



1 Corinthians 7:8-16 Apostolic Marriage Principles Pt 2

November 24, 2013

Text: 1 Cor 7:8-16, 25-40

A Review of Goals for 1 Corinthians 7:

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; a quick (LOL!) review from last week ☺

Verse 1:

- 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)

Verse 2

- 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! **Yes, there is more going on, like marriage typifying 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

- Married people should "give" to one another. This mindset helps defeat selfishness.

Verse 4

- A married couple mutually gives up a key prerogative of singleness...power over their own bodies.

Verse 5

- 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! 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 goods and challenges.

Today's Thoughts:

Verse 8

Once again, we see the “good” language as it relates to being single. This point I believe is critical and has great application even in our day. We’ll see Paul’s reasoning beginning at verse 25 in a week or so. But for now, we want to really encourage all singles to think through these verses:

*1Co 7:32 ESV I want you to be free from anxieties. **The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord.***

*1Co 7:34 ESV ...**And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit.** But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.*

Verse 9

- And again, we see marriage is a biblical protection against sexual immorality. As we said last week, in our culture, we often use unbiblical justifications for discouraging marriage: certain education, financial success, etc.
- So often by doing so, men and women are set up for **temptations** they might struggle to defeat.

Verse 10

- “Separation” here means **divorce**. There was no separation like we know it today where people are just living apart. The word in Greek is the same word used in Matthew 19. Remember the command of the Lord with respect to divorce:
- *Mat 19:3-6 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**."*
- Roman law permitted either spouse to divorce the other without a reason. Paul, attacks this cultural mindset as he’d been doing throughout this epistle. Christians live differently!
- The command is “do not divorce.”

Verse 11

- Again, unless sexual immorality is the cause, neither saved spouse should seek a divorce. And if they did, they should remain unmarried or be reconciled.
- *Mat 19:9 ESV - And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."*
- Contextually, in God’s sight she would be reconciled “to her husband.” The Lord would still consider them married! Marriage is serious people! ☺
- To remarry except for the case of sexual immorality would mean the new marriage (which by the way is *still* a marriage) begins with **adultery**. It shouldn’t be thought of as a continual adultery, but rather that its beginning wasn’t the way God wanted.
- Some pastors and theologians believe that Christ’s command about divorce and sexual immorality refers not to a married couple, but to a “betrothed” couple. We respect those brothers but that is not our position. We believe that divorce is *biblically permissible* (not commanded or even recommended) on the grounds of sexual immorality, which is defined as ANY sexual intercourse that is contrary to Scripture. We also affirm the biblical justification of an unbelieving spouse abandoning the believing spouse (v15).

Verse 12

- The phrase “I, not the Lord” needs to be understood. Some use Paul’s language here (and in verse 25) to basically invalidate most of if not all Pauline teaching. They say, “How do we know what is Paul and what is God?”
- What he is saying is that the Lord spoke specifically about divorce, but didn’t about the specific case of an unequally yoked marriage. Paul isn’t invalidating the inspired nature of what he is communicating! “I, not the Lord” means “this is new.” He goes on to say, “*Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.*” 1Co 7:40 ESV)
- Peter considered Paul’s writings to be Scripture: “*And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, (16) as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.*” (2Pe 3:15-16 ESV)
- And lest we forget: “*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*” (2Ti 3:16-17 ESV)
- The command is “do not divorce the unbelieving wife if she wants to remain married.”
- The command isn’t “make life hard for her so she will leave!” ☺

Verse 13

- The same applies equally to a saved woman and an unsaved man. You can’t just **trade** him in for a sanctified church brother!

Verse 14

“For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.”

This verse looks tough, but let’s think about what it cannot mean to figure out what it does mean:

1. It cannot mean that an unsaved spouse will somehow be considered “saved” on the Day of Judgment. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Eph 2:8-10). Each person will give an account before God for themselves (Matt 12:36; Rev 20:12-15).
2. It cannot mean that unholy and unrighteous behaviors committed by an unsaved spouse are somehow made holy. The **Law** of God defines sin (Ex 20; Rom 7:13; 1 Tim 1:8-11), and the Scripture cannot be broken (Jn 10:35).
3. Therefore, we are left with the following deductions:
 - a. It refers to the marriage itself nevertheless being “holy” before the Lord, regardless of the unequally yoked nature. In other words, the marriage is still **legitimate**.
 - b. It refers to the marriage continuing to be a “dominion” marriage, with offspring who are still covered and protected by **grace**.
 - c. It refers to the greater influence of the believing spouse, by faith, that will one day “save” the unbelieving spouse, and that his/her influence on any children of the union will be also be greater.

Verse 15

- In the sad case of abandonment and divorce initiated by an unbelieving spouse, the believing spouse is not **bound**, and is not in sin if they remarry.
- It is debatable whether in this case, a believing spouse could lawfully initiate a legal divorce. Say in the situation where “separation” drags on and on. But it is clear that the believer is free if abandoned or divorced by an unbelieving spouse.
- My *opinion* is that the “call to peace” would seem to indicate the believer, if abandoned, if all avenues of reconciliation are exhausted, and especially if there has been subsequent adultery, can initiate a divorce.
- This however, would not be the case for two believing spouses where there is no adultery: “A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.” (1Co 7:39 ESV)

Verse 16

- So Paul’s admonishment back in verses 12 and 13, to stay in unequally yoked marriage, has a **gospel** motive!
- This verse has the potential to give SO much hope to those in this situation. The presence of a saved spouse, biblically, is reason for hope that God will save the unbelieving spouse! **Do not give up!**

Practical guidance for those with unsaved spouses:

1. Pray for their salvation **daily**.

Eph 6:12 ESV For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Eph 6:17-18 ESV and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, (18) praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

Rom 10:1 ESV **Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.**

2. Live with them, as much as possible, in **peace**.

Rom 12:16-18 ESV Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. (17) Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. (18) **If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.**

3. Recognize the power of your **example**.

1Pe 3:1-7 ESV Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, **so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,** (2) when they see your respectful and pure conduct. (3) Do not let your adorning be external--the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear-- (4) but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. (5) For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by

*submitting to their own husbands, (6) as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. (7) Likewise, husbands, **live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman** as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*

- So then the wife remains respectful and pure, and focuses more on her example.
- The husband then does the same, loving his wife with understanding, honor, and tenderness.

4. Obey the Scriptures in your Role.

- Believing husbands have the added benefit of being able to call the family together for prayer and study, **tenderly** exhorting his wife to at least listen and maybe participate. Either way, he must lead. (Deut 6:1-12)
- Believing wives must be a bit more delicate in their leadership; she has **creation** order working against her. If you remember, according to a report published by The Baptist Press, if a child is the first person in the household to become a Christian, there is a 3.5% probability everyone in the household will follow. If the mother is first, there is a 17% chance everyone else in the household will submit to Christ. If the father professes Christ first, there is a 93% probability that everyone else in the house will heed the Gospel call.
- Therefore, she must focus on leading the children towards Christ and serving her husband with respect and love. Rare is the woman who can “fuss” a husband into the Kingdom. 😊

Pro 21:9 CEV It's better to stay outside on the roof of your house than to live inside with a nagging wife.

Pro 19:13 CEV A foolish son brings disgrace to his father. A nagging wife goes on and on like the drip, drip, drip of the rain.

5. When the opportunity arises, and won't explode into a mess, preach the gospel. 😊

- *Mar 16:15 ESV And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.*
- Pick your spots. Be tender. Don't use the Bible to extort. Don't withhold or deprive. Be truthful and share your heart. Love hard!

Amen.