

THE CHURCH THAT CHANGED A CONTINENT AND THE MAN WHO LED IT
FIRST CORINTHIANS

STUDY NUMBER 6
Wednesday, June 12, 2013

I Corinthians Chapter 7
“What God Says About Marriage”

1 Today’s general concept of marriage in the United States is pathetic. It is far from the
2 noble life-partnering one given us by God throughout Scripture - that of a man and a
3 woman legally giving themselves to each “til death parts them.” Some of the man-made
4 ideas our generation has about marriage are beneath human dignity:

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- 6 • Some believe that a marriage partner can evade the responsibility by divorcing for
- 7 reasons not given in Scripture
- 8 • Some couples haven’t the slightest idea of how a husband wife treat each other
- 9 • Some states have already sanction “gay marriage” (whatever that means)
- 10 • I am absolutely convinced that within ten years polygamy will be legal and
- 11 accepted to the general public
- 12 • I believe that by the time my grandchildren are grown bestiality (sex with animals)
- 13 will be legal and accepted by the general public
- 14 • It is probable that households with a husband and wife, legally married, will be in
- 15 the minority in this country
- 16 • Many who continue to be married live in hostile environments that have nothing to
- 17 do with God’s intent for us
- 18

19 So...in tonight’s study we read of GOD’S concept of marriage, which is to be a blissful
20 and productive way of living.

21
22 **HOW DID PAUL KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE SUBJECT?**

23
24 There can be little or no question that Paul had been married. Scholars, whom I trust,
25 write that Paul had one time been married and that his wife had passed away - hence, the
26 reason he did not mention her in his writings. However, careful study of what he DID
27 write about marriage indicates clearly he knew first-hand what he was talking about.

28
29 Why do I believe Paul had been married? He had to have been for he was once a
30 member of the ruling council of the Jews - the Sanhedrin. How do we know Paul was a
31 member of that August body of rulers? In Acts 26:10, Paul wrote of his time agreeing to

1 the death of Stephen: **Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints**
2 **did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when**
3 **they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.** How could Paul have given
4 his vocal approval to an action of the Sanhedrin unless he was part of it? *Being married*
5 *was one of the conditions of membership to that body.*

6
7 If Paul's wife had died, why did he not re-marry? Scripture certainly gave him that
8 option: 1 Cor. 9:5 **Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as**
9 **other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas (Peter)?** I believe the
10 reason Paul did not remarry is because he did not want to ask any woman to follow him
11 around the Mediterranean world in his ministry, where she might also have suffered
12 imprisonment, hunger, stonings, shunning and even death.

13
14 One writer has shed this light: *"It is my conviction that in the past Paul had loved some*
15 *good woman who had reciprocated his love, because he wrote so tenderly of the marriage*
16 *relationship. 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave*
17 *himself for it.'*" Eph 5:25

18
19 Tonight we will discuss this great subject in full, taking the lead from Paul himself:

20
21 1 Cor. 7:1-9

22 **Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to**
23 **touch a woman. [2] Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own**
24 **wife, and let every woman have her own husband. [3] Let the husband render unto**
25 **the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. [4] The wife**
26 **hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband**
27 **hath not power of his own body, but the wife. [5] Defraud ye not one the other,**
28 **except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and**
29 **prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.**
30 **[6] But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. [7] For I would that all**
31 **men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this**
32 **manner, and another after that.**

33 **[8] I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide**
34 **even as I. [9] But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry**
35 **than to burn.**

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37 Sometimes men read verse one and just ... groan. Wait a minute! Let's find out for sure
38 what the Apostle was REALLY saying here.

39
40 Remember our earlier study of Corinth. Note the picture of the ruins of the city on this



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21 Towering above the city was the massive mountain - the acropolis called the Acro-Corinthus. On top of it was the
22 temple of Aphrodite (the smaller temple in the foreground was the Temple of Apollo - given to homosexuality).
23 The temple of Aphrodite was heathen, featuring over 1,000 female "ministers" who were really full-time practicing
24 prostitutes. It was concerning these prostitutes that Paul wrote: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman." He
25 was not referring to their wives....but to these pagan priestesses.

26
27 page. Read carefully the caption beneath the picture. Here sex was carried on in the
28 name of religion.

29
30 Women in Paul's day were "chattel," something to "own." She was a virtual slave to the
31 husband. Many of the Corinthians men had several wives – one to do the housework,
32 one to escort to fancy parties, and one to take care of his property, clothes, etc. For sex,
33 he went to church!! The church was the temple on the mountain and the bed mates were
34 one of those one thousand prostitutes.

35
36 Women should thank Paul for his enlightened concepts. More than anyone else I know
37 in that time period, the Apostle elevated the rights and status of women - and of marriage.
38 Through Christ, he lifted women from the status of slaves or prostitutes to that of
39 honorable married women. He faced the same spiritual and sociological problems in
40 Ephesus and to the Ephesians he wrote: Ephesians. 5:25 **Husbands, love your wives,**
41 **even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...**

1 Tenderness, warmth, joy, sex, fulfillment are to take place between a man and woman,
2 married to each other, in the sacredness of the marriage bed.

3
4 Yes, yes, but...DOESN'T THE BIBLE TELL THE WIFE TO OBEY HER HUSBAND?
5 Try to find *that* verse in the Bible. Here is what the scriptures actually demand: Ephes.
6 5:22 Wives, **submit** yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

7
8 Aha, Pastor – there it is: SUBMIT! But hold on a minute. What does that word
9 “submit” mean? It means to RESPOND. The Bible tells wives to RESPOND to their
10 husbands. But what if the husband doesn't do anything to respond to???

11
12 So - we have responsibilities to each other: 1 Cor. 7:3 **Let the husband render unto**
13 **the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.** 1 Cor. 7:3
14 From the Message: **The marriage bed must be a place of mutuality—the husband**
15 **seeking to satisfy his wife, the wife seeking to satisfy her husband.**

16
17 A wife is not an “employee” of the husband; she is an equal partner in the marriage. His
18 courting her never stops (if it does, it is almost for sure that there will be problems in the
19 marriage).

20
21 What about the sex issue between a husband and wife (married to each other)?

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23 1 Cor. 7:5-6 **Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that**
24 **ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan**
25 **tempt you not for your incontinency. [6] But I speak this by permission, and not of**
26 **commandment. [The Message] 1 Cor. 7:5-6 Abstaining from sex is permissible**
27 **for a period of time if you both agree to it, and if it's for the purposes of prayer and**
28 **fasting—but only for such times. Then come back together again. Satan has an**
29 **ingenious way of tempting us when we least expect it. [6] I'm not, understand,**
30 **commanding these periods of abstinence—only providing my best counsel if you**
31 **should choose them.**

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A husband or wife (married to each other - in these days we always have to add that caveat!) who uses sex against his or her spouse is sinning. Sex is a delightful God-given provision for the marriage bed, not just for procreation, but for love expression and joy. Scripture is very plain on this issue. Hebrews 13:4 states that the marriage bed is undefiled. It is a place for pleasure for married people.
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35 I have known a few people who remained single and chaste all their adult lives, but they

1 were few and far between. On the other hand, I have known so many couples who lived
2 lives of fidelity and joy all their lives. I personally came from a broken home, so I
3 know first-hand the incredible pain that comes to a child who has to live through his
4 parents' divorces - or the years of living together in which the home becomes hell on
5 earth.

6
7 Now what happens in a Christian home when differences cause separation - or worse.

8
9 **1 Cor. 7:10-11 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not
10 the wife depart from her husband: [11] But and if she depart, let her remain
11 unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his
12 wife. [New Living] 1 Cor. 7:10-11 Now, for those who are married I have a
13 command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her
14 husband. [11] But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else go back to him.
15 And the husband must not leave his wife.**

16
17 Let us not be naive here! **GOD HATES DIVORCE!** How do we know that? The Bible
18 says so. Malachi 2:16 [New American Standard] **"For I hate divorce," says the
19 Lord, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the
20 Lord of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."** We
21 have concocted a lot of excuses for divorce in our society that perhaps many think have
22 biblical basis. Let's see what the Bible truly teaches.

23
24 The Bible gives two clear grounds for divorce: 1) Sexual immorality - Matthew 5:32
25 **But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of
26 fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is
27 divorced committeth adultery. Matthew 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever
28 shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another,
29 committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit
30 adultery. 2) Abandonment by an unbeliever 1 Cor. 7:15 **But if the unbelieving
31 depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but
32 God hath called us to peace.****

33
34 Even in these instances though divorce is not required or even encouraged. The most
35 that can be said is that sexual immorality and abandonment are grounds (an allowance)
36 for divorce. Confession, forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration are always the first
37 steps. Divorce should be viewed as a last resort.

38
39 Are there grounds for divorce beyond what the Bible explicitly says? Perhaps, but we do
40 not presume upon what the Word of God says. The most frequent additional grounds for

1 divorce that people espouse are spousal abuse (emotional or physical), child abuse
2 (emotional, physical or sexual), addiction to pornography, drug/alcohol use, crime and
3 imprisonment, and mismanagement of finances (such as through a gambling addiction).
4

5 While I find nothing in Scripture that teaches those issues as biblical grounds for divorce,
6 I personally cannot imagine that it would be God's desire for a wife to remain with a
7 husband who beats her or abuses her - or the children. In these cases, separation is
8 certainly a viable retreat with the prayerful and hopeful desire for reconciliation,
9 forgiveness and healing that could even restore the marriage bond. If there is a risk to
10 the spouse or children, separation is a good and appropriate step.
11

12 Bottom line: What are the biblical grounds for divorce? Sexual immorality and
13 abandonment. Is divorce ever to be treated lightly or employed as the first recourse?
14 Absolutely not. God is capable of changing and reforming any person. God is capable
15 of healing and renewing any marriage.
16

17 DOES GOD FORGIVE DIVORCE? 18

19 I once heard Jerry Falwell say (in jest, of course) that he and his wife had never one time
20 ever considered divorce. Murder, yes.
21

22 God uses marriage between a man and a woman (not a woman and a woman or a man and
23 a man!) as an object lesson of His relationship to the Christian believer. Anything that
24 severs that relationship becomes the object of His anger and judgment. And so we all
25 should clearly understand that:
26

- 27 • Divorce is not a convenient answer to your marital problems
- 28 • Divorce is not a bargaining chip in the tug of war that sometimes plagues
29 relationships
- 30 • Divorce is not an 'easy way out' for someone who just can't deal with commitment
31 or responsibility anymore
- 32 • Divorce is not conflict resolution
33

34 Divorce is:
35

- 36 • Too easy to obtain
- 37 • A means to make lawyers rich
- 38 • Painful to everyone involved in one way or another
- 39 • The catalyst that adds despair and hopelessness to relationships
- 40 • The sword that puts the family unit to death

- 1 • The nightmare that causes your children to pay the price of a broken home all their
- 2 lifetimes
- 3 • The greatest tool the devil has today to destroy the plan of God

4
5 * TAKEN FROM A SERMON FROM THE "INTO THE LIGHT MINISTRY"

6
7 It is my belief that the unforgivable sin - which is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit - is
8 dying without Christ. The Bible concludes in the very last chapter with this glorious
9 promise: Rev. 22:17 **And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that**
10 **heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him**
11 **take the water of life freely.** What a precious provision of Calvary!

12
13 But take heed lest you abuse that promise! But to the sincerely repentant there is mercy
14 and forgiveness from our Heavenly Father. 1 John 2:1 **My little children, these things**
15 **write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the**
16 **Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:** Isaiah 1:18 **Come now, and let us reason**
17 **together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as**
18 **snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.**

19
20 Yes, God forgives divorce. But let us not use that as a "license" to just live any way we
21 want, thinking, "Well, God will understand and forgive." Romans 6:1 **What shall we**
22 **say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?**

23
24

The standards for the world are one thing; but the standards for Christ's Body, the Church are quite another: 1 Cor. 7:23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. God holds us to a very high standard. We don't pick and choose which biblical precepts we want or don't want. We do not belong to ourselves. First of all - a Christian man belongs to his wife and a Christian woman belongs to her husband. May God have mercy on anyone who would dare to violate that!
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25 26 A CORINTHIAN CHALLENGE

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28 So here was the problem: Under Paul's ministry (and that of Apollos and others),
29 families were coming to Christ, some with daughters who were married to men who still
30 consorted with the prostitutes of Aphrodite. Can you even imagine the tension that
31 situation must have evoked? Should they remain married to them? And vice-versa,
32 there were doubtless unsaved women who still pursued the pagan sex lives of many of the
33 other Corinthians. Paul's response:

34
35 1 Cor. 7:26-27 **I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say,**

1 **that it is good for a man so to be. [27] Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be**
2 **loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.**

3
4 One commentator observed: *In the present distress, since you have come to Christ at*
5 *such a difficult time, if you are bound to a wife stay with her. If she is unsaved, stay with*
6 *her as long as you can. If you are not married, then, because of the present distress with*
7 *the tremendous immorality that is here, it would be best for you to stay single.*

8
9 **IF A SPOUSE DIES, IS IT ALRIGHT TO REMARRY?**

10
11 **1 Cor. 7:39-40 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if**
12 **her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the**
13 **Lord. [40] But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also**
14 **that I have the Spirit of God.**

15
16 **GOD'S THREE GREAT "INSTITUTIONS"**

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18 The first of the three was **MARRIAGE, THE HOME**....the union between Adam and Eve.

19 The second of the three was **GOVERNMENT**...a theocracy (God-rule)

20 The third of the three was **THE CHURCH**.

21
22 Much of today's society flaunts all three of these divine creations. Many marriages are
23 smoldering ruins because we have abandoned God's laws. Our government, in its effort
24 to be all-encompassing, embraces to its bosom the very viper who bite is poison and
25 brings forth death, and that viper is flagrant immorality, endorsed by even the President.
26 And violating the first two institutions causes incredible damage to the Body of Christ.,
27

28 It has been well-said that no person is an island, an entity unto himself or herself. Every
29 action we take will in some way, shape or form touch someone else's life - whether good
30 or bad. God gave us all three institutions for our betterment, our well-being, our
31 happiness. We have kicked God out of much of our country, schools, public areas, etc.,
32 and now, when disasters occur we wonder, "Well, where is God?"

33
34 If Christianity is to work anywhere, **IT IS TO WORK IN THE HOME**. Otherwise it
35 does not work at all.

36
37 **Next week: WATCH WHAT YOU EAT!!! I Corinthians 8 and 9**