

I Corinthians 7:1-5

I Corinthians 7:1a - Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me:

Paul will now answer a number of questions by the Corinthians. Evidently they had written to the Apostle while he was at Ephesus. In Chapter 7 Paul answers some of their questions. Paul first chooses to deal with their **marital** problems. Remember, he had just discussed sexual desires (6:12-20) about fornication and that it was better for one to marry than to burn.

A. *Paul's teaching to a single person:

I Corinthians 7:1b - *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*

1. This was Paul's advice for **sin**gles. Paul makes it clear that premarital sexual relationships are wrong (Hebrews 13:4). The believer is not to have sexual intercourse with someone **out**side of marriage.
2. It is important to understand that here Paul is **not** teaching for celibacy nor against marriage. Both would go against **God's** will:

Genesis 2:18, 24 - And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone*; I will make him an help meet for him. Gen. 2:24 - Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Proverbs 18:22 - *Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.*

3. Paul **hon**ors marriage when he wrote that it was good for pastors and deacons to be married (I Timothy 3:2, 12) Paul also taught that in the last days there would be false teachers **for**bidding to marry (I Timothy 4:3). Paul was for marriage!
4. Here, Paul is talking about one who is single, and whether or not it was permissible to touch a woman. The answer is **no**! There is no problem for a man to touch his **wife**.

* | To touch in the Greek is a continuous touching that stimulates sexual desires leading to sexually
* | embracing.

5. Question? Is the single life better than being married?
 - a. Paul does not say that remaining single was necessary or better, but he does not deny its **val**ue.
I Corinthians 7:7-8, 26 - For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I Cor. 7:8 - I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. I Cor. 7:26 - I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, *I say*, that *it is* good for a man so to be.
 - b. Paul's advice in times of difficulties and **per**secution was to stay unmarried and avoid the heartbreak of losing a loved one. It would be difficult to have a **nor**mal marriage relationship (few jobs, imprisonment, separation).
 - c. Paul understood himself that being single helped a person to have an **un**distracted devotion to the Lord. As a single person, one would not be responsible for meeting the needs of his mate (kids?). He could use his full energy in serving Christ because his interests would not be **div**ided between God and mate.

I Corinthians 7:35 - And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

d. Paul is in agreement with Jesus that celibacy is **not** for everyone:

I Corinthians 7:7 - For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

Matthew 19:11-12 - But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. Matt. 19:12 - For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

* | So the truth is, marriage is not inferior nor is celibacy higher. Paul is saying that in **light**
* | of the early church context, celibacy could be wise!

I Corinthians 7:26 - I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

B. ****Now Paul's advice is to married believers:**

I Corinthians 7:2 - Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

1. Since fornication is against God's will (I Thessalonians 4:3), they needed a partner in marital union. This would **help** them to avoid immorality and was necessary for many because of their surrounding circumstances.

****Paul is not giving a low opinion of marriage, but he is just being **realistic**.** This was especially true to those men who had difficulty controlling their flesh and were in the high risk category.

2. Another view which makes sense as well says: [to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and every woman have her own husband]. Our verse does not say to "take a wife" but "to have his own wife." The context is partaking of sexual activity.

***Note:** I Corinthians 5:1 - It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

a. Paul says [to avoid fornication] and not adultery. **Why?** This for many was a **particular** type of fornication that was rampant in Corinth. Paul had said:

I Corinthians 6:15 - Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid.

b. ***The temple of Aphrodite had (we are told) over **1,000** sacred prostitutes who were part of their **worship**.** Even after they were saved, many Corinthians were continuing to do this form of sexual activity.

***To help say no to this Paul writes:**

C. I Corinthians 7:3 - Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

1. Some Corinthian believers had married, but religion had put **limitations** on how often the couple were to be intimate with each other (Puritans). With an immoral society, the temple prostitutes made many **vulnerable**.

*Paul corrects this error by saying this type of wrong thinking is not only unnatural, but it is strictly forbidden by God.

2. Paul here teaches that husbands and wives are to demonstrate kindness and good will in fulfilling their sexual responsibilities to their mate. The goal is to meet your mate's need and not forcing your needs. We are to understand that the sex act is not just for the honeymoon or only for childbearing.

Proverbs 5:18-19 - Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Prov. 5:19 - *Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.*

D. I Corinthians 7:4 - The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

1. When people marry, they abdicate the sole right of their own body. They do become one flesh, and each owns the other's body. This also teaches that the wife (the weaker vessel) has equal privilege and authority. *She is not just a sex object existing only to satisfy her husband's every whim. He is never to use brute force or abuse to get his lusts fulfilled. He is never to impose his will, but to understand he is to be a benevolent partner - not, "Submit woman!"
2. Both husband and wife are to lovingly and respectfully give themselves to each other. They are not to always have excuses for why not. There should be a mutual submission to graciously yield their body to the control of their spouse.
*| One's attitude of equal respect and equal consideration helps prevent selfishness or abuse.

E. I Corinthians 7:5 - Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

1. [Defraud ye not] (context) means to not hold back nor deprive your mate of sex or your body.
*Do not use sex as a tool to be vindictive, to get even or to get your way.
2. Sexual abstinence is only to be when both mates agree. Even then, it is only to be for a short period of time. This happens when a couple needs to learn a spiritual truth and they forego sexual privileges in order to spend time with God in fasting and prayer. They devote their total energies to higher priorities.
*| This is the only exception to the rule (of course illnesses included).
3. [and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.]
 - a. It is important to resume normal sexual relations with one's mate before one is tempted by Satan to fulfill his desires outside of the marriage union. Often time builds a gap - coolness between partners that could eventually grow into a split. The devil is shrewd.
 - b. [incontinency] has the idea of lack of ability or power to master their urges. One might even be spiritual but has a weak spot, a lack of restraint over their flesh's desire (Sampson - David).

Lessons:

1. Sex is pure and holy inside of marriage.
2. Sex is not the basis of marriage, but should be done mutually and wholeheartedly.
3. Sex has the goal of meeting the need of your mate.
4. Sex is relational, reproductive, and recreational.
5. Sex gives satisfaction to help prevent immorality.
6. Sex is to be on a regular, continuous, considerate schedule.
7. Sex is obedience to God since He created it within marriage.