

Day 89, 1 Corinthians 7

by David Servant

Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 7 emphasize the importance of sexual purity, the role of marriage in preventing immorality, and the need for evaluating each case individually regarding divorce and remarriage.

Scripture: Matthew 10:37, 1 Corinthians 7:1-27

Topics: "Marriage And Divorce", "Sexual Purity"

Description

David Servant preaches on Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 7 regarding sexual purity, marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Paul emphasizes the importance of maintaining sexual purity by abstaining from sexual immorality and fulfilling sexual desires only within the bounds of marriage. He also addresses the significance of devotion to the Lord, whether through marriage or singleness, and the implications of divorce within the Christian community. Paul's instructions are clear and logical, emphasizing the need for obedience to God's commandments above all else.

Transcript

Obviously referring to males and females who were not married to each other, the Corinthians had written to ask Paul, "Is it good for a man not to touch a woman?" Paul answered in the affirmative. That is the safe standard to prevent any sexual immorality, at least from a physical standpoint. One touch might lead to another. When magnets get too close, the attraction becomes unstoppable.

Sexual desire is God-given, thus it is not something that is evil in itself. Because it is God-given, we should follow the instructions of its inventor---who understands it best. He knows how it is stimulated, and He knows how strong a desire it becomes if stimulated. It is a desire, however, meant to be stimulated and fulfilled only in marriage. Additionally, a healthy sexual relationship in marriage is also a preventative against immorality. Thus Paul admonishes husbands and wives not to neglect their "duties" to each other in this regard (which seems to be an odd way to describe something so pleasurable). One is less tempted to steal the Ford parked across the street when one has a Mercedes parked in the garage.

Often overlooked in this chapter is the insight we gain into what is supposed to be normal Christian devotion. Husbands and wives may agree to abstain from sex temporarily in order to devote themselves more fully to prayer. Single people are advised to remain single so that they will not be distracted from devotion to the Lord due to trying to please a marriage partner. These are not far-fetched concepts for those who love God supremely, with all their heart, mind and strength, and who understand that anyone who loves father, mother, son or daughter more than Jesus is not worthy of Him (Matt. 10:37).

Although Paul recommended singleness, he fully understood that celibacy is a gift from God which not many have. He also understood the power of sexual desire, thus recommending marriage for those who would otherwise "burn with passion" (7:9). Paul told it like it is.

His instructions concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage are straightforward, logical, and harmonize well with the rest of Scripture. Christian married couples are not to divorce. In the event that they do, however, they should remain single or reconcile (7:10-11). Christians married to unbelievers should not divorce their unbelieving spouses due to the negative effects it would have on spouse and children (7:14). Although Paul's words in this regard are not as clear as we'd like, it is easy to understand how a divorce initiated by a Christian could well ensure that the spouse and children would permanently harden their hearts towards Christ.

On the other hand, it is amazing to me how some pastors and Christian counselors, "sticklers for the Word," yet lacking much sense, will counsel a woman in an abusive relationship to "obey the Bible" and not divorce her ruthless husband. It seems to me that Paul covers all those kinds of unusual cases in his final statement, "Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk" (7:17). That leaves room for evaluating every case by its own merit. Remember, "The Lord Thy God hath given thee a brain!"

Although Paul recommended singleness for Christians who had been previously divorced, he plainly stated that they would not sin if they remarried (7:27-28). The only way to reconcile this with Jesus' words that "everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery," is if Jesus was speaking about those who divorce in order to remarry someone they've already targeted, and Paul was speaking about those who divorce because they cannot get along. If that is the case, it is easy to understand why Jesus condemned divorce and remarriage as being equivalent to the sin of adultery, and why Paul did not.

"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor. 7:9). The first half of that verse would have been considered heresy by Jews. Sadly, the second half of that verse is heresy for many modern false-grace preachers who downplay obedience.

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