

WHY BOTHER WITH MARRIAGE?

1 Corinthians 7:1-9

This morning's message is another one of those messages we have preached before. However, Paul's exhortation is so counter-cultural, we need to hear it often!

It doesn't easily "sink in!"

So it's another one of those messages worth repeating!

We need to issue a "PG" warning today. Compared to TV this is pretty tame; but it IS direct!

Paul makes direct statements about things God's people need to understand about God's plan for marriage.

"Why didn't someone tell me this years ago!"

Too often we keep this part of the story "*a secret.*"

CONCERNING MARRIAGE 7:1-40

How lack of love affects marriage.

Diversity in congregation—each one views love and marriage through different eyes.

Like the Corinthians, it's too easy to treat the issue without love.

It's easy to just present this as a theory.

When you start applying these principles to life,
you have to deal with real live people.

Some are already suffering. What we say can add to the pain!

Others will suffer *because of* what we say.

THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE 7:1-9

Marriage is *designed* to give *US* opportunity to meet *the needs of another.*

MARRIAGE IS SERIOUS BUSINESS!

The marriage relationship is costly!

It will cost us plenty!

One of the main ideas of this chapter:

You're better off staying single!

Single people find this hard to believe.

When we marry, we start out on one of the most difficult struggles of our life!

[Paul affirms this fact four ways: . . .]

* **Once we marry, we're stuck for life!**

*Marriage is forever! **Matt. 19:3-12***

Divorce in N.T. times—motivated by various problems and offenses in the wife.

Most any “offense” would do!

Christ prohibits divorce.

Disciples' response: *"If that's the way it is, you're better off not to marry!"* (10)

* **Once we marry, we're no longer our own boss.**

We give up control of our own life.

That's just as true for a man as for a woman! **7:3**

We belong to our mate! **7:4**

Our spouse has authority over our body—NOT us!

We submit *our* desires to our mate **5**

This is something we are to ***keep on doing continually!***

"Pay what you owe! Do your duty!

Fulfill your obligation!"

It's *NOT* conditional. We're told to do our part, period!

We dedicate ourselves to meeting the needs of our partner!

This requirement goes beyond sexual needs– but includes them

If we don't like it, we don't have to marry, but IF we choose to marry, part of the deal is we give up *our* rights and *our* desires for our spouse

—because marriage is about GIVING!

Concl. – Therefore, it's better not to marry! (7:7-8)

*** Once we marry, our concern becomes our spouse's welfare 7:26, 28b**

We become more concerned about the person we love.

Therefore, in hard times—the family becomes a burden.

When persecution comes, it's one thing if I suffer;

it's another if my family suffers because of me.

If there's a shortage, it's always harder if our family suffers too.

Married people commit themselves to struggle for good of their family.

Concl. – Don't try to get married!

*** Once we marry, ministry takes second place 7:32-35**

1st priority– how to please our mate.

2nd priority– how to serve God

7:32 “*I would like you to be free from concern.*”

7:35 [NAS] “*I want you to be without restraint.*”

– to enjoy “*undistracted devotion to the Lord.*”

There's a price to pay for marriage.

We give up our right to be an independent person

We give up our control over our own life

We even give up our liberty to serve the Lord

So, why would ANYONE want to bother with marriage?!!

Paul recognizes the benefits of marriage.

He also recognizes that *marriage will cramp our style!*

It restricts our freedom!

Two logical conclusions:

* **We're better off not to marry! 7:1**

* **If we're going to marry, we'd better be willing to pay the price!**

We'd better be determined to *GIVE!* 7:9a

v. 1 The warning: It's best to stay away from women!

Don't have anything to do with them!

v. 2 As a realist, practical problem: fornication—temptation is too great (especially in sex-saturated Corinth—or in sex-saturated U.S.!))

Christ adds, "*but not everyone can live with that alternative!*"

PRACTICAL COUNSEL FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

LEGITIMATE REASONS FOR GETTING MARRIED:

* **Because of the immorality around us 7:2**

Temptation is everywhere—for both men and women!

It was in Corinth in Paul's day. It's here today as well.

Temple of Aphrodite was just outside Corinth. 1,000 priestesses carried on immoral activities to "worship" a pagan god. Their sandals left words in the sand: FOLLOW ME. Corinthian citizens and sailors accepted the invitation.

The goddess of physical pleasure still calls to us;

almost every area of our culture cries out: "*FOLLOW ME!*"

We face: Natural temptation – what we see with our own eyes
 Social temptation – what the world flashes before us daily
 – movies, television, computer, magazines, music, newspaper
To avoid falling into Satan's trap, it's better to marry.

* **Because of the inability to control ourselves 7:9a**

Danger physically, as well as mentally.

Danger of “burning” **7:9b**

Paul goes through this whole dialogue by way of concession;
 he'd *rather* we stay unattached, as he is.

That isn't practical for most people.

We weren't made to live that way.

We need companionship and sexual intimacy (7:6-9)

[“If you *must* marry, then”]

LOGICAL CONCLUSIONS DEDUCED FROM THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE:

Paul *appears* to be saying:

* **Marriage is a carnal thing to do.**

* **Celibacy [= not getting married] is a more spiritual thing to do.**

It *looks like* he's saying marriage is “worldly”;
 it's not the *best* choice

... that staying single is *more spiritual*; it's a better choice!

This is NOT a valid conclusion: That's a *false* conclusion!

God created marriage

God created sex

Marriage is good

Sex is good

God said “*it isn't good for man to be alone!*”

Either response is possible:

Marriage can be lived for God, or be self-centered and carnal!
A single lifestyle can be lived for God, or be self-centered and carnal

BUT, because temptation is flagrant and everywhere,
our defense is to marry!

God's plan for most people is marriage 7:2

That often leaves people who don't marry feeling like they're missing something.

Benedict's *Scrapbook*: a publisher offered a prize for best answer: "Why is a newspaper like a good woman?" Winning answer: "It's like a good woman, because every man should have one of his own and not look at his neighbor's!"

God's answer to sexual temptation is *NOT* abstinence (self-control);

God's answer is marriage.

A godly marriage provides a way to overcome the temptation.

God's purpose for marriage includes sexual satisfaction.

Sexual satisfaction is a legitimate purpose for marriage.

Concept that the only valid reason for marriage is reproduction is NOT biblical!

Personal satisfaction is also a legitimate purpose—inside marriage!

BIBLICAL COUNSEL FOR MARRIAGE IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S PURPOSE:

(Since marriage exists to resolve the problem of sexual temptation:)

1) *BOTH* partners are told to meet the other's needs. 3-5a

"Fulfill your duty" 7:3

Each "has authority over" the body of their spouse 7:4

"Stop depriving each other" 7:5

(Lit. – "Stop robbing, cheating, one another")

2) Neither partner ought to reject the other's desires. 7:5

Either person may call on the other to satisfy needs (sexual or otherwise!)

Except under three *limited* conditions:

1) Mutual consent

2) Limited time

3) Spiritual purpose—to dedicate selves to prayer (& fasting).

Except under these three conditions, BOTH husbands AND wives should seek to meet their spouse's needs—sexual or otherwise—love or respect, etc.!

This is *not* conditional!

3) To deny our partner is to tempt our partner 7:5
The shopping trip—NOT an excuse for unfaithfulness!

"Satan is not such a fool as to fish without bait!"

Since this is true, married people should avoid putting partner in jeopardy by denying the other's desires and needs.

Satan will take advantage of it!

4) Sex is NOT a tool (bribe) we use to get our way.

It's not something we use to manipulate our partner to get what we want!

—that's prostitution!

5) Meeting our partner's need isn't limited to sex.

It applies to every area!

-economic needs

-personal needs

Companionship Self-expression

Love/respect Sense of value and purpose, significance

-social needs

Getting out of the house Going out together

-Sometimes it includes the need for "breathing room"

6) Fulfilling our duty to our partner requires spending time together.

Conclusion:

God's plan is that most people marry!

Marriage achieves good purposes!

ONE SURE FACT ABOUT MARRIAGE:

IT WILL COST US PLENTY!

It's about GIVING! –NOT getting!

Paul's focus on love tells us that we're not in this for what we get out of it.

Marriage is about *GIVING!*

We give ourselves to satisfy the needs of our spouse.

People who aren't prepared to give themselves away, shouldn't marry!

The world says:

"Your body is yours; you decide what you want to do with it."

"I have my rights!"

"If I don't get what I want—what I think I should get, I'll make him/her pay!"

Love says:

Satisfy your mate's needs *unconditionally*

=> and your need will be satisfied.

Even if it doesn't get me what I want,

I still do what God wants ME to do!

We're back to the bottom line of love again.

Do we just marry for what we GET OUT OF IT?!!

Love begins with *giving*. *GIVING* is unconditional!

***GOD WANTS US TO DEMONSTRATE WHAT HIS LOVE IS LIKE
BY OUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER!***

Again, how we love our spouse is just another demonstration of love for others.

Do we really love one another?

Are we just looking out for our own interests?

Trying to get what I want?

***GOD WANTS US TO DEMONSTRATE WHAT HIS LOVE IS LIKE
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