Corinthian Christians thought that if they were pure and pleasing to God on the inside, resisting certain foods, that it didn't really matter what they did on the outside - in their body. And this is true with food of course, but as we saw last week, this is not the case with sex.

Sometimes we forget that God created sex! God created the human body with a sexual appetite. We have a sex drive, and God created us with these urges.

In fact, it surprises lots of folks when they learn there's a whole book of the Bible devoted to sexual expression in marriage.

**SHOW PIC** If you've ever read it, you know The Song of Solomon has everything going on except Barry White singing in the background. In parts of this love poem it contains some steamy sections! **CLOSE PIC**

But not only did God create the act of sex, He also designed the fact that sex is only to be experienced within the confines of marriage.

The Bible teaches us that God intends for sex in marriage to be sensual and satisfying. God is no prude! After a careful anatomical survey of the bodies of both males and females, clearly God made our bodies with sexual compatibility and desires. And along with the anatomy, God has a plan! He made sex for marriage to strengthen the marriage.

It's wisely been said that sex can be described like a fire. Fire belongs in the fireplace. In the fireplace the fire provides warmth, and heat, and light. But put that fire anywhere it wasn't designed to be, and it'll burn the house down.

And so it is with sex... God created our bodies - He's purchased our bodies - and He doesn't want us using our bodies for sexual immorality. Our sexuality was made to burn in the fireplace of heterosexual marriage.

**1 Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:**

**It is good for a man not to touch a woman.** Now Paul isn't talking about hugging your mom, or your sister, or even a sister in Christ at church. Women don't have cooties.

No, when Paul says, "It's good for a man not to touch a woman..." he's speaking sexually.

Yes, God created sex and marriage. It's a good thing, but Paul says if God leads a Christian to forego the married life, that can also be a good, valid, spiritual option. There's no shame in being single.

And this was an important point, given the era and the culture in which Paul wrote. In ancient times marriage was assumed, especially among the Jews. People thought that something had to be wrong if a person chose not to marry.

And the basis for this erroneous assumption was **Genesis 1 26**  
**Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all[fn] the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."**

Because God told Adam to “be fruitful and multiply” - Jews considered a chosen celibacy to be a sin against God.

But this wasn't God's conclusion. When God created marriage, He said that it was good. But it's not for everyone. There are folks who aren't the marrying-type, and if they forego marriage that can also be good.

What's our scriptural basis for this?

Jesus said this in **Matthew 19:12** “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.”

To be more singly devoted to God, some people choose not to marry. Later in Chapter 7 Paul tells us that he also chose to be single, so he could devote himself exclusively to God and the work of God...

Paul will later tell every married Christian what they already know - a married Christian cares about the things of this world - a mortgage, kids, oil changes, honeydo lists. Family responsibilities gobble up a lot of time, and can distract from ministry.

On occasion and for some people, singleness is actually God's will. Remember, God called Jeremiah not to get married - **Jeremiah 16 1** The word of the LORD also came to me, saying, 2 “You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place.

For some folk's their sexual appetite isn't a problem. They have no burning desire to be married. They can take it or leave it. Life seems just as appealing to them flying solo, as it does in getting married.

If this is the case, Paul calls it a good thing.

But in this case singleness has to be a gift from God. And I want to caution young people, if you don't have this calling and enabling from God to be single, don't pretend. You'll be miserable.

If the sight of a pretty girl races a man's pulse and heats up his hormones - then God probably hasn't blessed him with the gift of singleness.

If a lady goes to sleep dreaming of a Prince Charming - a man who'll sweep her off her feet and give her a happy home - then neither does she have the gift of singleness. You either have this gift or you don't...

And if you don't - if you have a strong desire for intimacy with a member of the opposite sex, then make sure you wait for sexual relations until marriage!

Now for folks who are single, and desiring a spouse, I thought it might be helpful to bring to you the Not top 10 Biblical Ways To Find a Spouse.

#10) Go to a party and hide. **Judges 21:20 Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying, "Go, lie in wait in the vineyards, 21 and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out to perform their dances, then come out from the vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the land of Benjamin.**

#9) Find a prostitute and marry her. **Hosea 1:2 When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea:**

**"Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry**

**And children of harlotry,**

**For the land has committed great harlotry**

By departing from the LORD.”

#8)– this was Moses... Find a man with seven daughters, and impress him by watering his flock. Exodus 2:16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. 17 Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

#7) Find an attractive prisoner of war, bring her home, shave her head, trim her nails, and give her new clothes. Then she's all yours.

Deuteronomy 21: 11 and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your wife, 12 then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails.

#6) Purchase a piece of property, and get a woman as part of the deal. Ruth 4:5 Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate[fn] the name of the dead through his inheritance.”

#5) Have God create a wife for you while you sleep. And note: this wont cost you an arm and a leg, but it will cost you a rib.

Genesis 2: 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

#4) Genesis 29 too many verses to put on the screen but this was Jacob... Work seven years in exchange for a woman's hand in marriage. Get tricked into marrying the wrong woman. Then work

another seven years for the woman you wanted to marry in the first place.

#3) Become the emperor of a huge nation and hold a beauty contest. The winner becomes your wife. **Esther 2:2** Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king; 3 and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women's quarters, under the custody of Hegai[fn] the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them. 4 Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti."

#2) When you see someone you like, instead of talking to them, go home and tell your parents to get her for you. **Judges 14:1** Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife."

finally

#1) give the girl's dad a very, unique gift- **1 Samuel 18:27** therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife.

In the scriptures there's no one way to get a future mate, there's no secret formula to finding a spouse. I would encourage you if you're looking to get married, continue to pray.

Now in our text here in 1 Corinthians 7, Paul's intent is not to write a dissertation on marriage. He gives a more comprehensive teaching on marriage and the roles of husbands and wives in Ephesians 5. But here in 1 Corinthians remember, Paul is answering questions, and the subject on the minds of the Corinthians was singleness and sexual desire.

In 1966 Percy Sledge released a song that rose to #1 on the Billboard charts. In fact, Rolling Stone magazine ranks it the 54th greatest song of all time. The song...

**PLAY CLIP** "When A Man Loves A Woman."

There it is, "When a man loves a woman, can't keep his mind on nothing else..."

And this is why Paul writes in verse 2

**2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.** In light of the dangers of sexual immorality that surrounded the Corinthian culture, much like our culture, it's not only appropriate, it's important for husband and wife to have each other in a sexual sense.

Marriage is God's way of fulfilling our body's sexual desires. And nowhere does God give the green light to pornography, or romance novels, or hooking up or any other means of sexual satisfaction.

Husbands and wives are God's means of satisfying each other's desires for physical intimacy and sexual needs.

**3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.** The Greek word "affection" isn't merely holding hands, or a kiss on the cheek. It's a word



used to describe the conjugal rights and sexual needs of married couples.

Within marriage, this verse is clear, a husband must render to his wife the affection due her. And it's not only to the young wife, or to the pretty wife or to the submissive wife, no every wife is due affection because she is the wife of a Christian man.

Verse 3 also emphasizes what the woman needs: not merely sexual relations, but the affection due her. If a husband has sexual relations with his wife, but without showing true affection to her, he is not giving his wife what she is due.

The word affection also reminds us that when a couple is unable to have sexual relations, whether physical or other reasons – to have a complete sexual relationship, they can still have an affectionate relationship, and still fulfill God's purpose for these commands.

Now spouses at times may have different sexual tastes and desires, this is why verse 4 says...

**4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.** The key to sexual fulfillment in marriage is putting our spouse above ourselves.

To be clear, anything the Bible expects of a husband and wife is definitely in the context of a loving, and respectful, and willing agreement. This verse clearly prohibits forcing or guiltting a partner.

Obviously, marriage carries with it significant expectations! Verse 4 declares when two people marry their bodies are no longer their own. They've agreed to share their bodies.

This is how God wants us to function in marriage. A husband and wife have a claim on each other's body.

**SHOW PIC** From time to time, I wonder what I'd look like with a beard. But every time I mention it, Kim's face scrunches up like she just ate a raw lemon. **CLOSE PIC** She's not a fan of the idea. There go, no hair on my face, because it's not just my face, or my body, it's hers too!

And now, the Bible even goes so far as to instruct married couples on the frequency of their intimacy.

**5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.** When a couple deprives each other and withhold sex from a spouse, without even realizing it they are giving Satan an opportunity to work mischief into their marriage!

Every married couple needs to realize that sex is a tool to build with - not a weapon to fight with.

If you deprive one another and withhold sex as a form of punishment, you're disobeying God.

If you use sex to reward your spouse for a behavior you like, or use sex to bribe him or her for what you want - that's manipulation, not affirmation... It's a misuse of what God created as an expression of committed love.

Notice the Bible tells married couples that when it comes to sex in the marriage, the couples' default should be "Yes." "No" should be the exception.

Look at verse 5 again, it says "Do not deprive... except." Forgoing sex should always be a mutual decision. Both partners should be

in agreement, and even then, it's only for "a time." The implication is a very short time.

Please note that God is saying that sex in marriage is so important, that He doesn't want our prayer and fasting if it comes at the expense of our spouse and their needs

Depriving a spouse of intimacy gives ample opportunity for the deprived spouse to look elsewhere for fulfillment – and to destroy the marriage.

**6 But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.** God will permit (reluctantly, as a concession) a married couple to abstain from sexual relations for a short time, for the sake of fasting and prayer. But if this concession is used, it is only to be for a time, and then husband and wife must come together again in a sexual sense.

These verses are clear-God does not command or even recommend abstaining from sex within marriage, but it can be done for a brief time for a specific spiritual reason.

**7 For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.**

Paul, at the time of this writing, was unmarried (putting himself among the unmarried and the widows). Here he recognizes the benefit of being single, which he will speak more of later in the letter.

We know from Acts 7 that Paul had been a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin or Supreme Court. And to sit on the Court you had to be married.

I believe Paul was once married... Perhaps his wife died... Or it could be she was as devout a Pharisee as he'd been and she left him after he converted to Christ.

Whether Paul was a widower or a divorcee we're not sure, but he was single and considered it God's gift.

If your desire is marriage and you have not found a spouse yet, please know God is not punishing you. He hasn't abandoned you. Singleness is His gift, and you should see it as such.

Remember, there's one thing worse than being single, and that's being married to the wrong person! Until the right person comes along, view your singleness as God's gift.

I think it's important to remember that our Lord was single. Jesus was God incarnate. And Jesus never married. That means a person can live a rich, wonderful life - without being married.

Realize, being married doesn't make a person more spiritual than being single... And despite what some believers in Corinth were saying - despite what Roman Catholics have taught through the centuries - being celibate, or single, doesn't make you more spiritual or closer to God than being married...

Both being married and being single have their own perks and privileges. The Bible teaches both marriage and singleness are callings from God, and each person has their own gift.

**8 But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am;** " We don't know for sure, but the fact Paul mentions "widows" lends support to the theory that his wife had died, and that he was now a widower. However Paul became single, he enjoyed the freedom and opportunities that it now provided him. And he knows singleness isn't for everyone.

**9 but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.** The Bible recognizes marriage as a legitimate refuge from pressures of sexual immorality.

Now next week we'll see what the Bible has to say about divorce.

Satan is smart. He hates marriage. And he'll do everything he can to wreck a godly marriage, and he often starts through the bedroom.

If you're married, and you would classify your relationship as lacking sexually, you need to pray and talk to your spouse. The problems may not be easily overcome or quickly solved, but God wants every Christian marriage to enjoy a sexual relationship that is a genuine blessing, instead of a burden or a curse.

Talk about not speaking during Q&A...