

1 Corinthians 7 18 - 40 New American Standard Bible

Teaching on Marriage

Was any man called *when he was already* circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in 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 *person* is to remain in that state in which he was called. ²¹ Were you called as a slave? Do not let it concern you. But if you are also able to become free, take advantage of *that*. ²² For the one who was called in the Lord as a slave, is the Lord's freed person; likewise the one who was called as free, is Christ's slave. ²³ You were bought for a price; do not become slaves of people. ²⁴ Brothers *and sisters*, 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 am offering direction 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 people *as yourselves* will have trouble in this life, and *I am trying to spare you*. ²⁹ But this I say, brothers, 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 *present* form of this world is passing away. 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 I say this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but to promote what is appropriate and *to secure* undistracted devotion to the Lord. ³⁶ But if anyone thinks that he is acting dishonorably toward his virgin, if she is past her youth and it ought to be so, let him do what he wishes, he is not sinning; let them marry. ³⁷ But the one who stands firm in his heart, if he is not under constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin, he will do well. ³⁸ So then, both the one who gives his own virgin in marriage does well, and the one 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 dies, 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.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

1. What questions were provoked within you?
2. Did anything confuse you?
3. Did anything move you emotionally?
4. Did God instruct you to do something?
5. Did you gain any insight into God's character?

Pauls observations and insights

1. If the togetherness of the marriage is not there and peace has left the relationship, and the bond of together is broken and disharmony is in the relationship then it is better for them to separate.
2. The opportunity for the unsaved spouse will be lost if the togetherness is broken.
3. Circumcision was the mark of the covenant God made with Israel. It is not necessary for it to continue within the new covenant. What God requires now is the circumcision of the heart.
4. The point of reconnection to God is to do as God does and be as God is, which is righteous and holy.
5. In the eyes of the powerful slavery at this time is seen as a profession within society. It doesn't make it right but we can't change historical perspectives by seeing slavery with the eyes of today's perspective.
6. Paul uses the idea of being bound to God as a way of revealing the surrender of the will.
7. All are bound to sin and therefore all are slaves to sin. Jesus blood paid for our freedom from being controlled by the sinful nature. Jesus has given us the right to be free.
8. Virgins, and not being in a relationship, is better in Paul's eyes than the distraction of a marital relationship, as this will draw upon you, trials and tribulations.
9. Paul makes reference to the end of the age and things like relationships and not being married. There are no marriage relationships in heaven, marriage belongs to this world and not heaven.
10. Demands on an unmarried man/woman is less of a distraction from obeying the Lord than those who are married, unless the desire for marriage is greater and is controlling them.
11. Pauls heart is for all of us to be undistracted from our devotion to the Lord.
12. A father has to call a judgement as to what is best for his virgin daughter. This too, is a historical social perspective that does not operate in our culture today.
13. Although in some countries this practice may still be prevalent.
14. So Paul thinks alone in the Lord is better than being together unless self-control doesn't exist.
15. Only death breaks the bond of together in a marriage, until then they are still married.
16. If two people separate and re-marry they are committing adultery unless one of them dies.

17. God has a best practice position in everything regarding life. To sin is to fall short of God's best practice. He would prefer that we never sin, but we do, and so He has provided for us a resolve – repentance and forgiveness.
18. I believe divorce is not an option but there is not a loss of blessing from God if divorce occurs, it just means that you have moved away from His best plan for your life. The truth is we have been doing that from the beginning in so many areas of our lives.
19. So not doing what God says is not right as it is to move away from His best plan, but His love for us is not undone if we do.
20. Why we were yet sinners Christ died for us.
21. Is God going to reject you now you are trying to work with His spirit and re-establish His will in your life? No.
22. The term 'in the Lord' means a fellow believer.
23. The term, 'I have the Spirit of God', Paul is saying as I understand His will to me.