

(1 Corinthians) ch.7:1-7:24

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of glorifying God in our bodies, recognizing the rights of our marriage partners, and exercising self-control in the physical relationship.

Duration: 43:48

Topics: "Marriage And Family", "Spiritual Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of following God's calling and accepting the conditions that God has assigned to each individual. He encourages husbands and wives to come together and resume physical relations, warning against allowing Satan to cause unnecessary strife in the relationship. The speaker also discusses the topic of being single or married, stating that his previous instructions were commands from the Holy Spirit. Additionally, the speaker highlights the duty of both husbands and wives to fulfill their physical obligations to each other, emphasizing that neither partner has authority over their own body.

Transcript

We turn today to 1 Corinthians and chapter 7. Last week we were considering the last few verses of 1 Corinthians 6 and we saw the importance that the Holy Spirit gives to the body of the Christian. We saw here in verse 13 of 1 Corinthians 6 that the body is for the Lord and then the Lord is for the body. We also saw in 1 Corinthians 6.15 that our bodies are members of Christ and we saw further in verse 19 that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and that it is no longer our own.

Once upon a time our body was our own. We could do what we liked with it. We could use our eyes, tongue, ears, hands, legs, just as we liked.

But now 1 Corinthians 6.19 says you are not your own. This body also has been bought with a price. The blood of Christ purchased not only our inner personalities and our beings but our bodies as well.

Therefore glorify God in your body because your body is not your own. Your body is a member of Christ. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Your body belongs to the Lord. Therefore glorify God in your body. And in our body we have various desires.

He mentions the desire for food in verse 13, but he says in verse 12 we must not be mastered by that desire. We must keep even our eating desire under control. In the same way he mentions the desire for sex, a legitimate desire that God has placed in the body just like the desire for food.

The only thing is just like it is wrong to steal someone else's food in order to satisfy your hunger, equally it is wrong to steal in the area of sex to satisfy one's sexual desire. And that's what's referred to in verse 16 about joining oneself to a harlot or to someone who is not one's wife. And 1 Corinthians 7 is really a continuation of that same theme.

He's been speaking about avoiding immorality in 1 Corinthians 6.18 and how immorality is a sin that we commit against our own body. And then he says to avoid immorality, 1 Corinthians 7 verse 2, God has made a provision for every man to have his own wife and every woman to have her own husband. This is one of the subjects which the Corinthians had written to Paul about and so he says in 1 Corinthians 7 verse 1, concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

That is, it's good for a man to remain single and to avoid marriage if possible and he gives later on the reason why he says that, primarily so that one can be available to serve the Lord. He mentions that in 1 Corinthians 7 verse 32 onwards. But he says because of the tremendous possibility of immorality and of falling into sin in this area because of the strong temptation to impurity, particularly for men, therefore let every man have his own wife and let each woman have her own husband.

And so we see here that God has ordained marriage for a number of reasons. We see in Genesis chapter 2 that God has ordained marriage, first of all for companionship. Adam was not to be alone.

Second, so that together man and woman can be husband and wife and set up a home with children, a godly home for the glory of God and raise up another generation to serve the Lord. And then thirdly, also for the fulfillment of sexual desire that God has placed within the human body. And this is just as legitimate when fulfilled according to God's plan as the desire for food or the desire for rest.

And then he speaks about the responsibilities that husband and wife have towards each other in relation to their physical bodies. He is speaking about the body right from 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 13 onwards. He has been speaking about the human body.

And many Christians have not realized how important a part the human body has to play in our progress in sanctification. The way we use our bodies, he mentions later on in 1 Corinthians 9 verse 27, can determine whether we are going to be disqualified or whether we are going to be accepted in the final day at the end of the race. And so the way we use our body is the main subject here in chapter 7 and later on in chapter 8 as well to some extent.

But he says here in relation to these desires that God has placed in our body in the realm of sex it is very important that the husband fulfills his duty towards his wife and likewise the wife towards her husband. He is speaking about the physical relationship and he calls it a duty. It is not just a pleasurable act, it is a duty.

As much a duty as any other duty that God has appointed for man. Let the husband fulfill his duty. There are certain rights that husband and wife have towards each other in this area.

And Paul says further under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit whose body ours is, once we are converted. He says in verse 5, don't deprive one another in this area. In other words, if you don't fulfill your duty in this area towards your marriage partner, whether husband or wife you are cheating your marriage partner.

It is a very strong word that he uses there about cheating. And one needs to recognize this principle that is mentioned here in verse 4 that the wife does not have the right or the authority over her own body once she is married. She does not have the right to do as she pleases with her body is William's translation of that verse.

The wife does not have the right to do as she pleases with her body. The husband has his right to it. And in the same way, the husband does not have the right to do as he pleases with his own body because the wife, his wife has a right over it.

So this is a very important truth that married couples need to realize. That before you are married, it is only the Lord who has right over your body. And in a sense, if you understand it correctly, right through our life it is the Lord alone who has right over our bodies once we are converted.

But the Lord gives us the freedom to use that body in a godly wise way. As long as we are single, there is no one else who has a say in that matter. But when we get married, the word of God says that the Lord has ordained that your marriage partner has a right over your body.

That is the meaning of the two shall become one flesh which he has quoted earlier in 1 Corinthians 6.16 which is a quotation way back from the time of the marriage of Adam and Eve, Genesis 2.24 that each partner in the marriage has a right over the body of the other. What does this mean? This means that in terms of the physical relationship, God has intended that each person recognize that the other person has a right over my body. I cannot use my body just to please myself.

I have to consider my marriage partner. This speaks of the necessity of consideration in this relationship so that it is not abused, so that it does not get bogged down in selfishness and does not descend to the level of legalized adultery, but that it is a sanctified holy relationship. The Bible says in Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 4 Let marriage be held in honor among all and let the marriage bed be undefiled.

There must be a sacredness in the marriage bed. And this is what is spoken of here. That can only be true if each partner recognizes that the other person has a right over his or her body.

And if this right is not given, then it is cheating. It's like if you buy vegetables from the vegetable man, he has a right to the money which those vegetables cost. And if we don't pay it, we're cheating him.

In the same way, in this area, if we don't give that which is rightfully the right of our marriage partner, it's cheating. Stop depriving one another. And when we think of the word that is used here, don't withhold your bodies from one another.

Don't refuse each other. Don't defraud. And that means cheat each other in this area.

We find that the Bible speaks very plainly on a subject on which many people are unwilling to say anything. But the Bible speaks very plainly because this is an area where there is a lot of pollution, a lot of impurity, and a lot of wrong relationships that needs to be set right once a person becomes a Christian. And so it's very important that even in this area, that a husband and wife recognize their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

And I cannot do what I like in this body. It must be under the control of the Holy Spirit. There's a need for self-control.

There's a need for consideration of one's partner. And there's a need for recognition of the rights of the other. Let's turn today to 1 Corinthians chapter 7 and verse 3. Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife and likewise also the wife to her husband.

We were considering in our last study that the Bible speaks very plainly about the physical relationship in marriage and calls it a duty that each partner has towards the other to present their bodies to each other. Because, verse 4, the wife does not have authority over her own body, neither does the husband have authority over his. The other partner also has a right over your body.

And therefore, if you do not fulfill this responsibility and duty towards each other, it's a form of cheating. And so it says in verse 5, we are to stop doing that. And the only time when the Word of God permits a husband and wife to refrain from this physical relationship is when both agree to fast in this area for the purpose of prayer.

Very important to notice here in verse 5 that such separation from each other for a period must be by mutual agreement. Fasting in the area of food concerns only yourself and therefore you are free to fast whenever you feel led to do so. But in the area of the physical relationship in marriage, since it concerns your marriage partner as well, it is not right to fast without the voluntary and joyful consent of both partners in the marriage.

This is the Word of God and those who fear God will obey His Word. It's a sad thing that many Christians disregard God's Word in this area and live as though they have rights over their bodies to do exactly what they like with it. That's contrary to God's Word.

There is a false asceticism which comes from heathen teaching which leads people to think that there's something unclean in this matter and that to stay away from it is a holy thing. That is a doctrine of a devil according to 1 Timothy 4 and verses 1 to 3. Forbidding marriage and forbidding the physical relationship is a doctrine of a devil. There's nothing spiritual about it at all.

And so a refraining from the physical relationship in marriage must be with mutual consent. And secondly I want you to notice here in verse 5 what the Word of God says that it must be only for a time. It must never be for an indefinite period.

Only for a specific period of time that both of the partners in a marriage agree to stay away from it for. And also not in order to become more holy but so that both partners may devote their time undisturbed to prayer or as one translation has it so that your minds may be free for prayer so that the mind is undistracted for a particular time when you have a burden for prayer. It's right that husband and wife pray together and that they stay apart from this perhaps from food as well if they feel so led so that they can devote themselves to fasting and prayer.

And then after that is over the Holy Spirit is very careful to state that both partners need to come together again. And the failure very often here is on the part of the wife because the wife may not feel the necessity as much as the husband. This does not mean that the wife is more spiritual.

It just means that God has made the bodies of men and women differently. But the wife particularly needs to take serious heed to the commands given here in verses 3, 4 and 5 that you are to come together again with your partner the reason being one reason anyway lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control. This does not mean that if one is not married or if due to circumstances of separation or

illness or something like that a man cannot have physical relationship with his wife that therefore he has to sin.

Far from it. God's grace is more than sufficient to overcome this temptation. The word of God lays down a standard that we are not even to lust in our thoughts in this area.

That's the standard of the new covenant described in Matthew 5 verse 27 onwards. But not all have attained to this life of victory and so God has made a provision. Lest Satan tempt you.

Lest you are not able to control your fleshly passions and you are tempted strongly to sin in the thought life. He's not talking about adultery. Adultery was forbidden even under the old covenant but in the new covenant not even in the thought life should we sin.

And therefore it's necessary that husband and wife come together and live as man and wife resume physical relations again. And it is very important that you do not give room to Satan to unnecessarily harass your partner because of your lack of obedience to God's word in this area. In verse 6 he goes on to speak about the subject of being single or married and there he's very careful to say that I'm speaking this by way of concession and not as a command.

In other words what he had said earlier in the first five verses are the commands of the Holy Spirit. But now he says now what I'm going to say on this particular point which I'm just about to write on is something which is a way of concession. You'll find that Paul is very careful as he writes this chapter to point out what is from the Lord as a command and what is merely a suggestion from him as a mature and wise apostle.

And it's very important to distinguish between these two because Paul is very careful to make that distinction and we need to make that distinction too. He says here is something which is a suggestion. I wish, he says, now this is not the command of God but he says in verse 7 I wish that all men were even as I myself am.

Paul was single and he wished that all men were like himself for the reason which he gives later on in the chapter of being undistracted in order to serve the Lord. Verse 35 For this reason Paul kept himself single not to become holy, far from it. Holiness does not come by a single life.

That is a great deception of Satan. Asceticism is not the way to holiness. There's an amazing verse right in the beginning of the Bible which says about Enoch in Genesis 5 verse 22 that Enoch walked with God for 300 years.

That's quite a long period of time to walk with God and it says during those 300 years he had sons and daughters. In other words, he lived a normal married life and he walked with God. He walked with God and had sons and daughters.

Is it possible to walk with God and have sons and daughters and live a normal married life according to Genesis 5, 22? Yes. According to wrong, ascetic, heathen teaching, no. And it's very important that as Christians we are not influenced by the heathen teaching of asceticism in this area.

But Paul says, I wish that people were as I myself am for the purpose of an undistracted devotion to the Lord in his service, particularly since Paul had an itinerant ministry as a full-time Christian worker. He needed to be single. However, he recognizes that each man has his own gift from God.

One in this manner and another in that. And that's a very clear statement in the latter part of verse 7 that God has given a special gift in this area. And it's very interesting to see in verse 7, if you read it carefully that being single is a gift from God.

You cannot be single in God's will unless God gives you that gift. It's like the gift of healing, which he speaks of in 1 Corinthians 12. If God doesn't give it to you, you won't have it.

Or prophecy, or any other gift. If God gives it to you, you can have it. If he doesn't, you can't have it.

And here is one of those gifts, the gift of being single. But further, in verse 7, he says that to be married is also a gift. There are two gifts mentioned in verse 7. One in this manner and another in that.

In other words, one person has been given the gift of being single, like Paul, for example, and then he should be single. Another person, like Peter, was given the gift of being married, and so he should be married, like it says in 1 Corinthians 9.5. In fact, all the apostles, except Paul and Barnabas, were married according to 1 Corinthians 9.5. So, there were very few among the apostles who were single. Most of them were married.

And that's what is recognized in verse 7, the Holy Spirit inspires Paul to say clearly, that even though I wish that every man were single, yet I realize that God has given one gift to one, and another gift to another, and each person must be in that particular gift, which has been given to him by God. But he says to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. And there's nothing wrong in a servant of God giving his own suggestion that if possible, it's good for an unmarried person or a widow to remain single. Of course, he's referring to older widows, because in 1 Timothy 5, and verse 11 to 16, particularly 1 Timothy 5.14, he says that younger widows should get married, but otherwise, those who can keep single, he says it's better that they remain single.

Again, let me emphasize, so that they can devote themselves to the service of the Lord without earthly distractions. It's very important that we need to understand this in its context, otherwise we should go into wrong teaching that many Christian groups have gone into, unfortunately. Let's turn today to 1 Corinthians 7, and verse 8. We were considering in the latter part of our study last week about Paul's instructions to single people, the unmarried and the widows.

He says to the unmarried and to the widows, it is good for them, verse 8, if they remain even as I. He was single for the purposes of the Lord's work. But, he says in verse 9, if they do not have self-control, let them marry. In other words, if they cannot restrain their passions, if they cannot restrain their inner desires and urges, then let them marry, because it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

That is, to be consumed with passion is an indication that one is called to marriage. In our last study, we were considering in verse 7 that God has given some the gift of a single life for the purposes of His work and His service. Jesus spoke about that in Matthew chapter 19, in verse 12, that there are some who were born eunuchs from their mother's womb, and there are others who were made eunuchs by men, incapable of a sexual relationship.

And then he says in the third category, those who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. That is, those who have refrained from marriage for the purposes of the kingdom of heaven. And then Jesus says in Matthew 19, 12, He who is able to accept this, let him accept it.

Meaning that, not all are able to accept it. That is exactly what Paul also says. But if one is able to remain single, then let him accept it.

And that teaches us, when we put all these verses together, that the way by which we can know whether God has called us to a single life or not is by asking ourselves this question. Am I burning in this area? Is there a burning desire which I am unable to control? Then that would be an indication that God has not given me the gift of a single life. God wants to give me the gift of marriage.

Because the Bible says in the book of Proverbs, that a prudent wife is from the Lord. A wise wife is a gift of the Lord. He who finds a wife finds a good thing.

So God gives the gift of a single life and also the gift of a marriage partner according to our respective callings in His purposes for our lives. And the way to find out is by what it says in 1 Corinthians 7, 9 to know whether God has called us to a single life or a married life. If we are burning, if we are consumed with passion, that is legitimately, lawfully, and we find that we are not able to keep this urge under control, that is an indication that God has called us to a married life.

But if one is able to exercise self-control fairly easily in this area, then one can consider whether God has called such a person to a single life. But to the married, He says in verse 10, I give instructions. Not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband.

Now under the old covenant, the Jews were not permitted to marry non-Jews. And whenever they did that, God judged them quite severely as we read in Numbers chapter 25 and other places of the Old Testament. In fact, in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, when they came back to Jerusalem from Babylon, we find that this is one of the problems that cropped up in the midst of the Jews, that many of them had married heathen women.

And it is an amazing thing that we see there that Ezra and Nehemiah insisted that all these Jews put away their wives and their children. They said there must not be any continuation of this. And they did not permit those who were already married to retain their wives.

No, they were to send them away. That must have been quite a painful and a difficult decision to take. But the Jews took it in order to honour God.

That is how it was under the old covenant. There was to be a very strict separation, even to the extent of putting away a wife who was a heathen, that is a non-Jew. But now, under the new covenant, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7.10, referring to that Old Testament practice among the Israelites, to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord.

He says the wife should not leave her husband. But if she does leave, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. He comes to the subject of an unbeliever in verse 12, but as an introduction to that, he says a wife must never leave her husband, must not be separated from her husband or leave her husband.

She has to submit to her husband and be with him. That is not just an instruction of Paul, that is an instruction given by the Lord. And every wife who fears God would do well to take heed to that.

Let her not leave her husband. But if she does leave, in other words, if she's already parted, she's actually separated, in other words, if she's already done so, then she has to remain unmarried. There's one

provision that Jesus gave for divorce, not as a command, but as a permission for those who could not rise to his highest, and that is given in Matthew 5, and verse 32, that a man can divorce his wife for the sake of unchastity, for the cause of unchastity on the part of his wife.

That would be right. But even there, a man who rises to God's highest could forgive and be like the Lord himself towards others and still stay with his wife. It's not compulsory.

But it is a provision God has made to those who cannot rise up to his highest. But if she does leave, let her remain unmarried. That is very clear, that if a wife does have to leave her husband or has already left, she must remain unmarried.

It is completely wrong for a woman who has been divorced even under the provisions of Matthew 5 ever to be married again until her husband is dead. A marriage union in God's eyes, even if it is a heathen marriage, is in God's eyes forever. That marriage bond is never broken until one of the partners dies due to the fallen condition of this world.

It may be necessary because of the provision made in Matthew 5 by the Lord Jesus for a separation to take place for a time or sometimes even permanently. But in such a case there is no provision for remarriage until the other partner dies. That's so clear that it's only one who disobeys God's word who can ever be remarried in such situations.

This is becoming more and more common unfortunately in the world because of the decreasing standards found even among believers. And to the husband it says in verse 11 let the husband not send his wife away. The husband must not put away his wife.

God's basic will is that husband and wife be together. And they should never be separated. And if you are a spiritual man you will rise up to God's highest and not even take advantage of the provision given in Matthew 5. But to the others he says in verse 12 he says now it's I saying this and not the Lord.

I don't have a clear command from God but I'm giving you my advice. And Paul's advice is the advice of a godly man. He says if a brother has a wife who is an unbeliever.

Now this is the situation that I was mentioning that was found in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. A Jew had a non-Jew as a wife. Well, in the Old Testament Ezra and Nehemiah insisted that the Jew put away his non-Jewish wife.

But here Paul says if a brother has a wife who is an unbeliever and she is willing to live with him let him not send her away. No, there's no need to put her away. And likewise, vice versa if a woman has an unbelieving husband and he consents to live with her let her not send her husband away.

Let her not leave her husband. No, they can live together. If they are happy to live together even if one is unconverted they can stay together because, and here is an amazing verse in verse 14 the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife.

It doesn't mean he is converted but that the husband is in a sense set apart. There is a godly influence upon that home because one partner is a believer. This is an amazing truth that even if one partner is a believer there is an influence for God in that home.

And because of that, like it says in the Living Bible the husband who isn't a Christian may become a Christian with the help of his Christian wife. And therefore the partnership should remain. And further, it also says about children the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband.

And further otherwise your children would have been unclean but now they are holy holy in the sense of being set apart. That means there is a grace of God that is upon one marriage partner in that home upon one parent and this brings a certain influence upon the children. It does not mean that the children are converted.

Far from it because those children need to take their own decision when they are grown up whether they will be converted and be born again or not. But there is a godly influence that draws them to the Lord as the Living Bible says if the family separates the children might never come to know the Lord. But if the family stays together in God's plan because of one partner's influence one parent's influence it may result in the children's salvation.

And so this is a tremendous verse. There is a grace of God upon our family even when one person is converted. Let's avail of that and be a blessing in the home in which God has placed us.

We turn now to 1 Corinthians and chapter 7 and verse 15. Continuing where we left off last week here we see Paul's instructions to married couples where one partner is an unbeliever. He has earlier stated in verse 12 that if one partner is an unbeliever and is happy to stay on together in the marriage then stay on together.

Do not separate. Because through the influence of the converted partner the other person and the children may come to Christ. But he says verse 15 if the unbelieving partner is insistent on leaving you can't hold that person down you got to let him or let her go.

In such a case the brother or sister is not under compulsion is not in bondage. That does not mean that where the unbelieving partner has left for whatever reason that the brother or sister can now get married again. No.

That is certainly not possible. Because at the end of the chapter in verse 39 Paul has laid down a statement which covers the whole chapter. A wife is bound as long as her husband lives.

Whether the partner is unbelieving or not makes no difference. If they are husband and wife as long as the other partner lives as long as both partners are alive the marriage is valid and they are bound to each other in God's eyes. It's only when the other partner dies husband or wife that the other partner is free to be married again.

So that's very important to bear verse 39 in mind because so many people have taken verse 15 as though it is freedom to get married again after being divorced and that's certainly not what it means. What it says here is that you are not in bondage or under compulsion to hang on to your marriage partner if he or she does not want to stay on in the marriage let them go. What else can you do? Let them go.

But God has called us to peace. In other words we don't want to live in perpetual strife and quarreling. God has called us to peace and a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.

In other words a brother or sister is married to an unbelieving partner and the unbelieving partner decides to leave and break up the marriage and go. Well the brother or sister need not live with a guilty conscience. That's basically the meaning of verse 15.

It's not under bondage because you as a believer has done your part but if the other person has gone because of his or her own fault then you are not to live with a guilty conscience. God has called us to peace and he has allowed that to happen in your case and you just got to accept your circumstances but you cannot get married until your marriage partner though an unbeliever is dead. Verse 16 Because how do you know O wife whether you will save your husband? You see that's the ultimate point with which Paul is trying to preserve the marriage even with an unbeliever.

So it's because you cannot say through your influence your husband may be saved. Husband or wife or how do you know whether you will save your wife? Our ultimate goal is to bring the other person to salvation. See there is a difference here between this situation and the situation in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament a non-Jew is a non-Jew because it was an external matter but here salvation is an internal matter and a person can be converted and become a child of God in a moment. And so Paul says think of that think of that possibility and therefore stay on in the marriage however much you may have to suffer just deny yourself because you want your marriage partner to be converted. Jesus suffered in order to save us and we may have to suffer in order to bring the other members of our family to Christ.

Then we follow in the footsteps of Christ who suffered for our salvation. Otherwise if we choose the easy path we are certainly not following Jesus Christ our Lord because he didn't choose an easy path. So let's not choose the easy path but the way of suffering in order to bring salvation to others.

Verse 17 He says the same thing which he said earlier in verse 7 Only as the Lord is assigned to each one as God has called each in this manner let him walk. He recognizes that each person has a particular calling and God has given to each person a particular condition or this translation Wayner's translation says whatever the condition which the Lord is assigned to each individual and whatever his condition when God called him in that let him continue. In other words the station which the Lord has assigned to him the place which God has planned for him or allowed him to be found in let him be in that.

And I give this instruction in every one of the churches and he explains what he means. For example he says when you were called to Christ were you uncircumcised or circumcised it makes no difference. If you went through that religious ceremony and you were called of being circumcised you were a Jew and then you came to Christ.

Well there is no need to disguise it or efface it or pretend that you are not because this has no value before God. Vice versa if a person was called as a non-Jew there is no need to be circumcised religiously in order to become a Jew because circumcision counts for nothing under the new covenant very important under the new covenant is the circumcision of the heart the putting off of the sins of the flesh that God desires.

Not an external circumcision the old testament was only a shadow and so circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is also nothing neither group can glory neither Jew nor Gentile but what matters is under the new covenant obedience to God's commandments obedience to God's commandments is everything that is the meaning of verse 19 obedience to God's commandments is everything in the new covenant and all these things listed in chapter 7 earlier on are indications of what God's will is in the area of marriage

and those who want to please God will obey His commandments we mentioned in our earlier studies of 1 Corinthians that in 1 Corinthians we could see the characteristics of a carnal Christian and in the marriage relationship also you can find the characteristics of a carnal Christian and

their attitude towards their marriage partners in the area of physical relationships verses 1 to 5 in the area of being single or married verses 6, 7 and 8 and also in the area of being married to an unbeliever as we see further on in verse 12 onwards carnal attitudes the characteristics of a carnal Christian that we considered and also in verse 19 18 and 19 we see that a carnal Christian is taken up with religious ceremonies a spiritual Christian is taken up verse 19 with obedience to God's commandments and not with external rituals it's very important to see this distinction he goes on to say let every man remain in the condition of life in which he was called in other words are you a slave that's come to Christ and slaves in those days were those who were not paid any wages they

belonged lock, stock and barrel to their masters completely well, don't worry about that he says don't let that bother you don't let it annoy you and irritate you that you're a slave and you wish you could be free no God has allowed you to be in that condition of course if you can become free in other words if you can gain your freedom not by running away but legitimately then be free take not to be free from human slavery if that's the circumstance of your life and likewise he says if a person is free that means he's not a slave he's a free man and this is a very important distinction that there was in the first century he says he still has to be a slave to Christ he can't live as he likes and so verse 22 says I am to be free and I am to be a slave of Christ free from sin but yet a slave

of the Lord Jesus Christ whatever my earthly position may be because he says in verse 23 you were bought with a price and that price was the blood of Jesus Christ he paid the price in order to purchase us from the slave market of sin and this is a picture that was understood by all people in those days because people paid a price in the slave market and bought a person to be their very own and this is the theme which he's been dealing with right from 1 Corinthians 6 19 onwards and 20 you've been bought with a price he repeats that here you were bought with a price therefore don't become the slaves of men and that has a principle that has a wide application that we must not allow ourselves to be those who seek to please men Galatians 1 10 says if I seek to please men I cannot be the

servant of Christ to be a slave of man in that sense today for us is to seek to please men to do things to please people rather than to please God then I am a slave of men no I must not be a slave of men I've been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ to be his slave alone this applies to full time Christian workers too are you a slave of men or a servant of the Lord many people are slaves of men and therefore they cannot serve the Lord freely you are bought with a price do not become slaves of men let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called and be thankful and accept the fact that God will make all things work together for your good in your particular situation and condition

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