

Marriage and Singleness - Part 2

1 Corinthians 7; Coast Community Church; Earl Miles; 7-24-2022

Verse 1: Paul has been responding to reports of problems in Corinth (chapters 1-6). Now Paul is beginning to answer their questions (chapter 7). The Corinthians wrote to Paul and he appears to be responding to a statement of theirs: 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman.'

Beware of wrong attitudes with regard to marriage and sexual intimacy.

Holiness is the pursuit of the good of others (love), not simply the avoidance of certain activities (self-denial). - 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

We should read our Bibles carefully and seek to understand what is said in context. – Psalm 14:1

We should not arouse sexual desire in ourselves and others outside of marriage. – Song of Solomon 2:7; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; James 1:12-16; Proverbs 7:10; 2 Timothy 3:6

Verse 2: Paul makes it clear that marriage is the norm for humanity and that it is intended to be a protection against all kinds of sinful sexual practices.

Beware of wrong practices with regard to sexual intimacy. – 1 Corinthians 6:9-20

Sexual sin is *not* the unpardonable sin and *does not* damage you forever. – 1 Corinthians 6:11

Marriage is between one man and one woman. - Matthew 19:3-6

There are only males and females. – Genesis 1:27

Our authority for what is true and what is right cannot be our desires and how we feel. – Psalm 19:7-11

We should pursue marriage sooner rather than later, all things being equal. - Ruth 3:1-9; 1 Timothy 5:14-15

All sexual activity outside of marriage between one man and one woman is wrong. – Leviticus 18:6-24

Verses 3-4: Paul describes an equality and mutual service and enjoyment in the area of physical intimacy in marriage.

Physical intimacy is important in marriage, but it is not most important or essential.

Physical intimacy is a duty of love because of temptation and because the bodies of each spouse belong to the other. - Romans 13:7-8; 1 Corinthians 6:12; Luke 22:24-27; Mark 10:8; Exodus 21:10; Song of Solomon 2:16; 6:3; Ephesians 5:32

Sex is a good gift from God that is to be mutually enjoyed by both husband and wife.

The God who created marriage and the pleasures of physical intimacy intends it to point to 'heaven' and the future consummation of the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. – Ephesians 5:31-32; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7-9; Psalm 16:11; Song of Solomon 8:6-7

Verse 5: Paul disagrees with the idea that sexual abstinence is a good thing in marriage.

Physical intimacy should not be refused between a husband and wife except under certain conditions. – Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:24-25; Ephesians 5:31-32; Proverbs 5:15-23; Exodus 21:7-11

God gives grace through marital intimacy and apart from it when needed. - Matthew 22:30; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Galatians 5:22-23

Verse 6: Paul has given them some guidelines for sexual abstinence in marriage but he is not encouraging it or requiring it.

In every decision, we must consider what is right and wise and good. – 1 Corinthians 7:10, 19; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 7:20, 26, 35; Ephesians 5:15-16; 1 Timothy 5:21; 1 Corinthians 7:36, 39; Deuteronomy 14:26

Verse 7: Paul desires that all believers were like him, in light of the present distress (verse 26) and for the sake of undistracted devotion to Christ (verse 35), but he recognizes that it all depends on whether one has been given the gift of celibacy or not.

A minority of people have the gift of being single without serious sexual temptation. - Matthew 19:10-12; Luke 2:36-37; 1 Timothy 5:11; Proverbs 30:21-23

Verses 8-9: All those who are unmarried (never married, divorced) especially widows (no longer married), Paul encourages to seriously consider remaining unmarried (in light of the present distress and for the sake of undistracted devotion), but also commands them to get married if they are consumed with sexual desire and the desire to be married.

Those who do not have the gift of celibacy should pursue marriage.

How should we pursue marriage?

Pursue Christ first. (Matthew 6:33; Mark 12:29-31)

Pursue Christlikeness. (2 Corinthians 5:9; 1 Timothy 4:12)

Pursue a vocation and serve others. (Genesis 2:15; 1 Timothy 5:9-14; Psalm 127:3-5)

Pursue those who are doing the same. (2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Corinthians 7:39)

Flee immorality and romance. (Song of Solomon 2:7; 1 Timothy 5:2)

Ask God to provide. (Matthew 7:11)

Do what is wise and lawful to pursue marriage. (Judges 21:19-23; Ruth 3:3-9)

Employ wise counselors. (Proverbs 12:15; Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 27:6; 15:31)

Be careful of your list of requirements for 'Mr. or Mrs. Right'. (Proverbs 31:30; Psalm 4:3)

Consider practical matters that may influence timing. (1 Corinthians 7:26; 1 Timothy 5:8)

Wait on God. (Psalm 27:13-14)

Trust God for what you need and leave the matter to Him. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Proverbs 30:23; Proverbs 18:22; Psalm 84:11)