

Parson to Person

1 Corinthians 7 (Part 3B)

(Singleness, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage—The Biblical Positions)

“Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment. For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that. But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife. But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her,

let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches. Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called.

Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy. I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress—that it is good for a man to remain as he is: Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who

have wives should be as though they had none, those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away. But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please his wife. There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction. But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry. Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well. So then he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better.

A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment—and I think I also have the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 7:1–40).

The fact that marriage, separation, divorce, and remarriage has been so poorly handled by western pastors and churches, has called me to take plenty of time to teach and address the nuances

of this difficult subject. Adding to the confusion is the fact that the Scriptures contain Old Covenant teaching, Gospel era teaching, and Church age teaching. All must be examined and understood in order to grasp the full meaning of many passages. Moreover, the Biblical definitions of marriage have been blurred by federal and state interference. Laws have been made and decisions about marriage, divorce, child support, alimony, etc., all cloud Biblical judgment and complicate the issues.

For example, in the Old Covenant if a man or woman committed adultery, they were both to be put to death. In the Law we read, *“The man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death”* (Leviticus 20:10). However, today, in the Church Age, the law has been made obsolete and the death penalty for such things is no longer enforced. This, oddly enough, has complicated decisions and practices even related to such verses as those found here in our text. *“A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord”* (1 Corinthians 7:39).

Inasmuch as we have thus far expounded 1 Corinthians 7:1–16, I want to pause and work through an outline before moving on in the chapter. Therefore, let’s use the following outline in order to help us give focus to some of the many questions that have already arisen. I hope this will help bring clarity and answer some questions.

Biblical Grounds for Divorce:

1)Fornication

The Question of Adultery:

- 1)Formerly Required the Penalty of Death
- 2)Grounds for Forgiveness
- 3)Owning our Choices

The Question of Separation:

- 1)Illegal Activity
- 2)Danger/Exposure to Children
- 3)Physical Abuse
- 4)Disabling Emotional Abuse: Case by Case
- 5)The High Standard of Remaining Unmarried

Divorce:

- 1)When the Unbeliever Departs
- 2)Lack of Repentance and the Matthew 18 Principle

If Divorce Occurs:

- 1)Not The Unpardonable Sin
- 2)Not “A Greater Sin”
- 3)Looking on the Divorced with Care and Brokenness

Remarriage:

- 1)If an Unbelieving Spouse Departs
- 2)The Matthew 18 Principle
- 3)Death of a Spouse
- 4)Only in The Lord
- 5)The High Standard of Remaining Unmarried

I love you all,
Pastor Paul