

Sunday, September 18, 2016—I Corinthians 7:3: Due Benevolence

Introduction

- Last week we began our study of I Corinthians 7 by looking at verses 1 and 2. In summation we observed the following points regarding these verses.
- I Corinthians 7:1—now Paul is going to begin addressing the questions that the Corinthians had written him about. Judging from Paul’s statement in verse 1, it is clear that the Corinthians had written Paul with questions regarding sexual intimacy.
 - I Corinthians 7:8-9—it is good for the unmarried, regardless of the circumstances to not “touch” each other. But if they can’t contain their fleshly appetite for sexual intimacy it’s better to marry than burn with lust. Once the flames of sexual passion are awoken within someone they are hard to put out.
- I Corinthians 7:2—Paul is very clear, how does one avoid fornication? By getting married. Sexual intimacy outside of the confines of a marriage is fornication and a sin against one’s own body.
 - These statements to the men and women are in the imperative mood thereby indicating that given their exposure and propensity toward fornication they should get married.
 - Both men and woman are responsible to avoid fornication.
 - “every man” & “every women”— Paul places not limits here on who may or may not marry to avoid fornication. There is no suggestion that divorced man and woman should be deprived of the physical intimacy of marriage simply because they are divorced. It would be better for divorced believers to remarry and thereby avoid fornication.
- Given the sensitive subject matter of chapter 7, I want to say the following at the outset.
 - I am going to teach the details of the passage regardless of how uncomfortable it makes me.
 - I am not setting myself up as the perfect husband nor am I setting up Becky and I as the standard of a perfect marriage. That being said, I can only speak out the experiences I have had as a husband.
 - I am going to try and strike a balance between sharing things that have helped Becky and I, without sharing with you all the private details of our life together.
 - I have discussed what is permissible and allowable to talk about with Becky in advance.

- I am going to endeavor to be real and frank about things without be graphic.
- This morning I want to move on through the passage by looking at verse 3.

I Corinthians 7:3

- **Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.**
- *Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence*—once again the verb “render” is a present active imperative statement. Paul is commanding the husband to do something with respect to his wife.
- The English verb “render” carries the following relevant meanings according to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828):
 - To return; to pay back.
 - To inflict, as a retribution.
 - To give on demand; to give; to assign.
 - To make or cause to be, by some influence upon a thing, or by some change; as, to *render* a person more safe or more unsafe; to *render* him solicitous or cautious; to *render* a fortress more secure or impregnable; to *render* a ferocious animal more mild and tractable.
- Paul is commanding the husband to “render” i.e., return or pay back to his wife her “due benevolence.” According to Noah Webster the English word “due” means:
 - Owed; that ought to be paid or done to another. That is *due* from me to another which contract, justice or propriety requires me to pay, and which he may justly claim as his right. Reverence is *due* to the creator; civility is *due* from one man to another. Money is *due* at the expiration of the credit given, or at the period promised.
 - Proper; fit; appropriate; suitable; becoming; required by the circumstances; as, the event was celebrated with *due* solemnities. Men seldom have a *due* sense of their depravity.
- Malachi 2:14—the covenant of marriage obligates a man to his wife and vice versa.
- Given the parameters of the marriage contract the husband instructed to “render” what is “due” unto his wife. What is the wife “due”? Benevolence.

- The disposition to do good; good will; kindness; charitableness; the love, of mankind, accompanied with a desire to promote their happiness.
 - An act of kindness; good done; charity given.
- Ephesians 6:7—the same Greek word is translated “good will”.
 - I Corinthians 7:1—note the use of the word good.
 - I Corinthians 7:3—given the context it is clear that “due benevolence” is a reference to sexual intimacy. In short, Paul is using the imperative mood to instruct a husband to have sex with his wife.
 - Notice how the nature of the sexual experience has changed with in the confines of the marriage. Now instead of it being a sin against one’s own body it is doing good unto one’s wife. Instead of being ordered to “flee fornication” a man does good unto his wife by being physically intimate with her.
 - Upon marriage, sex transitions from being destructive to being good. This is hard for people living within the Christian bubble.
 - Gentlemen, sex with your wife is not just about you getting some; it’s about you serving her with your body.
 - *and likewise also the wife unto the husband*—the wife is given the same instruction as her husband i.e., to render unto him due benevolence. Just as the husband has an obligation unto his wife so too does the wife have an obligation unto her husband. The instruction to the wife is therefore also in the imperative mood.
 - Ladies, sex with your husband is not just about you getting some; it’s about you serving him with your body.
 - I Corinthians 6:20—when a husband and wife are physically intimate with each other they glorify God with their bodies. They serve God by serving each other.
 - Ephesians 5:21-31—marriage is the only place where one plus one equals one.
 - I Corinthians 7:3—sex is a form of worship. If this were not so the gentiles would not have included sex in the worship of their gods.
 - At last year’s conference, John Verstegen made a comment about the key to long and happy marriage. Quoting something Josh McDowell said at a marriage seminar, John said, “Have maximum sex.” He was right about that.

- As believers we need to have a proper view of sex and what God created it for.