

Difficult Texts In The Bible

To Give Or To Take

(I Co 7:36-38)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on "Difficult Texts In The Bible."
 - a. We have examined...
 - i. **Jn 8:2-11; Lk 23:34; Mt 24; Ro 1:16-17...**
 - b. Today we will be looking at **I Co 7:36-38**.
 - i. I have this titled as "Give In Marriage Or Marry."
3. Different versions of this section...
 - a. English Standard Version
 - i. "If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. 37 But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. 38 So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better."
 - b. King James Version
 - i. "But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. 37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. 38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better."
 - c. New American Standard Bible Updated 1995
 - i. "But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry. 37 But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, he will do well. 38 So then both he who gives his own virgin daughter in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better."
 - d. New International Version 84 Edition
 - i. "If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. 37 But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. 38 So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better."
4. As anyone can tell there is a vast difference between these.
 - a. One has a man marrying the virgin one has a father marrying off his daughter.

Difficult Texts In The Bible

I. The Context Of I Corinthians

- A. Paul is dealing with a troubled congregation
 - 1. Remember Paul was writing to a congregation that was having a great deal of difficulties.
 - i. **I Co 1:10-11** "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you."
 - 2. Corinth had many issues...
 - i. Egos (eating meat sacrificed to idols)
 - ii. Christian & Non-Christian marriages
 - iii. Pride (who was baptized by whom)
 - iv. So on and so forth
- B. Paul is asked to help the congregation in Corinth
 - 1. This is obvious in that through the first six chapters Paul deals with many "problems" the congregation was dealing with there that the house hold of Chloe seems to have informed him on.
 - 2. Starting in Chapter seven we see Paul start to answer a number of questions the brethren had concerning doctrine.
 - i. **I Co 7:1** "Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me..."
- C. Context of **I Corinthians 7**
 - 1. As seen Paul starts here dealing with questions asked of him.
 - i. **I Co 7:1-5** - Has to do with withholding sex from one another.
 - ii. **I Co 7:6-9** - Here Paul has one of his common sub thoughts which is if you can handle being single (due to the persecution at the time) than stay single.
 - iii. **I Co 7:10-11** - Has to do with the Lord's teaching in **Mt 19:6** that husband & wife are not to be separated ie divorced.
 - a. God's law on marriage "what God has joined together, let not man separate."
 - iv. **I Co 7:12-16** - Here Paul deals with the Christian & non-Christian marriage.
 - a. If the non-Christian is willing to stay married than stay married. Don't end the marriage just because your spouse has not become a Christian yet.
 - b. If the non-Christian is unwilling to stay married, than you are not required/bound to follow him/her away from Christ you are free to divorce them.
 - 1. This does not mean the Christian can remarry as the only reason a divorced person can remarry is if their spouse committed fornication.
 - v. **I Co 7:17-24** - Here Paul is dealing with circumstances new Christians were in such as being uncircumcised or a slave and if they should stay such or try and change.

Difficult Texts In The Bible

- vi. **I Co 7:25-39** - Paul is dealing with whether or not it is wise to marry in these troublesome times.
 - a. Remember the extreme persecution, Paul is just expanding on what He started in verses 6-9.

II. The Analysis And Breakdown Of I Corinthians 7:36-38

A. Looking at the Greek

- 1. First the word "virgin or betrothed."
 - i. Greek word "παρθένος" or "parthenos."
 - a. "an unmarried daughter:—virgin." (Strong, J., S.T.D., LL.D. (2009). Vol. 1: A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible (55). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.)
 - b. "a maiden, virgin," e.g., Matt. 1:23, signifies a virgin-daughter" (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W. (1996). Vol. 2: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (145–146). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)
 - c. "a virgin" (Thayer, J. H. (1889). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti (489). New York: Harper & Brothers.)
 - d. "1 a virgin. 1A a marriageable maiden. 1B a woman who has never had sexual intercourse with a man. 1C one's marriageable daughter. 2 a man who has abstained from all uncleanness and whoredom attendant on idolatry, and so has kept his chastity. 2A one who has never had intercourse with women." (Strong, J. (1996). The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order. (electronic ed.). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.)
 - ii. Thus virgin is a proper translation. Betrothed is not a translation but rather a commentary based on an assumption of the context.
 - a. This doesn't mean it shouldn't be betrothed here in fact we will see that betrothed is applicable in part of it this section but not in other parts.
- 2. Second the word "let them marry or they should get married."
 - i. The Greek word here is "γαμέω" or "gameo."
 - a. "to enter into a marriage relation, applicable either to a man or to a woman—'to marry, marriage.'" (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (455). New York: United Bible societies.)
 - b. "'a marriage, wedding,' or 'wedding feast,' is used to denote (a) the ceremony and its proceedings, including the 'marriage feast,'" (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W. (1996). Vol. 2: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (394). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)
 - ii. Thus we see Paul is dealing with virgins getting married or not married.

Difficult Texts In The Bible

3. Third the word "who marries or gives...daughter in marriage."
 - i. Greek word "γαμίζω" or "gamezo"
 - a. "...to give a daughter in marriage" (Thayer, J. H. (1889). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti (109). New York: Harper & Brothers.)
 - b. "to cause a person to become married—'to give in marriage.'" (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (455). New York: United Bible societies.)
 - c. "to give in marriage...e.g. one's daughter, 1 Cor. 7:38." (Difficult Texts Of The New Testament Explained "Difficult Texts From First And Second Corinthians by Deaver, Roy pg. 254)
 - ii. Thus the idea given in the word is simply the giving away of a daughter not taking a betrothed wife.

B. Putting it all together

1. Brother Guy N. Woods had it right when he wrote, "Under consideration is a father and his unmarried daughter. The daughter has reached and has already passed the age when girls ordinarily marry. If the daughter is to marry at all,

it

is time that consent by the father be given, and the usual arrangements be made...However, if the father, (who in that day arranged for the marriage of his children) chose to keep his daughter single and at home, in view of the trials soon to come, his decision was not subject to criticism, inasmuch as such a course would likely work out to the advantage of the daughter." (Ibid)

III. What Lessons Can We Learn?

A. The importance parents have in making lasting decisions for their kids

1. Though we, here in America, don't have arranged marriages for our children we do have a responsibility to makes sure they know how to pick a good mate.
 - i. For example my parents always told us never marry someone who is not a Christian.
 - a. **II Co 6:14** "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"
 - ii. They never told me I could not date non-Christians however every time I did it was made apparently clear that I needed to teach them the truth ie gospel before we got serious.
 - a. I was able to teach three different girls the truth and all three obeyed the gospel. The third I married Kristin.
2. Notice it is the father's responsibility as well. Father's still give their daughters away and thus dads we need to be the ones training our daughters just as much as the mothers do.

Difficult Texts In The Bible

- B. We must put faith ahead of desire
1. The reality is God must come first no matter what. We must make every decision whether it be for ourselves or for others with the question in mind "what does God want me to do here?"
 - i. **Mt 6:33** "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..."
 - ii. **Is 55:8-9** "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."
 2. God is so much more than each of us let us put Him first since He knows what is best for us and desires for us to have that which we need.
 - i. **Mt 7:7-11** "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

CONCLUSION

1. Brothers and sisters we have a great and awesome God who loves us and is not a confusion author (**I Co 14:33**).
 - a. Just like with any other verse we can know the truth if we simply put forth the effort to understand it, because God has given us everything we need to understand His Word (**II Pt 1:3**).
 - b. **I Co 7:36-38** is not an exception to that rule and thus we have seen the proper meaning. Don't be lead astray by translations or works of men look to God's Word and find truth there in (**Jn 8:32; 17:17**).
2. Invitation
 - a. God's Plan of Salvation
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**