

## **Marriage in Sin City (1 Corinthians 7:1-9)**

### **I. Introduction**

- A. The little ditty ‘bout “Jack and Diane”
- B. Reading the text with commentary by “Pastor Tim”

### **II. Understanding a text that has been historically difficult to interpret**

- A. *Now concerning the things you wrote me*
- B. **The traditional view:** a misunderstood and mistranslated text
  - 1. Tertullian and Roman Catholics/Orthodox exaltation of celibacy
  - 2. Evangelicals’ exaltation of singlehood
  - 3. Did Paul despise women? (7:4)
  - 4. Was Paul advocating asceticism?
  - 5. Does Paul have a low view of marriage?
  - 6. Bible translations contribute to the misunderstanding (NIV, TLB)
  - 7. The traditional view is at odds with the rest of Scripture
    - a. God did not design man to be alone (Gen 2:18)
    - b. Marriage is designed for procreation (Gen 1:28)
    - c. Marriage is designed for pleasure (Pr 5:18-19, Song of Sol)
    - d. Marriage is designed for sanctification (Eph 5:22-33)
    - e. Marriage displays Christ and His church (Eph 5:23-25)
- C. **An alternative view** that is consistent with the entirety of Scripture supported by the textual as well as historical and cultural context
  - 1. Historical and cultural support: Marriage in 1<sup>st</sup> Century Rome
    - a. Helps us understand why the instruction of 1 Cor 7:3-5 is needed
  - 2. Contextual support (sexual immorality and other slogans quoted)
  - 3. Textual support (v.1 man-wife; v. 2 his *own* wife”)
  - 4. Patristic support for alternative view – Origen 3<sup>rd</sup> Century

### **III. To Marry or not to Marry**

- A. As a ‘nuanced pastor’ Paul prefers celibacy (7:25-26), but realizes not all have that gift (7:7)
- B. Paul’s pastoral advice to single people (7:8-9)
  - 1. Does this reduce human beings to be subject to animal urges?
    - a. Thiselton suggests it has less to do with “self-control” as much as it has to do with loss of a sense of priorities
  - 2. To counsel ‘Jack and Diane’ to marry because of their lust is not sound Biblical advice

### **IV. Application**

- A. To the single person not yet in a relationship – single-minded service
  - 1. To ‘Jack and Diane’ – learn to deny yourself
- B. To the engaged or courting couple thinking about marriage
- C. To the married
  - 1. Take a bubble bath in a heart-shaped tub at Mount Airy Lodge?
  - 2. Sexual intimacy is good (Heb 13:4)
  - 3. Sexual intimacy should be enjoyed freely and regularly
    - a. Tim Challies on frequency of sexual intimacy
  - 4. Sexual intimacy anticipate the return of Christ for His church