

Answering questions:

John Courson points out that the remainder of 1 Corinthians appears to be in response to specific questions from the church.

This is indicated in chapter 7 verse 1 - concerning the things which you wrote to me...

Chapter 7 = partial instruction on issues in a marriage

Chapter 8-10 = Christian liberty

Chapter 11 = church conduct

Chapter 12-14 = spiritual gifts

Chapter 15 = the resurrection

Chapter 16 = giving

What we find here in chapter 7 is that the Corinthians had questions about marriage. Don't we all!

Now - this is not a complete teaching on marriage.

Marriage is a big topic. (Marriage series in January)

The point of marriage is stated in REF. EPH 5:23-33 BUT even that portion by itself is not a COMPLETE teaching on marriage.

OVERVIEW - [Eph 5:30-32 NKJV] 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father

and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."  
32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Thank God that His word teaches us about marriage by measure. Often that's what we need. Gentle course corrections over time.

One idea that continues to underpin the holy ordinance of marriage throughout God's word is found in the very first book of the Bible.

[Gen 2:19-25 NKJV] 19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought [them] to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that [was] its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said: "This [is] now 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 mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

This is the context into which Paul speaks regarding the Corinthian church, having just sternly warned them regarding sexual immorality (porneia) - a tremendous problem at the church in Corinth, steeped in pagan religion

and surrounded by legally, culturally, and religiously sanctioned prostitution.

SO, what's Paul's go to move right out of the gate? "It is good for a man not to touch a woman!" What!?! Come on Paul!

Paul is addressing here the topic of sex - let's keep it in context. Keep your hands, feet, and all other objects inside the bus at all times. Have some self-control.

Now, during this time a few of the early gnostic heresies began to circulate through the church - in one of these "hidden knowledge heresies" people taught that the flesh, our bodies, are inherently sinful and so we ought to ascribe to a more ascetic lifestyle - (SIDENOTE - this ends up morphing into the greater heresy of "seemism") - and then looks a whole lot like monasticism. The trap with the ascetic life is one of self-righteousness AND over-confidence in our flesh - even while we are trying to cast it aside.

We don't know the churches specific questions but given Paul's response perhaps it fell somewhere along the lines of "should we not have wives, should we abstain altogether from sex?"

v.2 - Paul makes allowance for our own over confidence - BE MARRIED!  
Remember, the earlier exhortation from 6:18 FLEE SEXUAL IMMORALITY...don't get dragged into that trap unawares in pursuit of

some self inflicted burden. Just be married, if that's what God has planned for you.

v.3-6 - AFFECTION - spouses render to the other the affection due them - good will, kindness

Notice, this is reciprocal.

AND, without over analyzing this, not a hard and fast rule - the husband is listed first - BE A LEADER HUSBANDS. Render to your wives the affection they are due.

Don't confuse this for the affection that you desire - as the greek implies "conjugal duty."

None of us are strangers to the paradox of marriage. Men crave and desire physical affection, women most often crave and desire emotional affection. Men wish their wives would initiate physical intimacy more, women wish their husbands would talk to them, and rub their back.

Sometimes, even when we are trying to be obedient to this verse we can end up trying to render to our spouse the affection that WE desire instead of what they are due.

The beautiful thing about this is that if it is carried out in love, humility, and obedience it works together just so - naturally, organically.

Additionally, it is not conditional - there is no if/then statement here. We ought to be seeking the betterment of our spouses life. Add to them. Don't just take. Reciprocate in affection. Caring for one another. Remember you are a picture of the church.

v. 4 - we are not our own, we have disavowed self-centeredness in the person of Christ - You have perhaps heard it said marriage isn't 50/50, divorce is 50/50. Marriage is 100/100 - don't nerd out on me and say that doesn't mathematically make sense. When couples go down the conditional road - if they do X, then I'll do X - that is 50/50 - that's the hard road to separation and heart ache.

[Heb 13:4 NKJV] 4 Marriage [is] honorable among all, and the bed undefiled...

v. 5 - Make sure we aren't DEPRIVING one another - to rob, defraud

There is a considerable amount of common talk among believers about not causing a brother/sister to stumble through our behavior. What about our own spouse? Do we care enough for them in this manner? Would we be willing to put them through a series of spiritual onslaughts tempting them into sexual immorality? Certainly not. "Defraud ye not one the other...so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self control" (KJV)

Paul nails our lack of self-control. He knows how this goes. There is some evidence to suggest that Paul was married earlier in his life. Though we will learn that he is not during this time in his life.

Notice this is still reciprocal - there is no place for demanding, or excusing behavior because of the other. There is a responsibility to care for one another.

v.6 - Paul's instruction on brief abstinence within marriage for prayer and fasting has boundaries - is not a command.

There is the subtle inference that perhaps people in their marriages were hyper-spiritualizing themselves to the extent that they were abstaining from sex within their marriages to the detriment of their spouse, and their marriage (this coming from the same church that thought it was perfectly acceptable behavior for a man to have an affair with his step-mother).

I don't know if it's caught on - I haven't heard of it catching on anywhere.

v.7-9 The completely abstinent life - desirable but not for all.

v.7 - I wish - it's not so

each has his own gift - abstinence is a gift - not an exercise of the will -

[Mat 19:9-12 NKJV] 9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever

marries her who is divorced commits adultery." 10 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with [his] wife, it is better not to marry." 11 But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only [those] to whom it has been given: 12 "For there are eunuchs who were born thus from [their] mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept [it], let him accept [it]."

Why is the illustration of eunuchs important?

Instead of being based on whether or not one was gifted with celibacy - Unfortunately this began to grow in the 4th century and became a requirement in the 12th century church - because people didn't read their bibles - and many were led into the trap of sexual immorality because of it - we are still dealing with the fallout of that today in the Catholic church.

[1Ti 4:1-3 NKJV] 1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, [and commanding] to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

v.8-9 - don't burn with passion and end up cultivating a secret life of sin - that's the trap! Flee sexual immorality - it's wounds are gruesome.

The adulterer - the one trapped by sexual sin - [Pro 7:22-26 NKJV] 22 Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, 23 Till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, He did not know it [would cost] his life. 24 Now therefore, listen to me, [my] children; Pay attention to the words of my mouth: 25 Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths; 26 For she has cast down many wounded, And all who were slain by her were strong [men].

Be married, and be merry - you are beautiful picture of Christ and His bride - love one another, be affectionate, be intimate, be married!

Let's pray for our marriages.