

Concerning Marriage and Divorce

1 Corinthians 7:10-16

10 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband

11 (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

12 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her.

13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

15 Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.

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?

I. Instruction for Those Married – vs. 10-11

- Why does Paul say, “not I, but the Lord”?



- How does God’s design for marriage go against the current, cultural understanding of marriage?
- Does God recognize all divorce as legitimate?
- Why does God “hate divorce”? (*Malachi 2:16*) How does divorce dishonor God? How does it dishonor Him if two believers get a divorce?
- How does a married couple bring God glory by staying committed to one another in marriage?

II. Instruction for Those Married to Unbelievers – vvs. 12-16

A. The Command

- Why would some of the Corinthian Christians want to divorce their unbelieving spouse?
- Paul commands married Christians to remain married – do not seek to be single again. How does this help to balance his previous teaching on the blessedness of singleness?

B. The Consent

- Does God forbid divorce at all costs? What exception is given in verse 15?



- What does it mean that “God has called us to peace”? Consider the following passages:

Romans 12:17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. **18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. **19** Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.

Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. **15** See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

- How would trying to “restrain” an unbelieving spouse from leaving actually dishonor the Lord?

C. The Comfort

- Should a Christian seek a divorce from their unbelieving spouse? What are the reasons they should stay married?
- What effect should a believer have on an unbelieving spouse? Or on their children? Consider the following verses and discuss:

Matthew 5:16 “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”



Acts 16:1 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. . .

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2 Timothy 1:5 For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that *it is* in you as well.

- What became of Timothy after growing up with a believing mom and an unbelieving father?

- Were you (or someone you know) like Timothy and were influenced in your faith through one believing parent?

- How does the following passage teach that wives, specifically, should live with unbelieving husbands:

1 Peter 3:1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, **2** as they observe your chaste and lrespectful behavior. **3** Your adornment must not be *merely* external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; **4** but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.



- Should the spouse of an unbeliever seek to “pester” or “nag” them with the gospel?
- What kind of hope and encouragement does verses **14-16** give to anyone married to an unbeliever?

Prayer Topics:

- Pray that God would strengthen and protect the marriages at ABC.
- Pray that God would save the unbelieving spouses of those at ABC.

