

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Apostolic Marriage Counselling
1 Cor 7:1-16

Last time...how then shall we live in this world?

What is the purpose and Ownership of these bodies made from dust?

1 Thes 4:3-7 For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness

This time...the message of 1 Thes 4:3-7 continues

Marriage Counseling in the early Church in Corinth...a very sensual city/society filled with debauchery

We are in 1 Cor 7

v1 concerning...wrote unto me...man...woman:

This Epistle is not the first correspondence between the church at Corinth and the Apostle Paul

1 Cor 5:9-11

Which resulted in a response from them to Him, mentioned in this verse

1 Cor is the Holy Spirit-inspired response from Paul to the church

It is a letter of correction and rebuke and instruction in righteousness

Chapters 5 and 6 deal with fornication (sexual sin) and whose bodies these are in the first place

1 Cor 6:13b, 19b-20

Chapter 7 indicates that the church at Corinth appears to be having questions about the place of marriage in the life of a Christian

Remember, what they knew as heathens was sexual uncleanness
(1 Cor 5:9-10)

The direct answer to their unpreserved letter to Paul:

It is good for a man (who responds to sight)

to not touch a woman (who responds to touch)

touch = "touch" or "to attach oneself to" i.e. in marriage

The context of the chapter is marriage

v2 to avoid fornication:

But...to avoid fornication/sexual sin/sexual uncleanness and possess your vessel/body in sanctification and honor unto the Lord,
let every man have his own wife and every woman have her own husband

The only place to avoid sexual sin and to live in sexual purity is within the safe and Divinely blessed confines of marriage...as defined by God Himself:

- one male and one female (becoming one flesh/man)
- one with Him (a 3 Person relationship of 1 Lord and 2 equal servants), a 3-stranded cord that cannot be broken
- both servants submitting their will to the other (Eph 5:22), as the Lord of the marriage did unto The Father in heaven for our benefit
 - husband loving his wife as Christ loves the Church, thereby meeting her need for security
 - wife submitting to the God-given position of leadership of her husband, thereby meeting his need for respect
 - both submitting to the Lordship of Jesus Christ who gives husband and wife the power to follow Him in the relationship
- until the last breath of either the male or the female

And within those safe and blessed confines...

v3-4 due benevolence:

The husband is to give his wife due benevolence

- marital affection due her
- conjugal kindness
- physical and emotional intimacy

And the wife is to give her husband that same conjugal kindness and intimacy

Marital relations take two, and both husband and wife are to be giving to the other
The wife's body and the husband's body belong to

1. the Lord (1 Cor 6:13b, 20), the 3rd Person in the marriage, the Lord of the marriage
2. the spouse

The wife's body does not belong to her and the husband's body does not belong to him

Regarding our bodies for us married folks, we are a solid #3!

That mind is consistent with our relationship priorities (Matt 22:36-40)

1. the Lord
2. our spouse
3. Self

v5 Defraud ye not one another:
defraud = “to deprive”, “to withhold by deception”

e.g. I have a headache...when you don't
I am too tired...when you are really too lazy or disinterested
Any excuse to mask a selfish unwillingness to submit and give to
the other

We are not to change the relationship priorities to

1. the Lord
2. Self
3. our spouse

We are not to change the authority over our body to

1. the Lord
2. Self
3. our spouse

To change the relationship priorities and the authority over one's body to place
Self above our spouse is to defraud our spouse...
to withhold conjugal kindness/physical intimacy from our spouse

Physical intimacy in the marriage relationship is

- a beautiful gift from God, not a tool to be used by one against the other to motivate, manipulate, control, or punish
- a blessing, neither a club for not meeting some unspoken test or requirement set by Self nor a reward for meeting that test or requirement

For a spouse to fraudulently say “I'm tired” or “I have a headache” or
“My stomach hurts” or whatever and thereby say “No” to physical
intimacy runs counter to the Lord's direction to His people regarding

- relationship priorities
- authority over one's body

To selfishly say “No”

- may push the other person away with a feeling of rejection
- may become a wedge between the two that are one...a division the devil exploits because if repetitious or protracted, may contribute to a fall into sin by the other

Bottom line: there is no room for self-centeredness in this aspect of marriage any more than there is in any other aspect of marriage

God's way is two others-centered people submitting the Lord who is Good...

man's way is two self-centered people wanting their will done.

Which way works?!

Do husbands and wives get too tired to enjoy the blessing of physical intimacy?

Yes

Do husbands and wives get headaches and stomach aches and illnesses that hinder the joy of conjugal kindness?

Yes

So what do God-loving and spouse-loving husbands and wives do?

They mutually agree to

- refrain from physical intimacy...
for a proper/convenient time
- "break fast" and come together again...
resume marital relations
- not give the devil a foothold in their marriage...
incontinency = "lack of self-restraint" when a sexual desire is unfulfilled

What do God-loving and spouse-loving husbands and wives NOT do?

Use physical intimacy as a weapon or leverage to manipulate their spouse for selfish interests

v6 permission, not of commandment:

The Apostle Paul, Spirit-filled and Spirit-led, is offering his prayerful
Marriage Counseling

He is speaking his mind, which is being inspired and led by the Holy Spirit

"This is not written in stone, this was not codified by Moses, but this is Godly wisdom in possessing your vessels/bodies in sanctification and honor.
This will make for healthy marriages."

Now Paul weighs in on marriage as a lifestyle

v7-8 even as I:

Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee

Pharisees were required to have wives

Therefore Saul of Tarsus had a wife

We know nothing of her

Did she die before Paul began his ministry?

Did she leave this “crazy Jesus Freak”?

But we do know Paul the Apostle was an unmarried celibate man

1 Cor 9:1-6

And when it comes to lifestyles, he personally prefers that all would be as he is –
unmarried and celibate, serving the Lord 24/7

Hence, v1, his direct answer to their unrecorded question

But he knows God so gifted him and he knows that God does not so gift many
that way

To those who are unmarried or widowed, Paul says it is virtuous and valuable to
be celibate unto the Lord
(but ONLY if you have received that gift from the Lord because...)

v9 better to marry than to burn:

If a person cannot contain/restrain the sexual desire, it is better for them to marry
than to fight a losing battle with a continual burning desire and fall into
sexual sin/fornication

Live in the safe and blessed confines of marriage if you have not been gifted of
God with celibacy (and not many are!)

v10-11 unto the married I command:

Now Paul is not offering his marriage advice, he is speaking authoritatively...

“Thus saith the Lord” if you will:

Keep the terms of My Marriage Contract...one Lord and two equal servants
(one male, one female) until one’s last breath

1. Let the wife not depart/leave/separate from her husband
2. If she departs...domestic violence, abuse or endangerment...let her
 - remain unmarried...lest she become an adulteress
(Matt 5:31-32, Rom 7:1-3)
 - be reconciled to her husband
3. Let not the husband put away/send away/divorce his wife
(Mal 2:16a, Matt 19:3-9)

v12-13 believeth not:

The Apostle Paul is, again, offering Apostolic Marriage Counselling,
Godly wisdom for healthy marriages and families

“This is not written in stone either, but run this advice thru the mind of Christ and
the heart of the Father.”

Remember the context:

- God is doing a new work – the Church, the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ...Jew and Gentile
- Corinth was a wild, anything-goes heathen city
- The members of the Body of Christ in Corinth have come from that filthy swamp and been made new creatures in Christ
- Many marriages are now “unequally yoked” (2 Cor 6:14-18)
- God has started a good work in them of conforming them into the image of Jesus Christ, being one with Him

What is the believing husband to do with his unbelieving wife?

Not divorce her as long as she is pleased to live with him

(NOT as long as he is pleased to live with her!)

Witness of the Person, work, love and grace of Jesus Christ to her

Be a tree of righteousness (Ps 1:1-3, Prov 11:30)

What is the believing wife to do with her unbelieving husband?

Not leave him as long as he is pleased to live with her

(NOT as long as she is pleased to live with him!)

Witness of the Person, work, love, and grace of Jesus Christ to him

Be a tree of righteousness (Ps 1:1-3, Prov 11:30)

v14 sanctified...holy:

By the believing spouse being Christ-like and self-last in an unequally yoked
marriage,

- the unbelieving spouse is sanctified...purified, Hag 2:11-13 exception
Not saved by the faith of their spouse but certainly blessed by the
faith of their spouse that may lead him/her to saving faith
- the children are holy...consecrated unto the Lord, blameless
Ezk 18:20
Not saved by the faith of a parent but certainly blessed by the faith
of a parent that may lead them to saving faith

v15 let him depart...God hath called us to peace:

But, v12-13 is not always the case...because of a person's rejection of Jesus

"You were a lot more fun before this Jesus ruined your life!"

"I don't know you anymore!"

"Enough of this Jesus talk, you freak!"

"All this worship music and Bible studying going on around here is
causing me to lose my mind!"

"I hate what you say and do, now I hate you."

"Either you dump this Jesus or I'm out of here!"

If the unbelieving spouse is not pleased to live with their believing spouse,
the believer is to let go...let them leave...and cling to Jesus

A relationship takes two willing volunteers

If one party is not willing, there is no relationship

The Christian marriage is a 3 Person relationship

If the unbeliever chooses to leave, the believer is to let them go and
cling to the Lord of the marriage

Rom 12:18...but it is not always possible because it takes two

Having made our peace with God (Rom 5:1), the God of peace wants us to
live in peace, governed by the Prince of Peace

If the child of the devil does not want to live in peace with His child, our Father
does not hold his child's feet to the fire to remain in a spiritually toxic
relationship

After all, marriage is a great Divine mystery...Eph 5:32

An invitation

Not a forced march

Does that mean Matt 5:31-32 and Matt 19:3-9 are "off the table" for the believer
who was left by their unbelieving spouse and they are free from their
marriage vows to re-marry?

Scripture is not crystal clear

Some, holding to the letter of the Word/Law, say, "No"

Others, holding to the Spirit of the Word and to grace, say the bondage of
the vow is broken so freedom to re-marry is available

The common interpretation in the Church is the latter – free to re-marry

But getting back to v12-13...

v16 thou shalt save:

Believing husbands and wives living with and witnessing of Jesus Christ to
unbelieving spouses who are pleased to live with them just may,
as trees of righteousness planted by the rivers of Living Water, bear fruit!

Perhaps the witness...

words and deeds and tone of voice and humility and meekness and
righteousness...

will draw the unbeliever out of the darkness and into the Light!

Preaching the Gospel and living the Gospel!

1 Peter 3:1-13

How glorious is the conversion of an unbeliever into a child of God!

How blessed to be an instrument unto salvation in God's hands for a
loved one!

Take-away

For your consideration...marriage is a great mystery, speaking of Jesus Christ and the church
aka the Bride of Christ

- God hates divorce
- Law: only the husband can divorce his wife, no provision for the wife to divorce her husband
- The husband dying to Self and loving his wife as Christ loves the Church gives the wife her one need – security
- Jesus Christ will not break the Law, He fulfilled the Law
 - Matt 5:17
 - John 5:43
 - He will NOT divorce His Bride, not even for fornication (spiritual unfaithfulness), and marry another
 - He will not tear asunder what God has joined together – His Son and His Bride (“in Christ”)
- If the Bride leaves (backslides), she is to remain unmarried (for she is already married and her leaving did not change that fact) and be reconciled to her husband
- The unbeliever (NOT a member of the Bride) can leave and the Prince of Peace will live in peace with His Bride

The Bride of Christ is secure in Christ!

The Body of the Bride belongs to Jesus Christ

Give Him the benevolence/kindness/intimacy/respect He is due!