

Last week: practical instruction in the marriage - “let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.”
AND “do not deprive one another...”

We talked about what that looked like...extrapolate.

This morning we continue with additional practical instruction regarding marriage - especially when marriage gets tough - DIVORCE.

You know the numbers - half of all marriages end in divorce, even within the church.

In Western cultures, more than 90 percent of people marry by age 50. Healthy marriages are good for couples' mental and physical health. They are also good for children; growing up in a happy home protects children from mental, physical, educational and social problems. However, about 40 to 50 percent of married couples in the United States divorce. The divorce rate for subsequent marriages is even higher. (APA Website)

So here in 1 Cor 7:10-11 - we receive some very straightforward counsel.

v.10 - I command, yet not I but the Lord - this isn't up for spin. this isn't Paul's opinion, in fact he removes his opinion from the equation.

we are not to be divorced - notice how Paul didn't say we would have really easy marriages.

Remember - EPH 5 - marriage is a picture of Christ and the church.

Now, as Paul says this is the Lord's command - this is from Christ, from God.

Here are Christ's words:

[Mat 5:32 NKJV] 32 "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

[Mat 19:7-9 NKJV] 7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" 8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 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."

[Mar 10:11-12 NKJV] 11 So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. 12 "And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

[Luk 16:18 NKJV] 18 "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from [her] husband commits adultery.

Sounds pretty clear. In fact, those who have experienced divorce may feel sort of persecuted by these verses.

Throughout history the church hasn't helped much in this regard - ostracizing, or barring divorcees from certain aspects of worship and christian life.

Listen, if you are divorced and Christ's words speak to your situation then that can be challenging. You are a sinner. BUT guess what...you're in good company.

Remember what Christ taught about adultery even apart from divorce?

[Mat 5:27-28 NKJV] 27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

AND...

[Jhn 4:16-18, 25-29 NKJV] 16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' 18 "for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." ... 25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." 26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am [He]." 27 And at this [point] His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked

with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" 28 The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, 29 "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

AND...

[Jhn 8:2-11 NKJV] 2 Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. 3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 "Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have [something] of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with [His] finger, as though He did not hear. 7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." 8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 Then those who heard [it], being convicted by [their] conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest [even] to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

Thank God for his vast grace towards us. We are all of us worthy of condemnation yet Jesus says, Neither do I condemn you.

This is the grace we are implored to demonstrate towards our families as well, towards our spouses...not divorce.

Christ's commands are sometimes hard to obey because we are so focused on ourselves.

v.12-14 the benefits of sticking in it - sanctifying your children. How? Being blessed by those close to God's heart - receiving the overflow. AND, mom and dad, hang in there - your kids are watching.

St. Augustine's mom was a believer, his dad was not - until he converted near the time of his death.

Isn't that grace too? sticking with somebody who doesn't deserve it?

v.15-16

v.15 God has called us to peace - don't make an almighty struggle out of the ordeal. Demonstrate peace.

v.16 - how do you know whether you will save your spouse? Not through arguments that's for sure. Love like Christ loves us.

They may very well come to see Christ through you - they may not, we don't know, only God knows and His hand is over our lives.

How glorious would it be to have one's spouse reconciled to the Lord? that would be such a beautiful moment and worth all of the waiting and praying.

v.17-24 - Be where you are - be a light, demonstrate Christ right where you are no matter the circumstances.

Paul will repeat this two more times in the next several verses.

By way of example he uses other illustrations.

circumcision or uncircumcision, slavery/servitude or as a free person, AND the implication is married, single, or divorced.

First and foremost you are a believer, you were bought at a price - your spouse didn't pay for you, and we certainly couldn't afford to pay for ourselves.

v.24 - Don't get caught up on your situation - some people get fixated on the idea that God wants to change their circumstances (always for the better too...richer, more handsome, smarter, etc). That was the case here with new believers in Corinth - I'm a believer now, should I dump my wife because she's not? Will that make me holier? God wants to use you right where you are - immediately.

Remain with God...beautiful, each of us individually is called to this - remaining with God.