

**CULTIVATE: INTIMACY**  
1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-9  
MAY 27, 28, 2023  
PASTOR RICKY JENKINS

**1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-9**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Pastor Ricky began today's lesson with a reminder that our series is "*Cultivate: The Marriage Series EVERYONE Needs to hear*" uses the verb '*cultivate*' because relationships require WORK and only WORK when we WORK. He also reminded us that THE BIBLICAL VISION OF MARRIAGE is defined as a lifelong, covenantal relationship between one biological male and one biological female. In past weeks, we have also explored the BIBLICAL VISION OF SINGLENESS as having the potential to show "our love" for God separate from the 'distractions' of marriage as described by the apostle Paul.

Today we discussed the BIBLICAL VISION OF SEXUAL INTIMACY: God's purpose and design for sexual intimacy; practical and Biblical principles of how we as singles and marrieds ought to navigate sexual intimacy in our lives.

To begin, we need to consider these facts:

- a. Sexual infidelity is the leading reason noted for divorce
- b. In a recent survey with teens and young adults, 88% believed romantic relationship with someone other than your spouse is wrong, while only 32% believed that viewing pornography is wrong.
- c. According to the Relationships on America Study, sexless marriages are becoming more common and the majority of Americans consummate their marriages before marriage.

Pastor Ricky used this analogy: Marriage is like Golf! "No one plays golf well without help," he reminded us, just like, "No one can do marriage well without help." And...he urged us to consider the myriad of variables determining whether one might have a successful game day, similar to the myriad of variables determining whether your marriage (and its sexual intimacy) will be successful. We turned to our Scripture passage for direction.

**1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-9**

**LESSON:**

**GOD'S THOUGHTS ON SEXUAL INTIMACY**

1. In our passage, we are in Corinth, the cosmopolitan city, both secular and idolatrous, with religious cults, and thousands of prostitutes at the temple of Aphrodite.
2. "*The problem was not that the church was in Corinth but that too much of Corinth was in the church,*" says Gordon Fee.
3. Verse 1 Paul responds to the question that the church in Corinth had asked about navigating sex, marriage, relationships.
  - The ASCETICS believed that anything associated with the flesh was bad, so they advocated denial and abstinence even in marriage. This ideology seemed to be gaining popularity among Corinthian believers.
  - The other view was "TRY-SEXUALS" which basically meant that believers could try anything.
4. Paul makes some ground breaking statements concerning sexual intimacy:
  - We ALL need to be ON GUARD concerning SEXUAL IMMORALITY.
  - "*If unmarried, God's will for sexual intimacy is that you abstain*" Paul reminds them.
  - Paul reminds married men, "*You don't have authority over your own body. Your wife does.*"
  - He reminds married women, "*You don't have authority over your own body. Your husband does.*"

## **CULTIVATE: INTIMACY**

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- *“Neither husband nor wife should be primarily concerned with GETTING sexual pleasure, but rather GIVING sexual pleasure,”* he tells them.

### **GOD’S PURPOSE FOR SEXUAL INTIMACY**

1. God has purposed sexual intimacy, exclusively, for the marriage covenant.
  - God’s wedding gift to marrieds is sex.
  - Its purpose is to celebrate oneness with our spouse and deepen our commitment to one another.
2. Consider God’s WHY for limiting sexual intimacy to marriage as the HIS acknowledgement of the UNIFYING/BONDING nature of sexual intimacy, and His protection of us when we step outside of His plan.
  - 1 Corinthians 6, Paul reminds us to refrain from “bonding” or becoming one flesh outside of the marriage covenant.
  - Ricky used the analogy of fire. Fire is great is used correctly. If used incorrectly, the hurt can be devastating.

### **GOD’S PRINCIPLES FOR SEXUAL INTIMACY**

#### **TO SINGLES:**

1. REMEMBER Your Worth - You are amazing and special. God has a plan.
2. REMEMBER Your God - God would not call you to wait without giving you the power to wait.
3. REMEMBER Your Community - Invest in relationships with Godly, likeminded people who will “walk the walk” with you.

#### **TO MARRIEDS:**

1. Begin praying for great intimacy, individually and corporately (1Corinthians 7:5b)
2. Refrain from weaponizing sex (1 Corinthians 7:5)
3. Realize that intimacy starts before intimacy (1 Corinthians 13)
4. Share in the Pursuit (Song of Solomon 7:1-13)
5. Pay attention to context (Philippians 2:3)
6. Try not to say no (Proverbs 3:27)
7. Drink from our own cistern (Proverbs 5:15-22)

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Read **1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-9** again. Review the two different thoughts/ideologies concerning sexual intimacy that existed at that time for believers. Do these ideologies exist in today’s world culture? In the culture of believers today? Compare and Contrast.
2. What was Paul’s instruction to the single believers of the time? To the married believers? Are these instructions applicable today? Why? Have these instructions ever been taught to you? To your children? How do you feel about them?
3. Discuss God’s purpose for sexual intimacy. Discuss the idea of “oneness” as it applies to the marriage covenant.
4. Discuss the practical instructions given by Scripture in “God’s Principles for Sexual Intimacy” and discuss how you might use these in future conversation with marrieds or singles.