

1 Corinthians 7:1-40 **Marriage Relationships – Question from Corinth**

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

Marital responsibility

It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. 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.

To the single

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

To the married - Divorce

10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. 11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

Mixed Marriages – not binding in cases of abuse and dissatisfaction of the unbeliever

12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.

16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

Paul's consistent teaching in all the Churches

17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.

18 Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.

20 Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. 21 Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. 22 For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave.

23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called.

Virgins – Paul's judgment

25 Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy.

26 I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress--that it is good for a man to remain as he is:

27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, 30 those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, 31 and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away.

32 But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord--how he may please the Lord. 33 But he who is married cares about the things of the world--how he may please his wife. 34 There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world--how she may please her husband.

35 And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.

36 But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry.

37 Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well. 38 So then he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better.

Bond of Marriage

39 A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. 40 But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment--and I think I also have the Spirit of God.

NKJV

Facts Revealed:

✚ The Corinthians had written to Paul with questions regarding problems in marriage relations.

Marital responsibility [1 Corinthians 7:1-5]

✚ Paul would prefer that single people remain single if they are able.

✧ His first statement is: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman."

✧ This attitude would prepare the men for the position as one of the 144,000 virgin men of Revelation 7 & 14 who are servants of the lamb.

- ✧ However because of the tendency toward sexual immorality with both men and women, in reality, Paul acknowledges it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
- ✧ So he concludes that it is right for each man to have his own wife and each woman to have her own husband.
- ✧ In the marriage relationship the couple are to focus on their responsibility toward their mate.
 - ✧ The husband does not have authority over his own body because it belongs to the wife.
 - ✧ The wife does not have authority over her own body because it belongs to the husband.
- ✧ Do not deprive one another sexually except with mutual consent, and then only for an agreed time so they can give themselves to prayer and fasting.
- ✧ When the time agreed upon ends, Paul advises them to renew their sexual relations so Satan can not use their desires against them and tempt them to go astray in sexual immorality because of their lack of self control.

To the single [1 Corinthians 7:6-9]

- ✧ Paul gives advise for the singles, which is not a command but a concession:
 - ✧ Paul desires for all men to remain single as himself.
 - ✧ He also recognizes that all are not able to do it because God has gifted each person differently.
 - ✧ If persons cannot exercise sexual self-control they should marry, it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

To the married – Divorce [1 Corinthians 7:10-11]

- ✧ Divorce is not within the will of God who said, "the two shall be one flesh." [Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:3-11, Mark 10:2-12, 1 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 5:25-31]
 - ✧ If a woman departs from her husband, let them remain sexually pure while they are apart and then they can be reconciled together. [Deuteronomy 24:1-4]
 - ✧ If they cannot be reconciled, they should remain unmarried.
 - ✧ The husband is commanded not to divorce his wife.

Mixed Marriages – not binding in cases of abuse and dissatisfaction of the unbeliever [1 Corinthians 7:12-16]

- ✧ Paul's advice to the rest:
 - ✧ If a believer is married to an unbeliever who is content to stay peacefully with the believer, then divorce is not recommended. The unbeliever is sanctified by the believer so the children may be holy.
 - ✧ If the unbeliever is **not content** with the marriage, let him or her depart, a believer is not under bondage in such cases.
 - ✧ God has called us to **peace**, which applies to the marriage relationship and the home.
 - ✧ If there is spousal abuse in a marriage relationship, the abusive spouse is not a believer whether they claim to believe or not, the proof is in the behavior.
 - ✧ There is no way for believers to know if they can save their spouse.
 - ✧ Peter gives a hope that by the chaste conduct of the believing wife the unbelieving husband might be won, but there is no guarantee. Still, in that situation, there is no suggestion of her being exposed to abusiveness from her husband.
 - ✧ So, if there is peace, stay together, if not, let the offender depart, because God wants peace and contentment in the home.

Circumstances of your Calling [1 Corinthians 7:17-24]

- ✧ Paul's consistent teaching in all the churches is:
 - ✧ God distributes differing abilities to each person.

- ✧ Paul suggested we continue to use the same state and circumstance we had when we heard the call.
- ✧ Circumcision or uncircumcision mean nothing since we are all members in the body of Christ. [Acts 15:1-31, Romans 2:25-29, 3:29-30, 1 Corinthians 12:1-27]
- ✧ It is the condition of the heart that matters in keeping the commandments of God. [Romans 2:29, 1 Corinthians 7:19]
- ✧ Slave or free does not matter in service of the Lord. However if a slave can be made free it is good to take advantage of the opportunity.
- ✧ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [Galatians 3:28]
- ✧ Let each remain with God in the state in which he was called.

Virgins [1 Corinthians 7:25-38]

✧ Paul's advice as one made trustworthy by the mercy of God – No commandment from God.

- ✧ God's command of blessing was, "Be fruitful and Multiply, fill the earth and subdue it." [Genesis 1:28, 9:1]
- ✧ However, because of the present danger and distress for a Church under persecution, Paul gives his advice that it is good for a man to remain single as he is.
- ✧ If one is married do not seek to be single.
- ✧ If one is single, do not seek marriage, however it is no sin to marry.
- ✧ Persecution of the Church makes it difficult for married believers, because the wicked opponents can use threats to your spouse against you to persuade you to renounce your faith. [Matthew 10:16-23, 24:9-14, Mark 13:9-13, Luke 21:12-19]
- ✧ Thus Paul desires to spare the single believers from this potential added threat.

- ✧ The time is short and the form of this world is passing away, therefore, Paul advises us to focus on our walk with the Lord, more than on our family relationships. [1 Corinthians 7:29-31, Luke 14:26]

- ✧ Coming back to the marriage relationship and its problem under persecution, Paul demonstrates that the married couple are concerned about the welfare of their spouse which might hinder their full commitment to Christ, whereas the single person has no such distraction.
- ✧ Paul's advice is therefore given in consideration for the benefit to believers, that they may serve the Lord without distraction. [1 Corinthians 7:35]
- ✧ If individuals are concerned that their youth is fleeing away and they are anxious to marry, it is not a sin to marry.
- ✧ Those who marry do well, but those who can exercise self control and remain single for the sake of serving the Lord do even better.

Bond of Marriage

✧ The legal bond of marriage is terminated at the death of the spouse, and the widow or widower is at liberty to marry any one they choose.

- ✧ However for the reasons stated above, Paul believes that the widow or widower is happier if they remain single.
- ✧ The ability is a gift from God. [Matthew 19:11, 1 Corinthians 7:6-9, 17]
- ✧ Paul said, "I think I also have the Spirit of God."