

1 CORINTHIANS 7 – PRINCIPLES OF MARRIAGE

What is marriage? Why is it important?

- C&MA Manual – Section H, Statement on Divorce, Marriage, and Remarriage
 - It is a covenant. This means that it is a solemn, binding agreement entered into before God and man.
 - It is sacred. Marriage is used to describe the relationship between God and Israel in the OT and between Jesus Christ and the church in the NT.
 - Marriage is not eternal. Matthew 22:29-30, Luke 20:34-36
- 7:1-5 – Do not deprive one another
- This seems to imply that there were some married couples who had one or more spouse decide to try and live a celibate lifestyle. Paul says it's too late for that, and doing depriving one another causes more harm than good.
 - Is Paul anti-marriage? No. 1 Tim. 4:1-3 forbidding marriage is a sign of apostasy.

Old Testament on Marriage

- Gen 2:24-25 – Two become one flesh; Deut. 7:3 – Don't intermarry with other nations, for they would pull away their devotion to God; Deut. 24:2-4 – Laws for divorce; Jeremiah 2-3 – God's marriage to Israel; Malachi 2:13-16 – Souls are joined together; Ezra 8-10 – God's judgment on Israel for intermarriage; 1 Kings 11:1-8 – Solomon's wives turn his heart away from God.

Jesus on Marriage

- Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:3-9; Luke 16:18
- 7:6-16 - A concession and two charges
- Concession: V6-9 – It's good to stay single, but it's better to marry than to burn with passion.
 - Charge from the Lord: v10-11 – Separation, not divorce. Be reconciled. "Divorce was not commanded. Repentance and forgiveness could restore the marriage and should be pursued – divorce always remains as the last resort option.

- Charge from Paul: v12-16 - The unbelieving spouse. In the context of scripture, this situation is addressing someone who became a Christian while their spouse did not. They were both unbelievers when married, then at some point on became a believer. Paul is not endorsing believers to intentionally marry someone who is not a believer. 2 Cor. 6:14
 - V14 – unbelieving spouse made holy/sanctified. This does not mean that such spouses receive salvation. Just as it is acceptable for a believing wife to have sexual relations with an unbelieving husband, it is also acceptable for her to have children by her husband.
 - V15 – If your spouse separates, let it be so. But you cannot remarry unless they either commit sexual immorality or die. Romans 7:2-3
- 7:17-24 – Live as you are called – illustrations to make a point
- When God calls you to salvation, Paul encourages us to maintain whatever marital situation you are in when he calls you, whether single or married
 - V19 – what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.
- 7:25-35 - The unmarried and the widow; divided interests.
- V26 – the present distress. May refer to food shortages in Corinth. Alternatively, the phrase may refer to a period of intense difficulties prior to the return of Christ.
 - V29-31 – The appointed time is growing near. Don't be consumed with temporal things with eternity looming so near. Live for the Lord in your marriage and singleness.
 - Confronting a major lie in Christian culture. *The lie*: Marriage is the next most important thing next to getting saved. *The truth*: Christ is the most important thing.
- 7:36-40 – final words on marriage
- V36-38 – Reiterates that it is better to marry than burn with passion. But it is far better to not be married at all if possible.
 - V39-40 – Remarriage is permitted only if the spouse has died (or committed sexual immorality). "*Only in the Lord*" means only to a believer.