

Intro:

1. Today we are going to begin talking about Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.
 - a. Despite my almost 15 years of married life experiences (our 15 year wedding anniversary is next month), I am by no means an expert in this matter.

Three things you must consider when looking at these verses:

1. Paul is now responding to questions from a letter he received from the Christians in Corinth.
 - a. But we do not have that original letter, nor do we know what specific things were asked.
 - b. But that doesn't mean we can't study and apply these verses (2 Tim 3:16-17)
2. Paul's responses are in context of the situation at Corinth.
 - a. Gentiles of that time saw no evil in having multiple wives.
 - i. Polygamy and divorce was widely practiced.
 - b. Many liberal Jews saw no evil in obtaining a certificate of divorce from their wives for any number of insignificant reasons.
3. This passage is not full exposition on marriage, divorce, and remarriage.
 - a. The full counsel of God must be taken into consideration when considering these topics.
 - b. To look at these verse in 1 Corinthians alone would leave the reader confused as to what is required and expected within these relationships.

Read 1 Cor 7:1-9 and Pray¹

1. Paul now addresses sexuality inside and outside of marriage.
2. Apparently part of the problem in Corinth was that single people were living like married people and married people were living like they were single.

¹ Unless otherwise marked, all scriptures taken from the New King James Version. © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

- a. What were..., what are the proper expectations for both single and married individuals.

1 Corinthians 7:1 ¹ **Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: *It is* good for a man not to touch a woman.**

1. The phrase “to touch a woman” was a common Jewish euphemism for sexual intercourse. (*something that caused kids to giggle*)
2. The implication, however, was that it is good for a man (or woman) not to marry.
 - a. Based on Paul’s convictions, in light of whatever questions were asked, and circumstances they faced in Corinth, Paul affirms celibacy, but with conditions.
3. Note that it is good; not best, it’s not preferred; it’s just good if a man or woman remains single.
 - a. Why does Paul say this?
 - b. Not to get too ahead of ourselves, but Paul indicates that a single person has a unique opportunity to commit themselves fully to the Lord without distraction.

But there are conditions to properly serving the Lord as a single saint...

1 Corinthians 7:2 ² **Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.**

1. Part of the problem was that at that time, the people separated the body from the spirit and believed that...
 - a. The body was evil and corrupt, therefore, why bother resisting its urges and desires. Just go ahead and satisfy those desires; you can’t help it, that’s just the way it is.
 - b. But they also believed that the spirit is what we worship with, so regardless of the body’s actions, we can continue worship God with our separate and independent spirit.
2. What do you think? Do you think that kind of mentality exists today? I do.
 - a. Have you met people who feel like they can kind of just do what they want, but that they are completely accepted by God no matter what?

- b. Their body and their spirit are not aligned. That’s why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:20 (read the verse – emphasize *body* and *spirit*).
- 3. In Corinth, evidently there was some confusion concerning the single life as well as the proper conduct within a marriage between a husband and wife.
 - a. First of all, Paul’s saying, don’t try to live some “holy” life as a single man or woman, telling yourself and others “*I’m single so I can serve the Lord*” but then indulging in any and every sexual sin.
 - b. Don’t forget last week’s study; in the words that filled his last breath to them Paul told the Christians in Corinth to flee sexual immorality.
- 4. Paul is not saying, “If you have uncontrollable sexual desires, just go find someone to marry who can fulfill those desires.”
 - a. That’s about what the mentality was at that time.
 - i. There is an ancient Roman document that has been found that records that someone during that time had been remarried 25 times.
 - ii. And you thought Liz Taylor was bad with her 8 different husbands.
- 5. Paul’s not saying, just go find someone to marry to relieve your sexual desires;
 - a. There’s something more meaningful that Paul is getting at, something we’ll dive into when we get to verse 7 concerning the celibate lifestyle,
 - b. But let’s look at the way things ought to be within marriage since there was some confusion there as well.

1 Corinthians 7:3-4 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*.

- 1. Now Paul is addressing the married saints who were trying to live like they were single.
 - a. Again, apparently there were those who felt that even though they were married, that they were being “super saints” by abstaining from all sexual activity.
 - b. Now that’s just stupid.

2. God, who created us, gave us sex drives and they are there for more than just procreation. Yes, I'm saying that our God given sex drives are to be embraced and enjoyed within God's guidelines.
 - a. Speaking of the wife of your youth, Proverbs 5:19 says, "*As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love.*"
 - b. The marriage bed is to be active and exciting!
3. Solomon spent much time talking about some of the most intimate matters of his relationship with his wife in the Song of Solomon, and God had that recorded in our bibles because...
 - a. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.* - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Repeat: 1 Corinthians 7:3-4 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*.

4. You see, within marriage, as Paul has already reminded us in chapter 6, that through marriage, a man and a woman, when they marry, "*the two... become one flesh.*" (Gen 2:24)
 - a. And in order for things to function properly in the marriage relationship, a husband must be totally, absolutely, committed to fulfilling his wife's needs.
 - b. And a wife, completely and entirely committed to fulfilling her husband's needs.
5. Husbands, render your wife the affection due.
 - a. NLT: *The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs.*
 - b. Do you understand this?
 - c. Your wife's sexual needs are really your wife's emotional needs.
 - d. If you will make the time to meet her emotional needs, sexual pleasure will be significantly increased; and sexual desire usually increases as well.

- e. One way this is often accomplished is by talking to her, not about your work, not about the bills, or when the oil needs to be changed in the car, but about the things that matter most to her.
 - f. It's going to take some dyeing to self in order to accomplish this because it means an investment of your time, and most importantly, your attention.
6. Wives, it says for you to do likewise.
- a. On the physical plain, I will admit that this is generally pretty easy.
 - b. A guy can be in the mood in minutes... more like in seconds.
 - c. Consider a couple of things.
 - i. A man often wants to know that you are pleased with him.
 - 1. Guys are achievement oriented and they want to know that they have achieved your satisfaction.
 - ii. A guy's sexual desire is usually strong and frequent.
 - 1. Coupled with the fact that he/we have really bad timing.
 - d. But it's going to take some dyeing to self in order to meet his needs.
7. What should be happening is a wonderful balance is accomplished.
- a. The husband is getting off the computer to give his wife his attention.
 - b. And a wife shows her interest and expresses her satisfaction in her man and both are fulfilled.
8. Remember, it's a balance and there is no balance when one or the other demands their rights.
- a. Husband, you say, "*Your body's not your own, it's mind*" and you're going to bump heads before your rub bodies.
 - b. Wife, you say, "*It's been a long day and I just need my space*" and you're going to get more than space, you're going to get a physically and mentally frustrated man in your house.

1 Corinthians 7:5 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. Sexual relations should be a regular, consensual, and enjoyable thing.
2. But there can be times when a Christian couple might decide that for a short period of time, they will forgo physical pleasures as part of a time dedicated to fasting and prayer.
 - a. Perhaps you have a decision that needs to be made or there is someone you are praying for.
 - b. And your fasting – fasting is usually forgoing food, and prayer will include a period of abstaining from sex.
 - c. If you choose to do this type of thing, just be sure that it's for a period of time, not so long that Satan could use the occasion as a means for tempting you.
3. Reasons for Adultery:
 - a. Loneliness, Communication barriers, Lack of love and affection, A poor sexual relationship, and a Lack of intimacy
 - b. For Affection and Attention, Lack of Sexual Fulfillment, and Nagging, nagging, nagging and more nagging
4. The real reason adultery occurs is not because a spouse has failed but because the person committing adultery has believed a lie.
 - a. The lie is that they have turned their back on what God has called for them to do and to be in their wedding relationship and they have come to believe that some other person is going to supply them with some type of gratification and fulfillment.
 - b. Sin never satisfies.

1 Corinthians 7:6 ⁶ But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.

1. Paul's not talking about abstaining during periods of fasting and prayer, he's talking about his instructions in verse 2.

1 Corinthians 7:7 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.**

1. Now we return to single saint.
2. Paul says, “**For I wish that all men were even as I myself**” meaning single.
 - a. Was Paul always single, we are not 100% certain.
 - b. It is likely that Paul was at one time married; this is often the accepted belief concerning Paul because he was a rabbi and a member of the Sanhedrin.
 - c. The Babylonian Talmud stated that one must be married before they could become a member of the Sanhedrin.
 - d. So logically, as a member of the Sanhedrin, Paul was at one time married; what then happened to his wife? We don’t know.
 - e. Maybe she died, but what is widely accepted is that as a Jew, she left him after his conversation, but again we don’t know.
 - f. Only that at this point in Paul’s life he is single.
3. And while he wishes everyone would remain single as he is, he recognizes that the ability to remain faithfully single is a gift. **“But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.”**
 - a. This notion comes from the Lord Jesus Himself in Matthew 19
 - b. Here we find that this will be understood by those whom it has been given for him to accept it.
 - c. The Lord calls and enables with a special gifting the ability to remain faithfully single.
4. In verse 2 Paul said, **“because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband”**
 - a. If you can’t bear it to abstain from all sexual activity; if you are not happy and content as a single saint, then chances are, you don’t have the gift of celibacy.
 - b. And that’s okay. In Verse 20, when we get to it, we’ll discuss the importance of being faithful with the calling God has given us.

5. Note, that the single saint has received a special gift from our Lord that enables them to serve Him in a special way.
 - a. We so often think that marriage is such a natural thing that everyone should be married.
 - b. When we see someone whose not, we think:
 - i. Poor thing... or
 - ii. Something must be wrong with that person.
 - c. It's not our place to condemn or even second guess God's calling and gifting in that single person's life.

1 Corinthians 7:8-9 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. So, what we have here is Paul's responses to questions that have been asked of him.

What can we learn from this?

1. Sexual activity outside of marriage is wrong.
 - a. Don't think that you are a super-single-saint, but you live in sin.
 - b. Don't be afraid to loving tell your single friends that either.
 - c. Let's help keep our single Christian brothers and sisters accountable.
2. Don't act like a single saint when you are married.
 - a. Someone who is single often only cares about themselves. If you are married, you are now responsible for satisfying not your own passions, but the passions and desires of your spouse.
 - b. I remember someone telling me as a young newly wed, make sure you take the time to make your wife feel special, b/c if you don't Satan will.
 - c. Take the time to make sure you and your spouse have a proper, healthy and active physical and emotional life together.