

"TO THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT CORINTH"

PAUL'S LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH



1 CORINTHIANS 7

Words in *italics* are not in the Greek text.

¹ Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. ² But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. ³ The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*. ⁵ Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ⁶ But this I say by way of concession, not of command. ⁷ Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

NOW CONCERNING THINGS ABOUT WHICH YOU WROTE: *MARRIAGE OBLIGATIONS AND THE AVOIDANCE OF SIN*

- What is Paul talking about when he talks about "touching a woman"?
 - So, is sex a bad thing?
 - Circumstances in which Paul says this...
 - 1Cor. 7: 25 Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an _____ as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. 26 I think then that this is good in view of the _____, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.
 - In fact, in Rabbinic teaching marriage was often held to be uniquely mandatory for men, and an unmarried man over the age of twenty is considered "cursed by God Himself." A man who, without any reason, refused to marry after he had passed his twentieth year was frequently compelled to do so by the court. (<https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10435-marriage-laws>)
- Nevertheless, Paul teaches that each man is have his own wife and each woman is to have her own husband — Why?
 - What is meant (v. 4) by husbands and wives not having authority over their own bodies?
 - Do spouses sometimes "deprive one another" in this regard?
 - What does Paul say about it? (v. 5)
 - What is the exception that Paul gives?
 - What might happen otherwise?
- What thing (v. 6) is Paul referring to when he says, "by concession, not of command"?

⁸ But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. ⁹ But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn *with passion*.

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?

¹⁷ Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches. ¹⁸ Was any man called *when he was already* circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in

- What is he calling a “gift”?
- Does everyone have this gift?
- If you are married and have this gift, is it OK to deprive your spouse?

- Summary of Paul’s advice given the circumstances: “_____ even as I. But if they do not have self-control, let them _____; for it is better to marry than to _____ with _____.”

SOME INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT MARRIAGE

- Where is this instruction specifically coming from?
 - Why would Paul (v. 10, 11) given husbands and wives this instruction *in this context*?
 - What did God instruct them to do?
 - If a wife should leave her husband, what was she to do?
 - Does this advice apply to husbands, too?
- What is Paul’s wisdom regarding being married to an unbelieving spouse?
 - What does it mean that the believing spouse “sanctifies” the unbelieving spouse?
 - Perhaps this concern is raised because of Paul’s earlier teaching that to “be one” with a _____ would defile one’s body.
 - So would marriage with an unbeliever defile the Christian and make the children of that marriage defiled too?
 - What is Paul assurance here?
- But if the unbelieving spouse leaves, what should a believer do?
 - Believers in this situation are not under _____.
 - God has called us to _____.
 - What did Paul say to those who might say, “But what if through my example and association I convert them?”
- The principle involved: “As the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has _____ each, in this _____ let him _____.”
 - Is this just a local piece of advice; and how do you know? (v. 17)

uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised.¹⁹

Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but *what matters* is the keeping of the commandments of God.²⁰ Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called.

²¹ Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that.²²

For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.²³ You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.²⁴ Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that condition in which he was called.

²⁵ Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy.²⁶ I think then that this is good in view 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 released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife.²⁸ But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.²⁹ But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none;³⁰ and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess;³¹ and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.

- Examples of difficult circumstances in which one might be called...

- Should one become uncircumcised? (v. 18)

- What is important? (v. 19)

- Each man must _____ in that _____ in which he was _____.

- How easily escaped is the status of slavery?

- What is the principle again? "Each one is to _____ with God in that _____ in which he was _____."

- How does this principle apply to...

- Marriage?

- Divorce?

- Returning to the question of getting married and virgins in particular...

- Paul's opinion is...

- I think then that this is _____ in view of the present _____, that it is good for a man to _____ as he is.

- Are you bound by a wife?

- _____

- Are you released from a wife?

- _____

- But...

- If you marry you have not _____

- If a _____ marries, she has not _____

- But they will have _____ in this life

- I am trying to _____ you

- What does Paul mean when he says that the time has been shortened?

- How would summarize Paul in verses 29-31

³² But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; ³³ but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, ³⁴ and *his interests* are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. ³⁵ This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and *to secure* undistracted devotion to the Lord.

³⁶ But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin *daughter*, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry. ³⁷ But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin *daughter*, he will do well. ³⁸ So then both he who gives his own virgin *daughter* in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.

³⁹ A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. ⁴⁰ But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

- What is the unmarried Christian free to concern himself with?
- What is the married Christian often going to concern himself about?
- What does he mean when he says he is saying this for their...
 - benefit
 - not to put a restraint upon them
 - What would undistracted devotion be?
- A question is often raised as to whether Paul refers to a virgin daughter or his unmarried beloved. What do you think?
 - Considerations
 - “Daughter” is not in the text
 - “gives in marriage” (γαμίζω, *gamidzo*) is a different word from “marry” (γαμέω, *gameo*)
 - Either way, what is Paul’s guidance here?
- How long is a marriage vow binding?
 - When a spouse dies, what are the restrictions on remarriage?
 - But given the circumstances of the early church (and any other circumstances like it), what is Paul’s guidance?