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- **The pagan, morally corrupt society in which the Corinthian church existed tolerated open and blatant fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and polygamy. Divorce was rampant.**

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- **“An active and vocal feminist movement had also developed. Some wives competed with their husbands in business and even in feats of physical strength. Many were not interested in being housewives and mothers, and by the end of the first century childless marriages were common. Both men and women were determined to live their own lives, regardless of marriage vows or commitments.”**
- **John MacArthur**

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- Juvenal (60-140 A.D.), a Roman poet, who wrote about women who rejected their own sex: “they wore helmets, delighted in feats of strength, and with exposed breasts hunted pigs with spears. ... they wore out their bridal veils with so many marriages.”

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Roman customs of that day allowed for the practice of four different kinds of marriage

- 1) **Contubernium** - means “tent companionship.” This was a marriage between slaves.
- 2) **Usus** - was a kind of common law marriage

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Roman customs of that day allowed for the practice of four different kinds of marriage

- 3) **Coemptio in manum** - in which a father would sell his daughter to a prospective husband.
 - 4) **Confarreatio** - was a higher form of marriage on which modern marriage ceremonies are based.
- NOTE:** “It was not impossible for men and women to have been married 20 times or more.”

7 

The Resulting Confusion in the Corinthian Church

- **“The early church had members that had lived together, and were still living together, under all four marriage arrangements. It also had those who had had multiple marriages and divorces. Not only that, but some believers had gotten the notion that being single and celibate was more spiritual than being married, and they disparaged marriage entirely. Perhaps someone was teaching that sex was ‘unspiritual’ and should be altogether forsaken.”**
- *John MacArthur*

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The question was:

“What do we do now that we are Christians?”

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Regarding the Issue of Marriage

- 1) Christians who were formerly married
- 2) Christians who are married to Christians
- 3) Christians who are married to unbelievers and who want to remain married
- 4) Christians who are married to unbelievers and who want to leave the marriage.

10  **Christians Who Were Formerly Married**

- *“Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”* |
Cor. 7:8-9

11  **Consider the challenge** of Anna’s life
Luke 2:21-38

12 

- *“But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”* - I Cor. 7:8-9

13  **Four things such people would** keep in mind

- It is never God’s will for Christians to marry unbelievers II Cor. 6:14

- The best way to find the right person is to be the right person!


14  **Four things such people would** keep in mind

- Until God brings the right person into our lives, our energy should be channeled into safe and productive channels to help keep our minds off of temptation!

- We should focus on God’s promise that until He brings that right person into our life, He will provide the strength we need to resist temptation and stay pure [I Cor. 10:13].

15  **Instructions for Christians married to other Christians**

- *“To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.”* - I Cor. 7:10-11

16  **Paul points out that the Lord Jesus Himself** taught that divorce is contrary to God’s plan for the human race

- Jesus said: *“what God has joined together, let no man put asunder”* - Matt. 19:5-6










- Matt. 19:7-8, Jesus taught that divorce is not permissible except in the case of adultery

- Mal. 2:16 God declared: *“I hate divorce.”*

17  **Some of the Corinthians had already divorced each other!**

- *“But if she does [i.e. divorce her husband], she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband.”* - Verse 11

- [i.e. In God’s eyes, that union was never dissolved!]

- 18  **Instructions for Christians married to unbelievers who want to stay married**
- *“To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.” - 1 Cor. 7:12-14*
- 19  **Instructions for Christians Married to Unbelievers Who Want to Leave**
- *“But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. ...” - Verse 15*
- 20  **Summary by John MacArthur**
- *“In God’s sight the bond between a husband and wife is dissolved only by death (Rom. 7:2), adultery (Matt. 19:9), and an unbeliever’s leaving. When the bond, or bondage, is broken in any of those ways, a Christian is free to remarry. Throughout Scripture, whenever legitimate divorce occurs, remarriage is assumed. Where divorce is permitted, remarriage is permitted. It is clearly forbidden in the case of verse 11, but here and in other texts dealing with divorce because of adultery it is not.”*
- 21  **Regarding the Issue of Celibacy**
- “Celibacy” - refers to the state of not being married [in some cases by a vow]; the abstention from sexual intercourse
- 1) Celibacy is good
- *It is good for a man not to marry ...”* - 1 Cor. 7:1
- 2) Celibacy can present problems
- *“... But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.” - 1 Cor. 7:2*
- 22  **Regarding the Issue of Celibacy**
- “Celibacy” - refers to the state of not being married [in some cases by a vow]; the abstention from sexual intercourse
- 3) Celibacy is inappropriate for married couples
- *“The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” [1 Cor. 7:3-5]*
- 23  **Regarding the Issue of Celibacy**
- “Celibacy” - refers to the state of not being married [in some cases by a vow]; the abstention from sexual intercourse
- 24  **Reasons to remain single [7:25-40]**
- 1) It is easier to cope with the spiritual warfare of this life
- 1 Cor. 7:25-27 *“Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy. Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are. Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife.”*
- 2) Life is easier and more simple
- *“... those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.”*
- 25  **Reasons to remain single [7:25-40]**
- 26  **Reasons to remain single [7:25-40]**
4. Marriage tends to preoccupy our time and attention
- *“I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife— and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord’s affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs*

of this world—how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.” 1 Cor 7:32-35