



1 Corinthians 7:1-7 _Apostolic Marriage Principles Pt 1

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Text: 1 Cor 7:1-1-7

Before we begin, let's keep in mind God's directives concerning marriage from some key verses:

Gen 1:26-28 ESV Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all 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) And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Gen 2:18-25 ESV Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (19) Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. (20) The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. (21) So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. (22) And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. (23) Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (24) Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (25) And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Mat 19:3-9 ESV And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" (4) He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, (5) and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' (6) So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (7) They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" (8) He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed 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."

- Man and woman are to "take **dominion**" (Gen 1:28) by managing God's resources for His glory AND having offspring that are trained to honor Christ and His commands as well.
- Man was given headship to lead and protect; woman was taken out of man to be a helper fit for him. (See also 1 Cor 11:1-9; Eph 5:22-33)
- I believe it's worth noting again that marriage is the cornerstone of a godly **society**. Don't be ashamed of it!
- Divorce is violent. (Mal 2:16) Marriage is for life!
- But just as God sovereignly gave Eve to Adam, God sovereignly decides who marries and when.
- So, as we move through 1 Corinthians 7, we want to:
 1. Uphold biblical marriage. Please saints don't be ashamed for believing the Bible!

2. Uphold Kingdom singleness by exalting God's sovereignty.
3. Help the "fear of commitment" types. ☺ Called to be married men? Ok...then stop being scared! ☺
4. Encourage **contentment** "in whatever condition each was called." (7:24)

Apostolic Marriage Principles:

Verse 1:

- In the context of warnings against sexual immorality (6:12-20), Paul now begins answering specific question about which the Corinthians wrote to him. Given the history of paganism and immorality in the region, it's not surprising that the Christian ethics of marriage needed some fine tuning in Corinth.
- There were apparently some extremes, which were a real issue in this church, with some saying that even married people should not have physical relationships. Others likely said that all sexual relations were evil, with some as we mentioned last week, saying "the body is for food, and food for the body," meaning do what you want!
- First, Paul establishes that abstinence, and by extension, being **single**, is a good thing. Jesus does the same (Matt 19:10-12).
- In fact, Paul calls being single for the Kingdom sake, a "**gift**" just as marriage is a "gift." (v7)
- Please know dear friends, that God is the giver of gifts!! ☺

Rom 11:29 ESV For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Rom 12:6 ESV Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;

1Co 12:11 ESV All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

1Pe 4:10 ESV As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

Principally, there is more going on with your marital state than how you feel. God, for His own glory, brings people together or keeps them apart. **Please be at peace!**

Verse 2

- The terms, "own wife/own husband" exclude the possibility of polygamy and homosexual marriage, just so you know!
- Now, many pastors and teachers have gotten a bit too deep with this verse (and verse 9). I'm SO guilty of this.
- Our tendency is to apply so many caveats, that we lose the force of the verse's plain meaning. So yes, I'll say again that you can marry and still be tempted and burning with passion. (v9)
- **However, that sad reality is not supposed to be normative!**
- Marriage IS in fact a **hedge** against sexual immorality! No funny exegesis is needed!
- When taken in context with the rest of biblical commands (Gen 2, Eph 4, Eph 5, Prov 5, Deut 6, etc.), **it is ok** to see marriage as given to be **one** (of many) protections against temptation!
- The implication here is simple: if you cannot control yourself, marry!
- "Marriage is God's **only** provision for sexual fulfillment."

- As much as I tried to over think this, it is stated simply. Of course there is more to a healthy marriage: not being unequally yoked, vision, views about money and children, doctrinal matters and church, etc. But:
- This admonition remains!
 1. Friends, it isn't as deep as we sometimes make it. Physical intimacy is a real, human need.
 2. Unless gifted to singleness, this area of physical attraction and "eros" love is IMPORTANT.
 3. In fact, to minimize this area in marriage is to set the marriage up for temptation and cultivate dull, lifeless marriages! That is not the biblical model!

Pro 5:18-19 ESV Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, (19) a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.

4. Just as it is legitimate to pursue marriage, it is also legitimate that one of the motivations is a desire for physical **intimacy**.
5. No...it NOT the only thing and good premarital counseling will help with that. But it IS an important, clearly stated thing!
6. **Yes, there is more going on, like marriage typifying the Christ and His church! (Eph 5:22-33). But it sure would be hard for the world to see that when there is no affection, lots of arguing, no passion for one another, and separation/divorce.**

Verse 3

- A good word to key on here is "**give**." This suggests a loving, thoughtful, volitional act.
- Married people should "give" to one another. This mindset helps defeat **selfishness**.
- *1Co 7:3 KJV "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband."* 😊
- Another good word to key on here is "rights." Intimacy isn't withheld to get something else or to punish. A spouse has a biblical right to the body of his or her spouse. If that is too much for you, DO NOT marry!

Verse 4

- Single folks take heed! You lose "authority" over your own body when you marry! Except in the case medical problems, there is no such thing as a **celibate** marriage.
- A married couple mutually gives up a key prerogative of singleness...power over their own bodies.
- Again, some Christians in Corinth may have thought all physical intimacy was wrong. Paul refutes that. And interestingly, he doesn't mention "conjugal rights" in the context of having **children**.
- Yes, procreation is a big dominion deal; but this entire context isn't about procreation; it's about **enjoyment** and defeating temptation. **Newsflash: Christian marrieds are supposed to enjoy each other!**

Verse 5

- Deprive is a strong word, and this is a strong command, indicating again that this deprivation may have been going on in the Corinthian church. Again, an extreme...from gross immorality in this church on the one hand to even married people depriving one another on the other hand.
- To deprive means “to withhold on purpose; to keep destitute.” **Don’t do this to your spouse!!**
- Abstinent periods in marriage, if there are any at all, should 1) Be by mutual **agreement** and 2) for **prayer**. If these two qualifications aren’t met, all other biblical commands apply!
- Again, Paul backs up his earlier claim that marriage is a hedge against sexual temptation: “...but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”
- After times of abstinence, spouses should recognize a greater vulnerability to temptation as a possible consequence and come together again quickly.

Verses 6

- “Concession:” Paul was not saying times of celibacy were commanded. But for those who desired such, he was simply giving the sort of regulation that would bless and keep the marriage from temptation.

Verse 7

- Paul frames both marriage and being single (“as I am”) as a gift!
- Again, it is the **sovereignty** of God that determines our “condition.”
- This should give us all great peace! Singles are not “lower than” or “second class.” Neither are marrieds “in a better place.” Each state has its benefits and challenges.
- “Each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another!”

Today’s Key Lessons:

1. Marriage is ordained by God; one man, one woman.
2. Marriage has a “dominion” purpose.
3. God directs who gets married and when.
4. Marriage is one of several hedges against sexual temptation. We need to accept this again.
5. Marriage requires the sacrifice of bodily authority for the good of one’s spouse.
6. Physical intimacy is to be enjoyed, and only within marriage!
7. Both marriage and singleness are gifts to be used for the glory of God.

Heb 13:4 ESV Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Amen.