



6/1/26

Wow. I'm so glad I didn't have to preach Sunday's message. I thought Tim did a great job of speaking carefully and clearly on a very intimate subject. I love how he talked about the impact a wife can make in how she looks at her husband. So, of course, I had to make lots of loving faces at him the rest of the day. It was fun. 😊 I hope you found it to be a challenging, yet helpful message. The biggest thing that impacted me is how generous our Lord is, that obedience to Him will always bring us the greatest pleasure. God is so cool!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

1 Corinthians 7:1-9

At the beginning of the year, I began to pray for the Lord to help me to live by a statement of absolute surrender ~ I serve at the pleasure of my King. I thought the idea was mine. I think the Lord was actually bringing me to that prayer so that I would be ready for when He allows me to walk through all kinds of training situations that would test my resolve. To live this mindset is to take two words out of my vocabulary... "I want..." The only God honoring way for me to use those words when I'm serving at the pleasure of my King is to say, "I want what You want."

The testing and training of my heart in this mindset can be found in any situation, but especially in marriage. I read the statement, "Marriage is not meant to make you happy, but to make you holy." Well... that holiness comes through a lot of testing. Physical oneness is one of those training situations. As I look at today's passage, I want to read it through the lens of, "I WANT what You want, Lord. I serve at the pleasure of my King." That means I put God's plan for physical intimacy as higher than my opinions or feelings. I find that, in any situation, when I put God's plan as higher priority than mine, the benefits I experience far outweigh any pain.

Vs. 1-2 ~ "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband."

So... I'm not sure what the specific "matters" were that they asked Paul about, but I appreciate that he was willing to address their questions. The bible gives practical, clear direction for life, including marriage. Here, Paul made it clear that celibacy is not for everyone, so it's good for a man to have his own wife... not someone else's and not multiple. And same for the wife to have her own husband. This is practical. It's also a gift from the Lord.

Vs. 4-5 ~ "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does."

Wow. Talk about practical. I imagine this had to be a little uncomfortable to talk about, but it's so important to address. While "it is not good for a man to have sexual relations with a woman" when he's single, it is NOT good to withhold when he's married. Both the wife and the husband are called BY GOD to be intimate with each other and not to withhold. This tells me something very cool about the Lord... He is calling me to give something that will also bring me great pleasure. God's commands will ultimately bring me more joy and pleasure than anything I could get for myself.

Physical intimacy is a sweet gift from God FOR the husband and wife relationship. When experienced according to His will, it is a mutual giving and caring. While the roles of the husband and wife are carried out as a model of Christ and the church, with the wife submitting to her husband, and her husband sacrificially loving her... the call to physical intimacy is completely mutual. The authority over the man's body belongs to the wife. The authority over the wife's body belongs to the man. Neither is given more authority, and neither is in charge of his or her own body. Wow. That is vulnerable! It requires us to work together, to consider each other, to never take advantage of the other.

If I am to serve at the pleasure of my King, I will not withhold intimacy from my husband, and I will not use the authority God's given me over my husband's body to control him, but to care for him better... and he is called to do the same for me.

Vs. 5 ~ "Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

I see another principle here that is all about mutual relationship. There is only one reason given for depriving physical intimacy... devotion to prayer. This is not an excuse to be used as an excuse to get away from one another... but it's a MUTUAL agreement that the husband and wife will together devote themselves to prayer, probably concerning something very serious and specific... and it has a planned end point. Satan looks for any opportunity to cause division in the relationship. He will try to stir temptations to corrupt what started with godly intentions.

*I just want to make sure I pay attention to this...
Any physical distance from intimacy with my husband must be*

- *Mutual*
- *Prayerful*
- *Limited*

Vs. 6-7 ~ "Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another."

Paul was single. Why did he say he wanted others to stay single if possible rather than get married? He was so ministry minded that he wanted to focus all his attention on the gospel. In vs. 32-35 he explained his thinking. He said that a married person's interests are divided between caring for his spouse and his devotion to God. But a single person could be wholly focused on his devotion to the Lord. Paul thought Jesus was coming back soon, so he wanted to focus all his attention on the gospel and he encouraged others to do so. Paul understood, though, that willingly remaining single was a gift from the Lord, and not everyone had that gift. God gifted others with other gifts.

I know from what he wrote in Ephesians and Colossians that he was not against marriage. As a former Pharisee, he knew the Old Testament scriptures better than most... where God commanded His people to "be fruitful and multiply." Paul wrote to husbands and wives of their responsibility in caring for each other. He was not against marriage at all. In fact, he spent a lot of time with a couple who served with him in ministry, Priscilla and Aquila. But he did think that if someone could handle staying single for the sake of ministry, they should.

Vs. 8-9 ~ Paul also understood that trying to pretend to have the gift of singleness could be really damaging. He said, "To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion."

I see something very clear in this. Physical intimacy is reserved for the married. The world teaches that we are in charge of our own bodies and can do with them what we please. But 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says that our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit, and we were bought with a price, so we need to honor God with our bodies.

We honor God with our bodies by remaining physically inactive as a single person. And we honor God with our bodies by remaining physically active as a married person. So... if a single person is in love with another single person, they both love the Lord, and they want to be one with each other, they should marry.

Well, I'm married. So how do I apply this passage to my life if my goal is to serve at the pleasure of my King, saying, "I want what You want"? I start by not giving more credence to my

opinions than His word. Then I pursue mutual intimacy and care for my husband. I do not withhold intimacy from my husband. And... with the gospel still in mind as my top priority, I make sure I'm not using ministry as an excuse to withhold spiritual, relational, or physical oneness from my husband. Jesus is the most important relationship in my life... but Tim must be the most important human relationship in my life. O Lord, I want what You want. The beautiful thing about serving at Your pleasure, is that when I actually do, that's when I receive the most pleasure. Please help me to be on YOUR plan.