

I CORINTHIANS
Chapter 7:1-9
Young Adult's Lessons

INTRODUCTION:

We are living through a time of severe change in the American family. The chaos is seen everywhere in our society. Babies having babies, kids refuse to grow up and leave home, affluent Yuppies think more of their "stuff" than children. The rich and poor children alike destroy their brains with drugs, people think nothing of living with each other with no thought of marriage. The divorce rate has doubled since 1965. As many as six out of ten marriages will probably end in divorce within the coming year. Those who profess being religious have a greater possibility of divorce than those who are lost and nonreligious. How sad!

The confusion concerning marriage and the home has had a sweeping effect on American's children. Look at some of the facts concerning our children due to broken homes and homes that are not in obedience to God's Word. The following shows what is happening due the downfall of the homes of American.

Look at what happens to our youth each day of the year:

2,989 children witness the divorce of their parents.
3,288 teenagers will run away from home.
6 teenagers will commit suicide.
438 teenagers will be arrested for drinking.
211 teenagers will be arrested for drug-related crimes.
2,861 teenagers will drop out of school.
1,629 teenagers are placed in adult jail for some reason.
7,742 teenagers become sexually active.
1,106 teenage girls become pregnant.
8,219 teenagers acquire a sexually transmitted disease.

What has gone wrong? There are many things involved, but the main factor is that many have abandoned the principles of marriage as given in the Word of God. If there is a chapter in the Bible that gives us insight into marriage it is ***I Corinthians chapter seven***. This is a chapter that gives us principles for those preparing for marriage, those who are married as well as those who are single and separated.

Take note of - ***verse 5: "...that Satan tempt you not..."*** As a Paul deals with the subject of marriage he reminds us that Satan is an enemy of a healthy marriage and works havoc seeking to destroy it.

I read about a farmer that walked into a lawyer's office wanting to file for a divorce. The lawyer asked, "Well, do you have any grounds?" The farmer replied, "Yeah, I got about 140 acres." The lawyer said, "No, you don't understand, do you have a case?" The farmer replied, "No, I don't have a case, but I have a John Deere." "No, no, you still don't understand, do you have a grudge?" "Yeah, I got a grudge, that's where I park my John Deere." "No, sir, do you have a suit?" "Yes sir, I got the one I wear on Sunday." The lawyer beginning to get frustrated asked, "Sir, does your wife beat you up or anything?" "No sir, we both get up about 4:30."

Seriously speaking, the work of Satan in destroying marriages is obvious. Satan, **"as a roaring lion"**, is doing all he can to devour and destroy our marriages. For that reason marriages need and must be according to the Word of God.

With this chapter Paul begins to deal with the subjects they had written to him in a previous letter. **"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me."** Although this letter is not a part of the canon of scriptures, we know it existed because it's contents can be known through the answers given by Paul. For the rest of **I Corinthians** we will be studying the things that the church of Corinth had written Paul about.

When you look at the subject of marriage in the Bible you find that it is always described as a special relationship in life. It is more important than all other human relationships. The Bible speaks of special privileges and pleasures reserved only for the marriage relationship.

In **verse 1-2** Paul speaks of physical and sexual relations as part of the privileges and pleasures of marriage. Notice God's guidelines about sexual relations. First, we see:

VERSE 1:

It is evident that there were many different opinions on the subject of marriage among the Corinthian Christians. Probably, some of them of Jewish origin thought it necessary, while others thought it undesirable, if not wrong. Paul says - **"It is good for a man not to marry"**. The word - **"good"** here means expedient, profitable, as it does many other places in the Bible, **Matthew 17:4; 18:8,9; I Corinthians 9:15**. We are able to see that Paul does not mean to teach either that marriage is morally a sin as compared with celibacy (def: the state of being unmarried, complete sexual abstinence).

In **verse 1**, **"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman."** The word **"touch"** is the key to understanding Paul's statement. The word does not speak of the total absence of touch. Some today teach a couple dating should never kiss or even hold hands. A total absence of touching is empathized in all forms. The word that is used here in its basic meaning speaks of - "setting fire to something, to kindle, to light.", a touch that arouses and stimulates. It is an intimate touch that leads to sexual relations.

The touching is directly connected to the word **"fornication"** in **verse 2**, which is dealing with illicit sex. In summary, Paul is saying in **verse 1** that all sex outside of marriage is prohibited, forbidden, and condemned by God. Paul is acknowledging there are human desires and passions that can be inflamed and incited by the kind of **"touch"** he is speaking of. He says that it is not **"good"** for a person to satisfy those desires outside of marriage. The word **"good"** speaks of that which is acceptable. Sex before marriage is not acceptable to God.

The Bible is clear in the matter - **I Thessalonians 4:3**, **"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication."** It is the will of God that one be sexually pure outside of marriage and do nothing and allow nothing that would lead to the violation of God's will.

NOTE: Parents and grandparents – If there ever has been a time for you to teach your children and grandchildren on this subject it is today. Because of the awkwardness of this subject it is often ignored and even tolerated in the lives of children and grandchildren.

Children today are not being taught biblical truths concerning this beautiful gift which has been given, by God, to a husband and wife. When parents and grandparents do not give biblical answers to this subject the devil and the world standards will. When "sluts" like Britney Spears are the role model to many young people something is badly wrong with our youth's thinking. When our youth emulate this kind of "star" a wrong road is being traveled. Often times there are no standards of dress, dating, and friendships. Often parents and grandparents permit free access of a TV and computers with no safety nets or guards against the trash and porn that is so readily presented. The sad thing is these kinds of things are often times accepted and tolerated in homes. Yet it is these things that are putting our youth onto the road of promiscuousness which is happening in even many Christian's homes today. Sexual misconduct is still sin today just as it was when Paul wrote this letter to the church at Corinth.

VERSE 2:

However, marriage was commanded to avoid the sins of pre-marital and extramarital fornication. The believers at Corinth were surrounded by sinful temptations and unrestrained behavior that constantly warred against the spiritual control of their sexual desires. In such a situation, a wholesome marital union was not only helpful, but absolutely necessary for many.

The command in **7:2** shows that the fulfillment of sexual needs within the marriage relationship is right. As long as the world stands, marriage shall continue to be a personal matter to be decided by each individual. The proper form of sex has never and will never be a sin and it is a sad thing for anyone to be taught or look upon sex as filthy, or evil – **Hebrews 13:4**.

Paul makes it clear in **verse 2** that sexual relations are confined to marriage. We read, **"Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."** Paul was saying that sexual relations were not to be between any man or any woman, but between a husband and a wife. There are no exceptions. Sex is God's gift to a man and his wife and sex outside of marriage is sin and will reap the consequences.

Such God-given guidelines exalt marriage and make it a special relationship. As I said earlier, it is a relationship that involves privileges and pleasures that no other human relationship is entitled or allowed. I must admit that such a concept is almost foreign to our society. The message of our society is "Safe Sex," which in actuality is a subtle way of saying that the priority is not keeping sexually pure, but to keep from catching some STD or AIDS.

Sexual misconduct has been the downfall of many a home, for when sex is used in the manner in which God intended it is the highest expression of intimacy in the marriage relationship. When it is wrongfully looked upon and used it is the worst thing that can happen to any home.

VERSES 3-4:

It is sad that approximately 45 percent of marriages stay together, some surveys say only 10 to 20% of those could be called intimate marriages.

A little boy took a history exam and one of the questions was, "Who was Patrick Henry?" He wrote, "Patrick Henry was a man who got married and then said, 'Give me liberty or give me death.'"

Someone has said that it has been proven that married life is healthy. Statistics show that single people die sooner than married folks do. So, if you are looking for a long life and a slow death, get married.

The sad truth is that many marriages are not happy and satisfying relationships. In **verses 3-4** Paul speaks of marriage as a satisfying relationship. In order to have a satisfying relationship, we must understand:

VERSE 3:

We read in - **verse 3, "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband."** Notice the words "**due benevolence.**" The words actually speak of a debt that is owed, an obligation. The context tells us that the debt that the marriage partner owes to their spouse is the fulfilling of their physical and sexual needs. The word "**render**" is a command, not a recommendation. The husband and wife are commanded to fulfill each other needs. The marriage relationship is to be one that is fulfilling, gratifying, and satisfying.

In verses 1-2, Paul tells us what we should not do and then in **verse 3** tells us what we should do. The husband is obligated by God to meet the needs of his wife and the wife is commanded by God to meet the needs of her husband.

The command "**render**" indicates that sexual intimacies should be a constant part of the martial union, not limited to the honeymoon or to the purpose of bearing children - **Proverbs 5:18-19; Ecclesiastes 9:9.**

Someone has said that troubles in marriage often begin when a man becomes so busy earning his salt that he forgets his sugar.

VERSE 4:

At Corinth, the man was not to run to the temple of Aphorodite, which had sex as its religion. There were one thousand so called vestal (sacred) virgins there. In that temple you could get food, drink and sex. Those vestal virgins were nothing in the world but one thousand prostitutes. Sex was carried on in the name of religion. Paul is saying that love and sex are to take place at home. NOTE: The only motive for marriage is love -- not sex, but love. How sad that so many young people of today have gotten these two words confused and twisted.

Yes, in marriage the husband and wife belong to each other. The wife is not a piece of property to be used or exploited at will. She is not a sex object, existing only to satisfy her husband's whims. Rather, they are both persons who lovingly are to give themselves to each other. They are not to give or to withhold sexual privileges as the basis of reward or punishment. Each should be motivated not to have their own desires satisfied, but rather to fulfill the needs of the other.

Notice carefully that Paul speaks of the both husband and wife. The wife makes her priority the meeting of her husband's needs. Likewise, the husband makes his priority the meeting of his wife's needs. The result is both are fulfilled. Marriage is a relationship where it is no longer one's rights but one's responsibilities.

Marriage is not a relationship where you live to get what you want. It is a relationship where you want to give. It is a relationship where you make the priority the fulfilling of your mate's needs.

It would seem that some in Corinth held the opinion that it was better for those who were married to separate and not to live together as husband and wife. Paul makes it very clear that such is not the case. It is permissible for husbands and wives to separate for short periods of prayer and fasting if they wish. Such times should not be long drawn out span of time, lest any might be led into sin through lack of self control.

VERSE 5:

Take note of this verse - **"Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."** Paul is still speaking of how marriage is to be a satisfying relationship. He tells us that physical needs of the marriage partner are not to be deprived. The word **"defraud"** speaks of depriving or withholding.

The word **"consent"** suggests that the couple has discussed the matter and has consented to do so. They have talked about it.

VERSES 6-7:

Paul was quick to point out that both the single life and the marital union are permitted and not commanded. The duties for each commitment are prescribed, but neither institution is an obligation. Marriage is a way, not a must. Nowhere does the Bible state, "Thou shalt marry," or "Thou shalt not marry."

Because Paul was single and had no compelling urge to be married, he was able to devote his entire life to the Christian ministry - **7:7**. This brought him spiritual fulfillment, and he desired this goal for every believer.

However, he recognized that both the single life and the martial union were gifts from God. If God enabled one not to marry then use that freedom to serve and devote that life to the service of God. - **Matthew 19:10-12**.

VERSES 8-9:

The words - **"I say therefore"** introduce a slight change in subject. Paul now applied the previous general principles to two specific groups; the unmarried and the widows. Since the latter term refers to women who had lost their husbands through death, the former probably includes men who had lost their wives through death. Possibly, the

term might include both widowers and men who had never been married, but it certainly would not include divorced men.

The word **"good"** speaks of that which is acceptable and honorable. He was saying that being single was neither sinful or shameful, but allowable and acceptable.

Paul's words help the single to realize that they are not some second-class believer in the family of God. Being single is perfectly honorable and acceptable.

Even though Paul wished that all men were as himself, he realized that his desire were not the desires of everyone. For the most part, people wanted to marry, would marry, and should marry. Paul was well aware that remaining single was the exception, not the standard or norm. But at the same time, Paul was aware that marriage was not for everyone. For some, living a single life was preferred and proper. Paul not only defended the single life, but also defined a single life from the perspective of those who remain single throughout life.

The word **"abide"** speaks of a decision that is made. The tense of the words speaks of a voluntary decision to remain single, a decision made once and for all.

Again, for most people it would be God's plan and purpose that they marry. But there are those, such as Paul, that it is God's will they remain single and thus the decision is made not to marry. When it comes to marriage, one must find what is God's will for their life.

Even though it is Paul's desire that most remain single, he was aware that most people it would not be best. Therefore, he discourages the single life for most people.

The word **"contain"** refers to having power or control over certain desires. The desires that Paul specifically speaks of are sexual desires. What Paul is saying is directly connected to what he said about one's proper gift of God. Those who have the gift to remain single are given a special control by God over their sexual desires. It is not that sexual desires do not exist, but they are gifted to discipline and control those desires and not let those desires govern them.

If a single person makes the choice to remain single because they feel it is best for them, God enables them to exercise the necessary control over their physical desires. In those who do not possess such a gift, there is a desire for marriage and for a mate in life.

Paul says of one that has not the gift of celibacy, **"Let them marry, it is better to marry than burn."** The word **"better"** speaks of that which is profitable. The idea of **"burning"** is being constantly plagued with unchaste desires. A person who realizes that singleness is not their lot in life, makes the decision that marriage is best for them, and in God's time and will, they should marry.

The bottom line that Paul is giving is that it all depends on God's gift and plan for your life.

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1. If there is a chapter in the Bible that gives us insight into marriage it is _____.
2. This is a chapter that gives us _____ for those _____ for marriage, those who are _____ as well as those who are _____ and _____.
3. Who is the greatest enemy to marriage? _____ **Verse 5.**
4. With this chapter Paul begins to deal with the subjects they had _____ to him in a previous letter.
5. From **chapter 7** to the end of this book Paul deals with what subjects? _____.
6. In **verse 1-2** Paul speaks of physical and sexual relations as part of the _____ and _____ of marriage.
7. What does the word "**touch**" mean? _____

8. What is **not** acceptable to God if it occurs before marriage? _____.
- 9 The touching is directly connected to the word "**_____**"
10. It is the will of God that one be sexually _____ outside of marriage!
11. Marriage was commanded to avoid the sins of _____-_____ and extramarital _____.
12. Sex is God's gift to a _____ and his _____ and sex outside of marriage is _____ and will reap the _____.
13. The words "**due benevolence,**" speaks of a _____ that is _____.
14. The word "**render**" is a _____, not a _____.
15. What is the name of the famous temple at Corinth? _____.
16. Marriage is not a relationship where you live to get what you _____. It is a relationship where you want to _____.
17. The word "**defraud**" speaks of _____ or _____.
18. Paul was quick to point out that both the single life and the marital union are _____ and not _____.
19. Remaining single permits the single person to do what? _____
_____.

20. However, he recognized that both the single life and the martial union were _____ from God.
21. The words - "**I say therefore**" introduce a slight change in subject. Paul now _____ the previous general principles.
22. The word "**good**" speaks of that which is acceptable and honorable. He was saying that being _____ was neither sinful or shameful, but allowable and acceptable.
23. The word "**contain**" refers to having power or control over certain _____.