

### Biblical Principles of Marriage (Part 3) – 1 Cor 7:6-9

1 Cor 7:6-9; We're in the middle of a marriage series, discovering biblical principles for a house built to last; And having covered 2 of them, our 3<sup>rd</sup> comes from this passage And I'd like to start at v1, even though we're going to focus on v6-9

[7:1] *Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." [2] But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.*

And then, after talking about fulfilling one another's sexual desires, he says in v6 . . .

[6] *Now as a concession, not a command, I say this.* And then he elaborates

[7] *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. [8] To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. [9] But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. (Intro)*

If v6-9 were the only passage in the Bible that speaks to marriage and singles, the next principle might be – Marriage is for only a few

➤ But that doesn't take into account verses like **Gen 2:18**; Where God said . . .  
"*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.*"  
Referring to Eve, his wife

And since Adam is considered our head and representative in the Bible (Rom 5), it follows that it's not good for *anybody* to be alone; Or that marriage is for *everybody*  
So we can't conclude from 1 Cor 7 that it's only for a few

And Paul himself says, in **1 Tim 5:14** – *I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander.*

No opportunity to undermine their testimony b/c of their misconduct

I would have them *marry* he says

Which is different than his statement in v8 where he says – *To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single*

➤ So what do we do with that? How do we put all those thoughts together? B/c coming from the mind of God, they *can't* be contradictory

The answer I think, is this . . .

**Principle #3 – Marriage is for most, but not all (Gen 2:18; 1 Cor 7:6-9)**

It's for most b/c of Gen 2:18, and 1 Tim 5:14, and even v2b – *each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband*; It's for most

But it's not for all, b/c *each has his own gift* it says in v7, and v8 says that it's good for those who *aren't* married to remain single

So it can't be for everyone, but it has to be for most b/c of the other Scriptures

That's Principle #3

But that's certainly not the whole of it, b/c Paul elaborates with 4 supporting thoughts;

Saying first of all, that . . .

• **Marriage is a concession (v6)**

Not a compromise as we normally think of it, but a privilege; An act of grace that's granted by God; Look at v6

*Now as a concession [he says], not a command, I say this.*

Referring to what? His instruction in v2, that *each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband*; He says that as a concession

B/c while it's good for a man to remain celibate, it's better not to sin, and better not to burn; So go ahead and get married if you have to

It's not a command, but a grace-filled concession; A privilege; That's the first thought

➤ And then he takes it a step further, in v7; Saying – *I wish that all were as I myself am.*  
Go ahead and get married if you need to and want to, but I wish that *everybody* was single he says

Indicating that being single is something to hold on to; Something to aspire to

On the other hand, *each has his own gift from God* [v7b], *one of one kind and one of another.* So just like *marriage* isn't for everybody, neither is being single

• **Some have the gift of being married, and some have the gift of being single (v7b)**  
It's not a one-size-fits-all kind of thing; Some people have the gift of being *single* and happy, others have the gift of being *married* and happy

And one of the clues to your gift, is your desire for sexual intimacy, and your inability to *control* it; Your inability to take your thoughts captive, and not dwell on them  
IOW if you don't burn with passion, or you can exercise self-control, it may very well be that you should remain single; It's one of the indicators

Whatever the case, *each has his own gift*, and it comes *from God* (7)

Which means it's not only our responsibility to discern it, but embrace it

That's the 2<sup>nd</sup> supporting thought here

➤ The 3<sup>rd</sup> comes from v8 – *To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am.*

• **Being single is actually good (v8)**

For a whole bunch of reasons; Like the fact that there's less trouble, more focus, less tension, & more freedom; All of which Paul gets to in the *second* part of this chapter  
And we will too in a few weeks

But for now, suffice it to say that it's good just b/c God says so; Single is good

➤ But that *doesn't* mean you should necessarily remain that way; Especially if you burn with passion; Which most people do; Look around; Marriage is for most, b/c . . .

• **Most people burn with passion and can't control it (v9)**

That's the final supporting thought here – v9

It's good for people to remain single Paul says – *But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.*

It's better to marry and live fulfilled, than fight it and live miserable

Better to marry and live holy, than remain single and lust

Not that marriage *cures* your lust, but it helps

Marriage is for most, b/c most people *strongly desire* physical intimacy

They're overwhelmed by the *intensity* of their feelings, they're distracted by the *frequency* of their feelings . . .

And they're preoccupied with the *fulfillment* of their feelings (**Summary**)

4 supporting thoughts to the principle that marriage is for most, but not all

- The question is, what do we do? "What do I do if I'm single, and what do I do if I'm married? I get the principle, but what do I do?"

The answer comes down to **2 Responses:**

**1. Learn to be content no matter what your situation (Phil 4:10-13)**

That's the first response to this principle; Whether you're single and want to be married, or married and want to be single – contentment is the key; Be content

Phil 4:10-13; Paul is writing from prison in Rome, to the church in Philippi; And having just said to *imitate* him, and do the things *he* does – he says in v10 . . .  
[10] *I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me* [referring to the gifts they sent him after a long delay (v16-18)]. *You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.* [11] *Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content* [I've learned it he says]. [12] *I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.* [13] *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

Paul wasn't in need, nor was he *need-y*; B/c he learned to be *content*

He learned to be *okay* with the situation at hand; At peace; Not necessarily *satisfied* with every situation, but settled

It things were going great, he was good; If they were going poorly, he was good

He knew how to be brought low and be content, and he knew how to abound and be content (12)

*I have learned the secret* [he says] *of facing* everything, good and bad; He *learned* it

- Which begs the question, "How?" *How* do you learn contentment?

And the answer is found in the previous verses; Where Paul encourages us to do 3 things – rejoice, pray, and think; As in . . .

**A. Rejoice in the Lord**

V4 – *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.*

If you want to be content, no matter *what* your circumstances, single *or* married – revel in Jesus; Celebrate your relationship with *him*

Get your eyes *off* your circumstances, *on* to him, and keep them there

That's the first way to learn contentment

**B. Pray to the Lord**

V6 – *Do not be anxious about anything* [don't be *dis*-content], *but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

IOW pray; To the Lord; Not to Mary, or an idol, or some other religious construct

invented by man – but God; Pray to the *him*

*And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding* [defies all explanation], *will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

That's the 2<sup>nd</sup> way to be content; Pray to the Lord

**C. Think like the Lord**

V8 – *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

Is that not how Jesus thinks? I think so

And if you want the *peace* of Christ, like he says in the *next* verse, you'll do the same

That's how you learn contentment; That's how you discover its *secret*

Rejoice in the Lord, Pray to the Lord, and Think like the Lord (**Summary**)

- And lest you think that's out of reach, think again

B/c Paul says in v13 – *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

Including being content as a single when you want to be married, or content in your marriage when you want to be single

Learn to be content no matter *what* your situation

B/c if you're not content with what you have, you'll never be content with what you want; That's the first response to this principle

**2. Be patient and wait on the Lord (Ps 37:7; Lam 3:25)**

Which is easier said than done, but absolutely *necessary* in God's design; Especially if you're going to experience his best in life

*Waiting* is one of God's primary requirements for blessing us

**Lam 3:25** says – *The LORD is good to those who wait for him*; He blesses those who wait for him; Just like humility is prerequisite, so is waiting

And he *tells* us to do it; Like in **Ps 37:7** – *Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him.* It's a command; Be patient, and wait on the Lord

Something the saints of old modeled for us time and time again

Like Jacob in Gen 49 – *I wait for your salvation, O LORD.* (18)

And King David in Ps 25 – *For you I wait all the day long.* (5)

And the prophet Micah – *As for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation* (Micah 7:7)

And the Apostle Paul in Gal 5 – *We ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.* (5)

Patiently waiting on God is all *over* the Bible; For the big things like the consummation of our *salvation*, and the little things like the consummation of marriage\*\*\*\*\*

- That said, there are 2 caveats to this response; First, marriage isn't guaranteed

God's *blessing* is a sure thing, but not necessarily the way you want it

If you wait patiently on the Lord for a spouse, he may or may not give you one

It's *God's* will that governs the universe, not yours

That's the first caveat here – marriage isn't guaranteed as a result of your patience

And the second, is that waiting on the Lord doesn't mean *passive*; It doesn't mean passively waiting

If you're single and want to be married, waiting on the Lord doesn't mean sitting on your couch and waiting for a damsel in distress to knock on your door

Or a knight in shining armor to ride into your room

You have to *pursue* a spouse; Like Isaac did with Rebecca, and Jacob with Rachel, and Ruth with Boaz

They presented themselves in the best way they possibly could, they adorned themselves with godliness and respect, and they got after it

Waiting patiently on the Lord doesn't mean passive

➤ When Becky and I were just getting to know one another in college, I thought that all the times we ran into each other on campus, were random

Every time I turned around, there she was; And I loved it; She had a sparkle in her eye and a smile on her face that made my heart flutter; And she was smokin' hot

And it wasn't until years later that she told me most of those "random" times were intentional

She knew my schedule, knew where I would be, and made it a point to show up

The point being, that waiting on the Lord doesn't mean passive

It means trusting and holding loosely, while acting on the desires of your heart

Trusting *his* timing and ways, and holding loosely to yours, while you pursue (**Summ**)

2 responses, to the principle that marriage is for most, but not all

Learn to be content no matter what your situation, and wait patiently on the Lord

Pray – Lord, help us in all this; We need your strength, we need your truth, and we need your grace