

1 Corinthians 7 Half-way thru LETTER -

v. 1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote...

So far, IMPORTANT Words about Sins and Struggles he heard of from church

Food offered to Idols – Spiritual Gifts – Resurrection – Collection – Apollos

NOW > Marriage, Divorce, and Virginity

Chapter 6 Sexual IMMORALITY – Chapter 7 Proper view of Sex & Marriage

Background - Society: Greco-Roman Family Life

1. Most Marriages Arranged by Families – Little Personal Choice

Enhance Social Status – Business or Political Advantage

Sexual Pleasure NOT from Wives but Concubines & Prostitutes

2. Husband wields Power and Authority

EXTREME Cases – POWER of Life and Death over Family Members

3. Home was place of Social Relations and Business

Western Model: NUCLEAR Family, Private CASTLE None Dare Enter

CHURCHES met in HOMES – HC open “their space” for OTHERS

Home = SHOP, BUSINESS Office, SCHOOL for Kids, Residence of SLAVES

Even POOR had SLAVES – Wealthy Slaves had Slaves – WON by WAR!

Scripture: Foundations of Marriage

1. Ultimate “a man will leave his father and mother”

2. Permanent “and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh”

3. Intimate “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame”

Genesis 2.24,25

4. Binding Forever

Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?” He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate”... And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

Matthew 19.3-9

Some: “Jesus does not say anything about homosexuality!”

NOT TRUE – Right here! NOT Word, 1 Man, 1 Woman, Marriage FOR LIFE
ANY Sexual Relationship OTHER than this is VIOLATION of Word of Jesus

READ Chapter HERE ---

1. Authority – Paul the Apostle speaks the Word of God

v. 10 To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord)

v. 12 To the rest I say (I, not the Lord)

GOSPELS were NOT Complete – MAYBE Mark was Already WRITTEN

Words of Jesus were ORAL RECORD – Perhaps some Small Writings

IF known Words of Jesus SUPPORT Teaching – Then PAUL cites them v. 10

IF Paul has NO Quote from Jesus – Speaks with AUTHORITY of Jesus: Apostle

v. 25 Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

v. 40 Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

SARCASTIC Tone – COMPARING self with Bold, Arrogant Claims of Corinth

If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 14.37

2. Monogamy – One Man, One Woman, Married for Life

v. 2 But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

Seems OBVIOUS to US – I HOPE! But a RADICAL idea in CORINTH

1st C SLANG “to Corinthianize” = to FORNICATE

Many – even in CHURCH – Would have thought Paul was UNREALISTIC

3. Equality – Your Body belongs to Your Spouse

vs. 3,4 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

FRANK Teaching about Sex – BOTH Husband and Wife have FULL Rights

Sex is NOT DIRTY or SHAMEFUL but a GIFT you GIVE to your Spouse

BEST Way to put Prostitutes – and Internet Porn – OUT of BUSINESS

This whole approach to equality and mutuality in the marriage relationship was completely revolutionary...and continues to be so in every modern culture...At the practical level this is a very challenging word to all Christian couples. Many reasons are given for withholding what is due the other: tiredness, resentment, disinterest, boredom, etc...Paul does not stress the duty of either partner at the expense of the other.

David Prior

v. 5 Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

LIMITED Time – MUTUAL Agreement – Urgent PRAYER – RESUME Sex

GANDHI – Quit having SEX in Marriage – PRAISED! – SELFISH!!

Jonathan Edwards had several Children born on SUNDAY!

Colonial N.England believed Born day of Week Conceived – Pastor? Sabbath?

4. Individuality – Everyone is Different

vs. 6,7 Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

Marriage is NORMAL and GOOD and MOST People will be Married in Christ
SOME have the GIFT of Singleness, just as others have GIFT of Marriage

Some taught that VERY HOLY Engaged Couples would NOT get Married!

vs. 36-38 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. 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. So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.

DEPENDS on Your WILLPOWER and SITUATION

CAN you WAIT on the WEDDING?? Or do YOU NEED to MARRY?

Met couple who were ENGAGED for 8 years!/ Wonder, Where was PASSION!?

4 Months from Engagement to Wedding – And it was HARD for us to WAIT!

AREAS of Christian Freedom – No COMMANDS – No Pressure from Church!!

vs. 39,40 A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is.

Paul addresses WIDOWS – Many of Them – Husbands often MUCH OLDER!

Roman HUSBAND more like UNCLE – or Much OLDER Brother in AGE!

WIDOWS became Great Servants, Leaders in Early Churches

BUT they were always FREE to Marry if they so Choose to do...

Paul LIKELY speaks from EXPERIENCE of having BEEN Married

RABBI – NOT SINGLE & Leader in ISRAEL – Widower? Abandoned?

5. Testimony - Believing Spouse brings Sanctification & Salvation

vs. 12-16 To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

COMMON Situation – ONE Spouse gets SAVED – Is Marriage OVER? NO!

Marriage is CREATION Ordinance, Not Salvation Ordinance

Yet, it can be SHOCKING to Spouse – SOME want to Leave!

South African Doctor's Wife was Converted and he said there were 2 Shocks

1. Woman I Loved Change Completely / 2. Another Man in Marriage: Jesus

Paul is REALIST – If they WANT to Leave, You cannot FORCE them to Stay

Most Commentators do NOT SEE Permission to REMARRY in this Chapter

Some Christians WORRIED that Unbelieving Spouse would Ruin their Faith

Paul argues the Opposite – YOU the Believer are there to Change them

HOLY = Saved > SET APART, Unique Opportunity – Salt, Light, Truth, Jesus

The godliness of the one does more to 'sanctify' the marriage than the ungodliness of the other does to make it unclean.

John Calvin

WHO KNOWS – Paul is NOT Guaranteeing Salvation – God is Sovereign

Paul extends EVERY HOPE in Grace & Mercy of God our Savior

If God saved Paul, and You, and Me, Then ANYBODY can COME to Him!

6. Priority – Live as you were Called

vs. 17-24 Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

DIGRESSION – Different RELATIONS in Family of God – 2 Illustrations

Circumcision was Greatest RELIGIOUS Barrier in 1st C Roman World

SLAVERY Greatest SOCIAL Barrier – Then & Now – MORE than in History

What is MOST Important is NOT One's SOCIAL Position but they're Salvation

SALVATION in Jesus has made these 2 Huge Barriers – NULL & VOID, Empty

In the Transforming Light of Kingdom they NO LONGER MATTER

Jesus OVERTURNS all Human Categories – Male, Female, Black, White, Jew...

Christians MUST Not allow any Human Category or Status to DIVIDE them

One Master, One Teacher, One Savior, One Lord

vs. 32-35 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

FOCUS – Distractions --- More People in Family, More busy & Divided Time

SPOUSE & CHILDREN also Open up GOSPEL OPPORTUNITIES!

People OPEN their Hearts to Women & Kids

Every Time I needed to RENEW Visa in Africa – Took a Baby Son!

PRIORITY of our Calling is to SERVE & SHARE Christ from Whatever Status

7. Urgency – This World is Passing Away

vs. 28-31 But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

Corinthians OVERLY Focused on KINGDOM VICTORY of Christ

Over-Realized and Over-Heated Eschatology – We have it all NOW in Christ

Paul BALANCE – Not only has NEW AGE Begun / Old Age NOT YET Ended

Destruction of Jerusalem – Persecution of Nero, Diocletian, other evil Caesars

Paul the Pastor has HEAVY Heart to Think of SUFFERINGS Ahead

Sufferings Continue for Christians Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan...

The apostle write to the Corinthians as he would to an army about to enter on a most unequal conflict in an enemy's country, and for a protracted time.

Charles Hodge

Paul is not so narrow minded that he thinks all must become full-time missionaries like himself, but he does believe that all must bear witness in whatever social situation they find themselves with their lives and their words. This is one reason he encourages Christians to remain in their current state.

Ben Witherington III

1 Corinthians 7:¹ Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”² But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.³ The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.⁴ For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.⁵ Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.⁶ Now as a concession, not a command, I say this.⁷ I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.⁸ To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am.⁹ But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.¹⁰ To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband¹¹ (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.¹² To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her.¹³ If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.¹⁵ But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace.¹⁶ For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?¹⁷ Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.¹⁸ Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision.¹⁹ For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.²⁰ Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called.²¹ Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself

of the opportunity.)²² For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ.²³ You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.²⁴ So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.²⁵ Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.²⁶ I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is.²⁷ Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife.²⁸ But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that.²⁹ This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none,³⁰ and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods,³¹ and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.³² I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord.³³ But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife,³⁴ and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.³⁵ I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.³⁶ 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.³⁹ A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.⁴⁰ Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.