

Part one of - 1 Corinthians 7 v 1 -17 New American Standard Bible

Teaching on Marriage

Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. ² But because of sexual 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 the wife also to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise the husband also 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 has his own gift from God, one in this way, and another in that.

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

¹² But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. ¹³ And if any woman has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not divorce her husband. 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 is leaving, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such *cases*, but God has called us in peace. ¹⁶ For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

¹⁷ Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this way let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches

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

Paul's observations and insights

1. Life is about relationships with all sorts of people, men and women are one aspect of that glorious privilege.
2. Appropriate behaviour applies at all levels including sexual application.
3. Inappropriate sexual activity has been the downfall of many and is responsible for much brokenness in our world.
4. Paul is trying to equip this church with insight regarding best practice, as he sees it, before God.
5. The lust of the flesh whether sexual or just the appetites need to be managed. Suppression of these, over a long period of time, will be difficult.
6. In Galatians chapter five, Paul tells us these appetites will be managed well when we walk by the Holy Spirit of God, but if we live according to the flesh these appetites will control us and so discipline and wisdom need to be applied in order not to succumb to the temptations.
7. In a marriage between a man and a woman there are responsibilities to uphold. Neglecting these responsibilities will create problems within the marriage.
8. The principle of surrender of control of the body is a beautiful act when there is a bond of love between the two people. Service is a blessing but if there is no love surrender will be difficult and service can be abused.
9. On occasions it may prove appropriate for a husband and a wife to restrain from sexual acts in order to seek God in prayer.
10. The concept of 'to come together' is the joining through intercourse in a marriage.
11. Neglect or depriving the reality of coming together will create a temptation to the appetites.
12. Paul reveals his performance to abstain from a marriage relationship to make himself more available to the service of the Lord.
13. But he acknowledges that we are all different and some have the gift of together and some have the gift of being apart.
14. He understands that a weakness of a lack of self-control would mean it would be better to marry.
15. To burn with the wrong passion is to get distracted from the service of the Kingdom of God.
16. Sometimes Paul gives his opinion within his teaching and other times he declares 'this is the word of the Lord'. This is why knowing the mind of the Lord is essential if we are to do His will.
17. Paul's statement 'the wife should not leave her husband' has created some very difficult relationships for believers over the years.

18. He presents the option to leave a marriage but with the caveat responsibility of not remarrying. This has also created a lot of painful relationships for Christians over the years.
19. His preferred option is to try reconciliation.
20. Paul instructs the husband 'in the Lord', meaning this is the word of the Lord, not to divorce his wife.
21. A believing partner is to remain with an unbelieving partner.
22. To be sanctified through a wife or a husband does not mean they will be saved, just because they are married to a believer, but that their togetherness is a bond of unity for them and their children.
23. This has also created a great deal of pain for many marriages.