

Marriage and Singleness

1 Corinthians 7; Coast Community Church; Earl Miles; 7-17-2022

*God created us to be holy and happy in Jesus through trust and love!
Jesus is an able and willing Savior for you and me!*

Introduction

The Christian and Marital Intimacy (1-6)

The Christian and Celibacy (7-9)

The Christian and Divorce (10-16)

The Christian and Circumstances (17-24)

The Christian and Wisdom regarding Marriage and Singleness (25-40)

The Christian and Marital Intimacy (1-6)

1. Our experience and cultural attitudes can make physical intimacy ('acting like you're married') seem, at best, a hindrance to our spiritual lives, and, at worst, a sin itself. (1)

Paul is beginning to answer their questions (after dealing with the reports he had heard). Paul founded the church in Corinth and spent 18 months there teaching and preaching. (Acts 18:8-11) Ten times in this letter, Paul says 'Do you not know' as a way of reminding them of what he taught.

This (verse 1) appears to be a statement of theirs and they want to know what he thinks about it. Many, but not all, see this as a restating of the view of the Corinthians. Some see Paul as supporting this statement with qualifications and others see Paul as speaking against it.

'*Not to touch a woman*' is a reference to sexual intimacy in marriage. – Proverbs 6:29

'To corinthianize' was a common way of speaking of being involved in prostitution and other immoral sexual activities. This would have been the total opposite of the way everyone else was living in Corinth.

'*Good*' means spiritually necessary or advantageous. – Matthew 13:27

In spite of all the problems in Corinth, there were still believers there who were wrestling with the question: *How can I grow to be more like Christ and put to death sin in my life?* But they were embracing a view of holiness that is flawed: *Holiness is primarily a matter of separating from the wrong people and avoiding certain activities.* Although separation and avoidance may be needed at times, true holiness is about engaging not separating and being involved in certain activities not simply avoiding certain activities. The pursuit of holiness is the pursuit of love. - 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

Though the man is mentioned, this also applies to the woman not touching a man. Paul is concerned in this passage about the ‘equality’ of the husband and wife in this marital intimacy. The duties and rights of both are emphasized. It is pictured as a truly mutual relationship of love and care. This emphasis would have been unique to the time and culture of Paul’s day.

The basic concern is whether it is better for someone spiritually, as a Christian, for the sake of growth and Christlikeness, to be celibate, whether you were married or not. *Why would someone think that it was better to not be intimate sexually?* (Hebrews 13:4) *‘Sex is inherently evil.’ ‘Sex is inclined to evil.’ ‘So it must be better to avoid it all together.’ (Ascetism) Because of a poor handling of what the Bible says.* (Psalm 14:1) We need to keep in view as we read our Bibles:

- *Grammatical Context* (words used and their connection to each other)
- *Historical Context* (culture and writer and readers and issues being addressed)
- *Literary Context* (kind of literature it is or kind of language being used)
- *Immediate Context* (context of the passage and book)
- *Biblical Context* (all that Scripture has to say on the topics mentioned in the passage)

Should we not touch a woman or man at all outside of marriage? – Song of Solomon 2:7 (also 3:5; 8:4); 1 Timothy 5:1-2

2. Physical intimacy is important in marriage. (2-6)

Marriage is the norm and God designed sexual intimacy to be an important part of it.

Marital intimacy is important because of the temptation to sexual immorality.

Marital intimacy is important because it is a duty of love.

Marital intimacy is important because of the oneness of the husband and wife.

A husband and wife should not refuse one another in this area except by agreement and for the sake of another good goal and only for a short time.

We can expect Satan to tempt us to sin in this area.

Paul is not commanding taking breaks from sexual intimacy but only allowing it under certain conditions, because sexual intimacy is not a hindrance to spirituality or something to be seen as dirty.

We are to do what is right and wise and good.

- What is *right* is determined by God’s commands in His Word. – 1 Corinthians 7:10, 19; Matthew 28:19-20
- What is *wise* is determined by principles in God’s Word and all the various circumstantial factors that need to be weighed (within the boundaries of what is right). – 1 Corinthians 7:20, 26, 35; Ephesians 5:15-16; 1 Timothy 5:21
- What is *good* is determined by our preferences and desires (within the boundaries of what is right and wise). – 1 Corinthians 7:36, 39; Deuteronomy 14:26