

1 CORINTHIAN SERIES #17
"HUSBANDS & WIVES" - 1 COR. 7:1-9

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Notice To Parents

1. Our time
 - a. since so prevalent, talk to kids early
 - b. what wisdom do you want you children to learn?
 - of world
 - of yourself
 - of the Word and counsel of God
2. We parents have an obligation to train our children
 - a. Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.
 - b. Eph 6:4 "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

B. RR

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 1-9 (Out of bible)

1. All ch. 7 speaks about the subject of marriage
2. In these first 9 verses, Paul speaks about celibacy & marriage
 - a. basically - celibacy is good if you're single
 - b. but it isn't if you're married
3. Some vital principles for life are discovered in these verses
 - a. both for singles
 - b. and for marrieds
4. But these verses also contain some one-liners that people have torn out of their context and made to support weird practices and beliefs
 - a. V.1 "it is good not to touch a woman"
 - b. v. 9 "it is better to marry than to burn"

B. Vs. 1-2

1 "Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: . . .

1. They had written him a letter asking about a number of things
2. From here through the rest of the letter, he responds
3. Talks about . . .
 - a. eating meat sacrificed to idols
 - b. support for the ministry
 - c. head coverings
 - d. spiritual gifts
 - e. and so on
4. The first issue he deals with is marriage
5. We can tell from all he says in ch. 7, they had asked a lot of question about marriage, divorce, and the single life

. . . *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*"

6. Paul is being delicate of speech here
7. "*To touch a woman*" was a polite Jewish way of referring to sexual intercourse
8. Paul is saying that the single and celibate life is a good thing, not a bad thing
9. Now, if we were to stop right there, we would be faced with all kinds of problems
 - a. is Paul saying that the single life is better than marriage?
 - b. that married people are not as spiritual?
 - c. that only celibate singles are qualified for leadership in the church?
10. No - No -NO!!! A thousand times "NO"
11. As we'll see, he is simply saying that to be celibate is a good thing, if one can receive it
12. Notice what he goes on to say . . .

2 "Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband."

13. Remember that he is responding to their questions about marriage
14. Remember as well the nature of the City of Corinth
 - a. it was a sexually immoral city
 - b. but it was also a city influenced by Greek philosophy - which believed the body was utterly corrupt & evil
15. Some Christians were wondering if married people

should abstain from normal sexual relations - so they wrote Paul to find out

16. His response -
 - a. celibacy is good
 - b. but if a person cannot be celibate - they should get married -
 - c. because marriage is the proper realm for the satisfaction of the sexual desires of a man or woman
17. Furthermore, married people are not to practice celibacy

C. Vs. 3-5

3 "Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

4 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*.

5 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.

1. Many people find Paul's words here a bit shocking.
2. Not only does he say that married people are NOT to be celibate . . .
3. He shows that the sexual relationship between a husband and wife is to be a unique one of complete satisfaction and fulfillment.
4. This is a delicate area, but there are some principles for the physical relationship between a husband and wife that need to be appropriated from these verses . . .

#1 - Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

- In marriage, a husband owes (*the affection DUE her*) his wife sexual satisfaction and fulfillment.

- That means he should seek to meet her needs, not just thinking of his own.

- Conversely, a wife owes her husband the same.

#2 - 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*.
- There is no other relationship in which this holds true.
 - God has given us our bodies, and we are to be good stewards with them.
 - As believers, we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God
 - In marriage, a man or woman is called to turn over the rights of their body to their mate.
 - Very simply, this means that a husband and wife are to stay sensitive to the sexual needs of each other and endeavor to satisfy them.

#3 - Do not deprive one another

- A husband or wife is not to withhold sexual gratification from their mate.
 - sex must never be used as a weapon
 - or as a means of manipulation
- To deprive your mate means to shun their advances or to otherwise withhold meeting their needs
- There is an exception to this . . .
 - except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer;
 - fasting serves the purpose of saying "No" to the flesh so as to strengthen the spirit and set one before God in a special way
 - fasting from food while still allowing the body the pleasure of sex would be rather pointless, so Paul identifies the need to fast from sex as well
 - but notice that there are limits to this
 - it is "for a time"
 - and it is to be "by consent"
 - so really, they are not depriving each other
 - they are merely abstaining for a limited time
 - and then, they are to make it a point to return to a normal, healthy sexual relationship
 - and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.
- That again sounds like Paul is denigrating the sexual relationship of marriage.
 - not really
 - rather, he is being realistic

D. Vs. 6-7

6 But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.

1. The concession he is referring to is not sex within marriage, rather, it is the choice of the single life versus marriage
2. Notice what he goes on to say in v. 7 . . .

7 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.

3. While it's clear from Paul's writings that he was single . . .
4. We can be almost certain that he had been married at one time, but at the point he wrote this, he was single.
5. The evidence for his having been married is this . . .
 - a. he was a part of the Sanhedrin, and one of their requirements was marriage
 - b. he had been a rabbi, and claimed that before coming to faith in Christ, had fulfilled all the law
 - it was an accepted part of Jewish social customs to be married
 - after all, God had told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply.
 - an unmarried Jewish man was said to have killed his posterity, and to have diminished the image of God in the world
6. What happened to his wife, we do not know . . .
 - a. she may have died
 - b. she may have left him when he became a believer
 - c. divorce laws among the Jews were pretty liberal during that time, and Paul would have been considered an apostate
7. In order to understand what Paul is saying here, we need to understand his mind set
 - a. in v. 29, he says, "the time is short"
 - he believed he was living in the last days
 - b. in v. 26 he] speaks of "the present distress . . . "
 - Christians were coming under increasing persecution
 - Paul was certain it was going to get worse
 - c. in light of these things, he knew that married people, and especially, couples with children, would be the hardest hit and have the greatest difficulties

8. So he says, "I wish that all men were even as I myself."
 - a. meaning single
 - b. but Paul knows that this is merely his preference
 - c. not everyone can be single
 - d. he goes on to say, "But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that."

9. Paul reveals an important truth here - Both marriage and celibacy are gifts from God, and each person must in faith receive the gift God is giving them.
10. From the book of Genesis, ch. 2, it is clear that God's general will for men and women is marriage.
 - a. not good that the man was alone
 - b. the solution - a life-long companion; a wife
 - c. marriage is the gift God gives many people in order to solve the problem of loneliness
11. But God gives others the gift of celibacy
 - a. Jesus spoke about that in Matthew 19:11-12
 - b. he had been teaching on the sanctity of marriage
 - c. he told the disciples that divorce is not allowed in any case except adultery
 - d. the disciples were flabbergasted - and said it would be better then not to marry at all
 - e. Jesus responded like this, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: For there are eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept *it*, let him accept *it*.""
 - f. Paul echoes that thought here.
12. How does one determine which gift one has?
13. Let's look on to find out . . .

E. Vs. 8-9

8 But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them

if they remain even as I am;
9 but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn *with passion*."

1. The word Paul uses for the *unmarried* here is a unique word that in every other place is used with the flavor of meaning those who had at one time been married but have become divorced.
2. And that fits with the word "widows."
3. Paul is speaking to those who have become single
4. And he tells them to follow his example - stay single
5. Unless they find that the celibate life is too big a struggle.
6. Then they are to marry.
7. You see, the way a person can tell which gift they have been given by God, whether to be celibate or to be married, is to be realistic about their sexual desires.
 - a. if a person finds that their need for companionship is fully satisfied in the context of the Body of Christ and in their relationship with the Lord , then it's a sure indication they are called to be celibate - single.
 - b. but if their sexual desire puts them under pressure so that they long for the companionship of someone of the opposite sex, then they need to realize their gift is marriage, and they need to carefully and wisely pursue that course.
 - c. in light of the calling of God . . .
 - it is wrong for the one called to be celibate to seek marriage
 - just as it is wrong for the one called to be married to seek to be celibate
 - in the 4th Century, Ambrose of Milan, Italy, set the course for the Roman Catholic church clergy by taking a vow of celibacy
 - his journal reveals the intense struggle he had with sexual temptation for years and years
 - he was continually stumbled by it
 - now, there is a lot more I could say on that issue, but we do not have the time
 - d. rather, we need to turn our attention to a couple other issues that need to be affirmed here . . .

- #1 - This passage reveals that both the single life and the married life are gifts from God.
- for a long time, the church has put singles under pressure to be married.
 - single people will often hear such statements as, "So, when are you getting married?"
 - "Don't you want to be married? Really, why not?"
 - "Are you seeing anyone? Is it serious?"
 - Paul affirms the celibate-single lifestyle in this passage;
 - in fact, he goes further than affirming it, he commends it to those who are single, or have become single
 - the church must affirm it as well
 - single people provide a resource of ministry that married people cannot because of the obligations to the marriage
 - so, married people should actively affirm and encourage singles in ministry
 - as well, if you are single, settle the issue of your calling, and if you realize you are called to be celibate, then realize it is for the purpose of serving the Lord without distraction

- #2 - This passage reveals that sex within marriage is a good thing to be enjoyed by a husband and wife.
- If there are problems in this area, a couple needs to talk frankly and openly about it with each other, each expressing their hearts and needs
 - If private talk between a husband and wife does not help, then it would be wise to seek some godly counsel from another

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Living As We Are Called
1. The bottom line truth that is revealed here, and again later in the chapter is this . . .
 2. We are to be faithful to our calling by God, whatever it is
 3. If you are single - live as a single for God, NOW!
 4. If you are married, devote your marriage to the glory and honor of God
 - a. serve your mate as you would the Lord Jesus Christ
 - b. let your marriage be a picture of the kind of relationship God wants to have with His people
 - c. in Eph. 5, Paul says that really, that is the

purpose of marriage - to be a picture of Christ
and the church

d. your marriage is a mini-church

B. To The Lost

1. The world has it's own set of rules
2. But the world is lost and seems to be headed for a dark end
3. Whose principles are you living by?
 - a. the world's?
 - b. your own?
 - c. these have all been tried and found lacking
4. Apart from a living relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, you are lost and there is no hope
5. But Jesus died to remove what separates you from God, your sin
6. And He rose from the dead to give you both hope and life