

1 CORINTHIANS

Seeing Life through the Mind of Christ

Marriage and Singleness from the Mind of
Christ

1 Corinthians 7:1 - 8

- Cultural “norms” that people brought into the church at Corinth:

A. Patriarchal society.

- Husbands had control.
- Jewish wife – right for food, clothing, and the “opportunity” to bear children. Ex 21:10
- Women were not “equal,” in any way, to a man. Wives were their husband’s property and could be divorced for any reason by the husband, only.

B. Sexual immorality was rampant in society and apparently had made its way into the church. (1 Cor 5).

- Reference: ***Paul, Women and Wives*** by Craig S Keener

Opening verse translations and interpretations:

- Traditional view of v 1-2:
 - Now concerning [your question]: “It is good for a man not to marry,” that is OK -- but because of the temptation to sexual immorality, it is not advisable, unless it is your “gift.” (v 7)
- Scholarly consensus of v 1-2:
 - Now concerning [your question]: “It is good for a [husband] not to have sexual relations with his wife,” that is OK, but because of the temptation to sexual immorality, it is not advisable.

Source: NAC 1 Cor. Mark A. Taylor

- The context for the question.
- Answered by Paul in v1-2:
 1. Not directed to unmarrieds.
 2. Directed to the marrieds:
 1. Is abstinence required since I am a Christian?
 2. Is abstinence, except for procreation, required since I now have Christ?
 3. Paul's response:
 1. Abstinence is OK but not advisable bc of sexual temptations.

1. Our question: “How can we bring Christ into our marriage?”

1. *Divorce/abandonment is not an option* (except with Biblical grounds). We have to work our problems out together.
 - v 7:10-11; Mal 2:16.
 - A. **Sexual immorality** (“porneia”). V 2. Matt 19:9, Heb 13:4
 - B. **Abuse** – v 7:15.; Mal 2:16
 - C. **Initiated by an unbelieving spouse.** V 7:15.
2. Irreconcilable differences? (**Not a Biblical reason**).
 1. “Hardness of heart.” Matt 19:8 (it doesn’t matter what God says – I cannot remain married)

What if I am divorced? What do Paul's teachings have to say to me?

- 2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (ESV)
- 2 Cor. 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (ESV)
- Heb 13:3 Remember those **who are in prison**, as though in prison with them, and **those who are mistreated**, since you also are in the body.

2. Our question: “How can we bring Christ into our marriage?”

1. Divorce/abandonment is not an option.
2. *By the intentional and constant aid of the Holy Spirit to train me to “see” my spouse (not our natural):*
 - A. Equal but different. V7:3-4.
 - Radical thinking. Mal 2:16, Deut 24:1f
 - B. I have a role (can’t be passive or “missing”). But my spouse's needs come before my own. V4.
 - C. Two-way street – each takes *cross-ownership* in giving and receiving. V4-5.
 - Song of Songs 2:16.



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3. Our question: “How can we bring Christ into our marriage?”

1. Divorce/abandonment is not an option.
2. Through constant aid of the Holy Spirit to train me.
3. *Jesus is the glue that holds us together.*
 - A. Prayer – to neglect prayer is to neglect my wife V 5.
 - 1 Peter 3:7-dishonor wife and prayers impacted.
 - B. Divorce is permissible, but *only if the unbelieving spouse leaves me?* V15.
 - C. satan’s *objective* - to destroy what God sees as precious - the family.
 - D. Singleness and marriage – *God’s gifts*. V 7-8, 17.

Next Steps:

1. Are there any areas in your marriage where your spouse feels neglect? What if you chose to take ownership in those areas? The best way to do that may be to act rather than use words.
2. Do you think Christ might identify some areas in your marriage where you need to forgive, along with the offer of a fresh start?
3. If you are the wounding party, real and enduring change is the best way to ask for forgiveness.
4. Some problems in marriage require a Christian marriage counselor. Take the initiative and start.