

1 Corinthians 7

Jesus

1 Corinthians 7:26b ...because of the present distress...

1. **Christian Persecution:** Nero's Rampage
 2. **Excessive Immorality**/Lawlessness...or both
- **Chapter 7**
 1. God's instructions in light of the **present distress**
 2. God's instructions in light of the **previous chapter**
 - **Chapter 6**
 1. Our physical bodies *belong to God*
 2. Our physical bodies are the *temple of the Holy Spirit*
 3. Our physical bodies are to be *used for God's glory*

Paul addresses questions about marriage/sex
Questions asked by the church of God in Corinth...

I. Principles of Marriage

1 Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: **It is good for a man not to touch** [*have sexual relations with...*] **a woman.**

- **Confused Corinthian Christians**
 1. Married to more than one wife
 2. Some using temple prostitutes for sex
 3. Others abstaining from sex even w/in marriage

Q. Is it more spiritual to stay celibate?
A. No. But it is good to stay celibate... [later]

2 **Nevertheless**, because of [the temptation of] **sexual immorality**, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

Celibacy is Good. Celibacy is a Gift
Overwhelmed by temptation? Celibacy *is not your gift*

IOWs If your gift is celibacy do it...if not get married
So from now on...One husband is to take one wife

To the Married...

3 Let the husband **render** to his wife the **affection due her**, and likewise also the **wife to her husband.**

Sex is good/right w/in marriage/Not only for procreation
God's instructions for both Husband/Wife...

v3 Render not only sex *but also affection*. Lit. good will/kindness

- **Do not:** Withhold sex as a weapon. **Evil**

- **Do:** Make yourself available to each another. **Safe**

I have a headache/Take an aspirin
I have to work late/Finish work tomorrow...

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.

- Our physical bodies...Ch. 6
 1. God's property
 2. Temple of the Holy Spirit
 3. To be used for God's glory
 4. Property of our spouse...Given at marriage

You belong to One another/One flesh
IOWs Depriving the other causes issues for both...

5 **Do not deprive** one another except with **consent for a time**, that you may give yourselves to **fasting and prayer**

- **To Married Couples**
 1. **Do not Deprive:** lit. Defraud/Cheat
 2. **Do not Avoid:** Only to fast/pray for a given time...

5b... [Then] **come together** again so that **Satan does not tempt you** because of your **lack of self-control**.

Satan looks for chinks. Malicious sexual depravation is a big one
Withholding sex in marriage to hurt/manipulate is evil/Open door to Satanic attack

Matthew 18:7b ...offenses must come but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

If there are issues... take time apart to fast/pray
Make it short/Have a set time

6 But I say this **as a concession**, not as a commandment.

Do not deprive one another sexually except to temporally fast/pray
Concession: IOWs Only if Spirit led/Absolutely necessary

For those considering getting married
If you have the gift of celibacy-Don't get married...

7 For **I wish that all men were even as I myself**.

- Paul: Member of Sanhedrin [court of Israel] required to marry
- Once Married- now single. Widower? Speaks from experience in Eph 5

Paul had freedom to take another wife
Many of the other Apostles were married...

1 Corinthians 9:5 Do we have no right to take along a **believing wife**, as do also the **other apostles**, the **brothers of the Lord**, and **Cephas** [Peter] ?

Paul was given the gift of celibacy after his conversion
I wish all men were even as myself...

7b ...But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

Paul regards both marriage and singleness as gifts from God. Many find themselves in the *grass is greener* trap, with single people wishing they were married and married people wishing they were single. **Each state is a gift from God.** [Guzik]

Paul is in no way forbidding marriage. In fact, religion that prohibits marriage to those without the gift of celibacy is not just wrong but demonic, many times leading to perverse temptations and sexual abuse. [NJC]

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to **deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons**, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 **forbidding to marry...**

Paul: I wish all men were like me
Abstaining from Marriage/Sex. Focusing fully on Christ...

Matthew 19:10 [After Jesus hard teaching on divorce] "If such is the case of the man with his wife, **it is better not to marry.**" 11 But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but **only those to whom it has been given:** 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."

So much unsolicited pressure from w/out for young people to marry. Unnecessary
Stigma
Self-imposed artificial time limits...Yet God in the eyes of God it's good to stay
single...

8 [So] to the unmarried and to the **widows**: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; 9 **but if they cannot** exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is **better to marry than to burn with passion.**

To the Unmarried and Widows

Better to be celibate than to marry. Yet...
Better to marry than to burn w/passion, constantly tempted to sin...

1 Timothy 5:14 ... **younger widows marry**, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 15 For some [unmarried widows] have already **turned aside after Satan**.

Better to marry than burn and yet...Caveat...
Marrying only to satisfy sexual passion will not sustain a marriage

Q. If celibacy is so great...Maybe I'll get a divorce/be more spiritual? **A.** No

II. Keep Your Marriage Vows

10 Now **to the married** I command, yet not I but the Lord: A **wife is not to depart from her husband**. 11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a **husband is not to divorce his wife**.

To Married Believers re. Divorce

A command from the Lord to wives...
Do not leave your husband.

- If you choose to leave anyway...
 1. Do not marry again or...
 2. Reconcile w/your husband

A command from the Lord to husbands
Do not divorce your wife.

Mark 10:6 But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' 7 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, 8 and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 **Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.**"

Matthew 19:7 They said to Him, "**Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?**" 8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you, **whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.**" 10 His disciples said to Him,

"If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

Jesus responds w/the benefits of celibacy [Mat 19:10 above]
If you are married...Do not divorce.

Malachi 2:16 "For the Lord God of Israel says That **He hates divorce**, For it covers one's **garment with violence** [*hamas*. Lit. wrong, cruelty, injustice, damage]. IOWs everything that's wrong] ," Says the Lord of hosts. "Therefore **take heed to your spirit**, That you **do not deal treacherously**."

Paul in addressing a marriage where both partners are Christians, says that they should not /cannot break up the marriage in a misguided search for higher spirituality. In fact if one were to depart from their spouse they must either remain unmarried or be reconciled. [Guzik]

To the Married: Do not Divorce.
Why be covered with *Hamas*?

12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say...

We should not think Paul is any less inspired by the Holy Spirit on this point. When he says not the Lord, he simply means that Jesus did not teach on this specific point, as He had in the previous situation in Matthew 19:3-9. So, if Jesus did not speak on this specific point, Jesus' inspired apostle will! [Guzik]

12b ...If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

▪ **Two Biblical Grounds for Divorce**

1. **Adultery:** Divorce permitted not encouraged by Jesus
2. **Abandonment:** Unsaved spouse leaves [later]

Separation for any other reason is not recognized by God as divorce

The partners are expected to honor their marriage vows even in their separation, because as far as God is concerned they are still married – their marriage covenant has not been broken for what God considers to be Biblical reasons. They may live as separate *but not single*. [Guzik]

God said no/You said yes/Here you are

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be **unequally yoked** together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

To Christians Married to Unbelievers

- Do not separate *from them* instead...
- Allow the Spirit in you to *sanctify them*

God's Economy: Their soul is more important than your happiness
Besides...It's your own fault for marrying an unbeliever

The believing spouse sanctifies the unbelieving spouse *and their children*
IOWs God will use even a difficult marriage in His manifold plan

Malachi 2:15 [Of marriage] ...did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? **He seeks godly offspring.** Therefore take heed to your spirit, And **let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.**

This is a beautiful assurance that the children of a Christian parent are saved, at least until they come to an age of personal accountability. We have no similar assurance for the children of parents who are not Christians. In fact, the sense of the text argues against it. – clearly giving the sense that *apart from the presence of a Christian parent*, the child is not regarded as holy, rather as unclean. [Guzik]

So Christian, do the hard thing...Stay with your unbelieving spouse
For God's sake/For your children's sake

15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases.

▪ **Divorce initiated by unbeliever?**

1. Let them go [Don't provoke them to go]
2. Free to marry

15b ...But [remember] God has called us to peace.

Context: Rather than find reasons to tear apart a family seek God
God's desire is peace between Husband/Wife by His Spirit so stay...

16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband?
Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

1 Peter 3:1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that **even if some do not obey the word**, they, without a word, **may be won by the conduct of their wives...**

III. Live as You Are Called

17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.

What should I do if I'm separated for unbiblical reasons/nor remarried?
As the Lord called you today walk in that. Can't put the toothpaste back in the Tube

18 Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised.
Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. 20 Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. 21 Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. 22 For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave.

Paul to all churches...

Remain as you were when you were first saved

- **Circumcised/Uncircumcised**/Jew/Greek all the same in Christ
- **Slave/Free:** Be content not focusing on either. Both are temporal

John 8:36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Gotta serve somebody
We were once deceived slaves of the Devil...Now willing Servants of Christ

23 You were bought at a price; **do not become slaves of men.** 24 Brethren, let each one **remain with God in that state in which he was called.**

In Christ we're able to flourish anywhere we're planted

IV. To the Unmarried and Widows

25 Now **concerning virgins:** I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy.

Again, we are not to think Paul is any less inspired here, but because he deals with life-situations that *differ from person to person*, he cannot, and will not, give a commandment. Yet, *he will give inspired advice and principles.* [Guzik] [Here to the unmarried...]

To Virgins: Unmarried Sons/Daughters

26 I suppose therefore that this is good because of the **present distress**—that it is good for **a man to remain as he is:** 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But even if you do marry, **you have not sinned;** and if a virgin marries, **she has not sinned.**

- **To the unmarried:** Consider the times/Read the room. **Distress coming/here?**
 1. If married stay married
 2. If unmarried stay unmarried

The grass is always greener, so...
If you choose to marry it is not sin, but don't say I didn't warn you...

28b ...Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.

Those married in times of distress will have special troubles/hardships
Hard does not *mean bad* in God's economy. It just *means hard*.

The sea of matrimony is rough Even under the most favorable conditions [JV McGee]

29 But this I say, brethren, the **time is short**, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, 30 those who weep as

though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, 31 and those who use this world as not misusing it. **For the form of this world is passing away.**

Psalm 39:6 Surely every man walks about like a shadow; Surely they **busy themselves in vain; He heaps up riches,** And does not know who will gather them.

Prepare for Jesus as if it will be 100 yrs. before He comes
Live for Jesus as if He is coming today!

Put God first. Don't let intense sorrows or pleasures keep you from serving God to the fullest. Don't allow great riches or lack of them keep you from serving God. IOWs In these times of distress and in all times...put God first. Time is short. [NJC]

The ancient Greek word for short is "*sustello*," meaning *contracted and rolled up*, as sails used to be by the mariners, when the ship draws nigh to the harbor. [Trapp]

The time is short; furled up, like sails when the mariner comes near his port. [Poole]

The harbor is near, and the sails are shortened!
Ready the ship for harbor!

Matthew 24:44 Therefore you also **be ready,** for the **Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.**

Romans 13:11 ...[Love] ...knowing the time, that now it is **high time to awake** out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

The form of this world is passing away
Live/Think/Act with an Eternal Perspective

1 Peter 1:24 ..."All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away..."

1 Peter 4:7 ...the **end of all things is at hand** therefore be serious/watchful in your prayers.

1 John 2:17 ...the **world is passing away**...but he who does the will of God abides forever.

The form of this world is passing away
Form [gr. *schema*] i.e. The bones the world hangs on have Osteo-porosis

2 Timothy 2:3 ... endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No one engaged in warfare **entangles himself with the affairs of this life,** that he may **please him who enlisted him as a soldier.**

32 But **I want you to be without care.**

I want you to live w/out unnecessary cares...

32b ...He who is **unmarried cares for the things of the Lord**—how he may please the Lord. 33 But he who is **married cares about the things of the**

world—how he may please his wife. 34 There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The **unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord**, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is **married cares about the things of the world**—how she may please her husband.

Being married is a balancing act
Serving the Lord/Serving our spouse/Doing both well

35 And this I say **for your own profit**, not that I may **put a leash on you**, but for what is proper, and **that you may serve the Lord without distraction.**

Paul's Goal: Provide an Eternal Perspective
New Schema of Vertical Thinking/Acting

To Fathers of the Unmarried

36 [Back to earth] But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin [daughter], if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; **let them marry.**

Situation: A father desires his daughter to marry
It is not sin...Send her to Home Depot

37 Nevertheless he who stands **steadfast in his heart**, having no necessity, but has **power over his own will**, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin [daughter], does well. 38 So then **he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better.**

Situation: A father is fine with his daughter staying home
It is not sin: Speak to her re benefits singleness unto the Lord

- IOWs Fathers encourage daughters to seek the Lord's guidance in marriage

To Older Widows...
[c.f. 1 Tim 5:14-15]

39 A wife is bound by law **as long as her husband lives**; but if her husband dies, she is at **liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.**

A widow has the Godly right to marry another believer...

40 **But she is happier** if she remains as she is, **according to my judgment—and I think I also have the Spirit of God.**

Is Paul by the Spirit trying to tell us something?

What about being fruitful/Multiplying?

We did that: 8 Billion people on earth, yet...

To married Christians: Continue the *upward trajectory* on the birthrate

Moving forward to the pinnacle of Chapter 13 the Love Chapter