

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 5TH - 6TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

### INTIMACY (1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-7)

#### "IN RESPONSE TO THE MATTERS YOU WROTE ABOUT"

Some in Corinth had gone to the opposite extreme of the group, trying to justify no sexual boundaries by claiming that people shouldn't marry or have sex with their spouse.

- **For some reason we struggle to find a balance in life and we fall into extremes. Ironically, the Bible teaches balance and logic, but we must read it!**

### MARRIAGE AS PROTECTION

When a marriage is biblical it is healthy, and healthy marriages protect people from sexual immorality. There are several reasons for this, but one is that sex and intimacy are good and encouraged by God through the Word.

- **Christianity has failed at teaching sex in church and in our homes. Sex is a good and holy thing in the proper setting.**

### A WIFE'S BODY DOESN'T BELONG TO HER?

Men often misquote these verses to prove to their wife that they must submit and sex is mandatory, but v3-4 clearly portray marriage and intimacy as being **mutually submissive**.

- **If Eph. 5:24-26 were lived out by both spouses, marriages would be strong, and intimacy and sex would be natural by products.**

### THERE MAY BE TIMES FOR ABSTINENCE IN MARRIAGE

Paul says there may be "time[s] to devote yourselves to prayer" where couples may agree to abstain from sex to fast and pray. He goes on to say that this must not be too long because it may cause someone to sin.

- **Intimacy is a natural desire that should be fulfilled in marriage, but if it isn't, we will try and fulfill it in sinful ways.**

### "A CONCESSION, NOT AS A COMMAND"

Paul was single, but he recognized not all people were called to this like he was. He also says that all people have "[their] own gift," meaning **wives, husbands, and single people all contribute to God's work**.

- **We are called to be content in the place God has put us during whatever timeframe He wants us there.**

### RESPONSIBLE (1 CORINTHIANS 7:8-16)

#### IF THIS IS WHERE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE...

Paul concludes his outlook on marriage by telling "unmarried" and "widows" to remain single unless they "do not have self-control" and "burn with desire."

- This isn't a command that everyone be celibate, though Paul did teach the benefits of being single in ministry. This is a call to **be present whatever your circumstance**.

### THIS COMMAND IS FROM THE LORD

Notice Paul offers suggestions in this chapter but also distinguishes the commands of God.

- We get into the uncomfortable and sometimes confusing topic of divorce amongst Christians. Paul was realistic enough to know that **illegitimate divorces** would happen, so he gave 2 options as to what to do: **remain unmarried or reconcile**.

### BUT WHAT IF THAT DOESN'T WORK?

Paul didn't tell us what to do if one tries to reconcile but is rejected. If a Christian divorces illegitimately, reconciliation must be attempted.

- **Adultery (Mt. 5,19), abandonment (1 Cor. 7), and abuse (Ep. 5:25-30) are permissible reasons for divorce.** We are never commanded to divorce, but there are times when one has little choice.

### WHAT ABOUT UNBELIEVING SPOUSES?

Paul makes it clear that this is his advice, not a command from God. He advises Christians to live with a non-believing spouse because they are "made holy" by the believing one.

- This doesn't mean salvation is transferable, but that **believing spouses are the best means of relaying the gospel to an unbelieving spouse**.

### "YOUR CHILDREN WOULD BE UNCLEAN"

Paul encourages believers to remain married if possible to non-believers for the sake of their children. This implies that **children will have better upbringings and a higher probability of following Jesus if they have a parent, or parents, that teach them the Bible**.

- **Christian parents are responsible to teach and model the Bible to their kids!**

### SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T WORK OUT

God understands that a Christian spouse may do everything they can to save a marriage, but the other spouse may choose to leave. Paul writes that if that is the case, "let [them] leave" because they're "not bound in such cases."

- We must ask, **"Have I done all I can to honor God and save this marriage?"** If we have, we can "live in peace."

### THE FINAL SENTENCE SUMS IT UP

V16 sums up this section perfectly. Paul simply poses the thought that **our endurance with a non-believing spouse (if safe) can lead to their salvation**.

## LIVING LIFE (1 CORINTHIANS 7:17-24)

### BEING PRESENT

Chap. 7 talks of being mentally and spiritually present wherever God may have us at the time. This doesn't mean we cannot change our status in life, but that **wherever we are, we're to honor God in that season**.

- **This doesn't mean every situation is God's will (sometimes it's our foolishness), but that Christians are to trust His direction.**

### "KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDS IS WHAT MATTERS"

V18-19 address the notion that we are to seek change simply because we want to. As Christians **it is fine to be ambitious, but we must seek God's will for our lives first**.

- Paul's example is circumcision, but we see the same pressure in our world today to conform to people's ideas of success. We must pursue God's ways, not culture's.

### "BY ALL MEANS TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY"

By telling slaves to "remain" in that position is not advocacy for slavery, but a call to live as a "free man" in Christ even in physical bondage. Paul also applies logic when advising slaves to be free if given that opportunity.

- **The point is for us to know that no matter our lot in this life, we're free in Christ and will be in perfect freedom in the afterlife!**

### "DO NOT BECOME SLAVES OF PEOPLE"

V23 is a scripture for us today! Paul urges us to "remain with God in the situation in which [we are] called," not to become "slaves" to the culture/people around us.

- We can trust Jesus because **our freedom and salvation were "bought at a price." The cross and our trust in Christ liberate us from the pressure and pitfalls of culture.**

### MARRIAGE AND SINGLENESS

- Married couples are to be mutually submissive, respectful, and loving with each other as they both pursue Jesus.
- Single people are to not feel the pressure to marry, but to be wise enough to avoid situations that will cause them to sin.
- Both groups are to know they have a place and role in the kingdom of God.

### LIVING RESPONSIBLY

- In marriage, and all other relationships, we should do all we can (safely) to reconcile.
- If possible, we should stay married to non-believers so they, and any children, have a greater probability of following Jesus.
- **It is wise to apply persistence and responsibility to all relationships in the hopes of one coming to Christ.**

### BEING PRESENT AND TRUSTING JESUS

- The theme of this half chapter is greater than marriage, being single, or slavery. It is **the charge to trust Jesus in whatever condition we are in**.
- In order to be at peace in our condition, **we must be obeying His commands and praying for the wisdom to "take opportunities" God may present**.
- Trusting Jesus wherever we may be allows us to be present.
- In a time of confusion and chaos, we need clarity more than ever to have healthy relationships, families, and to navigate life.
- Beyond navigation, **trusting Jesus and being present enables us to see beauty and feel the peace of God**.

### AN INVENTORY

- If possible, will we work to resolve unstable relationships or will we walk away?
- Are we obedient and trusting God regardless of the place we are at in life?
- Have we become "slaves" to our culture?
- Are we willing to cut distractions and temptations in order to **be present**? What are we missing and sacrificing if we're not?