



1 Corinthians 7:8-16

Difficult Marriage Questions

by Bob DeWaay

May 21, 2023

Instruction to the Unmarried

1 Corinthians 7:8-9 (ESV)

To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

- 'Unmarried' describes all single adults
- 'Self-control' means discipline to abstain
- 'To burn' likely means with passion (ESV)

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

1

Married Couples: Remain Married

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 (ESV)

To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

- Divorce was common in Roman culture
- Jewish men could initiate divorce

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

2

Those Married to Unbelievers

1 Corinthians 7:12-13 (ESV)

To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.

- Conversions likely caused these situations
- 'Not divorce' is imperative in the Greek

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

3

Holiness Terminology

1 Corinthians 7:14 (ESV)

For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

- In this case 'holy' does not mean saved
- The believing spouse is not defiled while the unbelieving spouse is in a better place

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

4

When the Unbelieving Spouse Leaves

1 Corinthians 7:15 (NASB)

Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.

- 'Under bondage' is *douloo*

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

5

Salvation is the Desired Outcome

1 Corinthians 7:16 (ESV)

For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

- These questions: optimistic or pessimistic?
- The outcome is in God's hands
- Sacrifice in hope of winning others is essential, even with uncertain outcome
- Paul's priorities: (9:19-22) = salvation

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

6

Implications and Applications

- Life in this fallen world is filled with difficulties, sorrows, and irresolvable problems. We need grace.
- In Adam all die, but Christ brings hope and resurrection life to those who believe.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

7

God's Answer to Paul's 'Thorn'

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NASB)

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

8

In Adam All Die In Christ Is Resurrection Life

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 (ESV)

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship

ggf.church

9