

**First Corinthians**  
**Chapter Seven**  
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The high calling of discipleship is discussed by Paul.

**1Cor 7:1 “Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.**

**1Cor 7:2 But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.**

**1Cor 7:3 Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.**

**1Cor 7:4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.**

**1Cor 7:5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.**

**1Cor 7:6 But this I say by way of concession, not of command.**

**1Cor 7:7 Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.”**

The area in which they were living was incredibly sexually oriented, not unlike today when drugs are touted on TV for helping people with ED achieve sexual activity all of their lives. Paul is trying to focus the people’s minds on the importance of serving the Lord in whatever way is best for them. Many church members had wrong attitudes about sexual activity even in marriage. Some were saying that the woman should serve the man sexually whenever the man desired such and some were saying the reverse. But the truth is that the man and the woman serve each other in the marriage relationship. Paul said that it is alright to abstain from sexual relationships for a specific season but then they should meet their sexual desires within marriage and not be tempted outside of the marriage relationship. Such advice was very wise with the people living in such a sinful area and with the sins that were already plaguing the church. Paul was not married and celibate at this time but he said that such was not for every person for such is a gift from God. Since Paul had been a member of the Sanhedrin, he had to have been married but we do not know what happened with his marriage. Did she leave him when he became a Christian? Did she die? Were there any children from the marriage? We do not know the answers to these questions for the Lord did not give us the information. We are on a need-to-know basis and that is not something we need to know.

**1Cor 7:8 “But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I.**

**1Cor 7:9 But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.**

He says that it is best to serve only the Lord unless they cannot control their sexual desires. When people are not married they can serve Jesus without concern about a marriage partner needing their attention. But not everyone can live that type of life. We might be tempted to infer from this that Paul was a widower but such speculation is of no value except for wasting our time.

**1Cor 7:10 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband**

**1Cor 7:11 (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away.**

**1Cor 7:12 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away.**

**1Cor 7:13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away.**

Paul is telling us here that this instruction is not just from him but it is from the Lord. Now since Paul is a legitimate representative of Jesus – he is an Apostle – his instructions carry the weight of Jesus but he wanted the readers to know that this instruction is directly from our Lord. He then tells us in verse twelve that his next instructions did not come directly from Jesus. Some people dislike some teachings from the writings of Paul and say that they do not carry the weight of needing to be obeyed. But such comments are heretical for Paul was an Apostle. We cannot tear away from the Bible the teachings we do not like for once someone starts down that path there is no place to stop. I am not interested in the writings of anyone when they do not line up with the canonized Word of God that we have. All the teachings are as valid today as they were over 2000 years ago.

Paul here reaffirms the sanctity of marriage. Although we are not to be unequally yoked in marriage between a believer and an unbeliever, such does happen. When such a union does occur it is still sacred. The believer in the duo must not send away the unbeliever if that person consents to stay in the marriage. The believer is bound by the sanctity of the marriage relationship. The unbeliever is not bound by the same binding relationship but if he/she will stay then the believer is to keep the bond.

**1Cor 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.**

**1Cor 7:15 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.**

**1Cor 7:16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?"**

In these verses, Paul explains his reason for the marriage being kept between a believer and an unbeliever. The believer in the marriage bond is indeed protected by virtue of his/her relationship to God and the unbeliever also receives some grace via the bond. The children are also children of one believer and so also are recipients of some grace from the Lord. We know that God's grace can be viewed as specific and general. His specific

grace is for His children and comes to them regardless of any other circumstances. The world still receives general grace from God even when unbelievers are not in any marriage relationship with a child of God. The following verse clearly illustrates that God's blessings fall upon the just and the unjust.

*Matt 5:45 "in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."*

Although unbelievers receive general blessings from God, unbelievers married to believers receive some "spill-over" grace by virtue of the specific grace poured out on the believers.

The following is also appropriate in this discussion:

*Proverbs 29:27 "An unjust man is abominable to the righteous, And he who is upright in the way is abominable to the wicked."*

I could not resist putting this proverb here for our general understanding as we walk in the world among the wicked. I have seen so many times how the wicked view me as an abomination because I do not fit within their guidelines. But it is also applicable in this discussion because the unbeliever in the marriage will probably give the believer a hard time when the child of God insists on Christian behavior that is not appealing to the unbeliever.

**1Cor 7:17 "Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the churches.**

**1Cor 7:18 Was any man called already circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised.**

**1Cor 7:19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.**

**1Cor 7:20 Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called.**

**1Cor 7:21 Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that.**

**1Cor 7:22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.**

**1Cor 7:23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.**

**1Cor 7:24 Brethren, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called."**

These verses were very important to me after my salvation. I wanted to be a servant in the best way that I could serve. I had already earned a Ph.D. degree in Chemical Physics and was an Assistant Professor of Chemistry and Physics at MSU and already well on the way toward a promotion. However I thought seriously about quitting my job and going to seminary so that I could preach in a church or perhaps teach in a seminary. But these

verses seemed to be talking directly to me. I was to remain at MSU and be a Christian teaching science to young people who were at a secular university and on a career path toward a position as an engineer or a scientist. There were not many Christians on the faculty and so it would be a lonely path and sometimes a painful path. However I praise the Lord for keeping me there and for using me far beyond anything that I could have earned on my own or done on my own.

I was bought with a terrible price and so I was bound to serve God wherever He wanted me. If I deviated from that path, even to go to seminary, I would be serving man and not God. My last sentence might really sound strange to you. How could I have become a slave to man by going back to seminary to become a preacher in a church? I think all you have to do is look around at many pastors who obviously are not serving God because of their teachings that are not scriptural. Many of those pastors are serving their pride and therefore man by becoming pastors.

So regardless of what you were doing when God reached down and caused you to be born again, stay in that position unless God clearly moves you in a different direction. Never give into serving your pride.

**1Cor 7:25 “Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy.**

**1Cor 7:26 I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.**

**1Cor 7:27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife.**

**1Cor 7:28 But if you should marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.**

**1Cor 7:29 But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none;**

**1Cor 7:30 and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess;**

**1Cor 7:31 and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.**

**1Cor 7:32 But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord;**

**1Cor 7:33 but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife,**

**1Cor 7:34 and his interests are divided. And the woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.**

**1Cor 7:35 And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.”**

Paul states again that he does not have a clear teaching from the Lord on these matters but he reaffirms that his word is trustworthy. Remember that, as an Apostle, he is a representative of Jesus Christ. Paul has a high view of our service to the Lord and he surely must have this view for it was also that of Jesus.

*Luke 14:26 “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.*

*Luke 14:27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”*

*Luke 14:33 “So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”*

If we are not a disciple then we are not a Christian. But the call to be a disciple is not to be lightly taken. Jesus did not really mean for us to hate our father, mother, wife, and children but our love for Jesus should be of such a high value in our life that it has to come first. By my loving Jesus more than my wife I am a far better husband than if I loved my wife more than Jesus. We each have to carry our own cross and that means that we are to die to our self. We are to loath our Adam nature and desire to put it to death every day. We also have to give up our possessions because, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, 100% of all that I have is now His. See my article on tithing for a clarification on this concept of all that we have is His: (<http://livingtheology.com/Tithe.htm>).

Paul also knew that if we lived like we really expected Jesus to return soon, such an attitude would affect the way we conduct ourselves everyday.

*Rev 22:7 “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”*

Paul ends these verses by stating his goal for every Christian: we are to seek first an attitude of total devotion to the Lord in our time here.

**1Cor 7:36 “But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter, if she should be of full age, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry.**

**1Cor 7:37 But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, he will do well.**

**1Cor 7:38 So then both he who gives his own virgin daughter in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.”**

These verses have given some people difficulty in interpretation but I think the message is really very simple. We should desire a high calling for our virgin daughters. Now I was just told that 90% of high school seniors have participated in some form of sexual acts before they graduate! That information is horrible to me and it certainly means that today it is very unusual for a father to have to struggle with the concept Paul clearly

states here. But let me go on and give the advice anyway. If I have a virgin daughter then I have to desire the highest form of life for her. But I also have to realize that she may have been led to marry and I have to respect her decision in that matter. It is better in regard to serving Jesus that she stay single but she can also serve our Master in a marriage relationship. Of course it is best for the marriage to be between two believers.

**1Cor 7:39 “A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.**

**1Cor 7:40 But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.”**

Paul ends this chapter by stating again that marriage is a sacred relationship and the woman is to remain married. If death does temporarily break her love relationship with her husband then she is free to marry again, but only as being led by the Lord. Paul does again here verify his high opinion of being a disciple of Jesus in that since God has now broken her marriage on earth she is in a position to more freely serve Jesus if she stays in that widow state.

### References

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