

Sunday, October 16, 2016—I Corinthians 7:5: Defraud Yet Not, Part 2

Introduction

- Over the past four or five weeks we have been working our way through the first 5 verses of I Corinthians 7. In doing so, we have been seeking to understand Paul’s instructions regarding physical intimacy within marriage.
- We had a conversation at our last board meeting regarding whether or not I was lingering to long on this topic. The feedback I received was that we needed to take our time going through this material on account of the constant messages people receive about these things in the media.
- Given the sensitive subject matter of chapter 7, I want to reiterate the following.
 - 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 finished looking at verse 5 and then offer some practical advice regarding how to think about this verse in your marriage.

I Corinthians 7:5

- **Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.**
- *Defraud ye not one the other*—the verb “defraud” is once again a present active imperative which means that Paul is commanding the husband and wife not to “defraud” each other.
- The English verb “defraud” carries the following meanings according to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828).

- To deprive of right, either by obtaining something by deception or artifice, or by taking something wrongfully without the knowledge or consent of the owner; to cheat; to cozen; followed by of before the thing taken; as, to defraud; a man of his right.
- To withhold wrongfully from another what is due to him.
- To prevent one wrongfully from obtaining what he may justly claim.
- To defeat or frustrate wrongfully.
- Given the context, it is clear that the verb “defraud” in verse 5 is referring to sexual intimacy in marriage.
 - Verse 2—the man and woman get married to avoid fornication.
 - Verse 3—the husband and wife are to “render unto” each other “due benevolence.”
 - Verse 4—the husband nor the wife has power over their own body “but” the other spouse.
- Neither party is to purposefully withhold sexual intimacy from their spouse. As I already said, neither spouse is to use sex as a weapon in their marriage to punish, manipulate, or get even with their spouse. The word “defraud” indicates a premeditated action.
- *except it be with consent for a time*—here Paul offers an exception to the instruction offered in the first phrase. The exception is in the form of “consent.”
 - Agreement of the mind to what is proposed or state by another; accord; hence, a yielding of the mind or will to that which is proposed.
 - Accord of minds; agreement; unity of opinion.
 - Agreement; coherence; correspondence in parts, qualities, or operation.
- The implication is clear, if there is going to be an “defrauding” of sexual intimacy in a marriage it needs to be agreed upon by both husband and wife for a particular duration of time.
- *that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer*—Paul mentions fasting and prayer as possible reasons why a couple might agree to “a time” of celibacy within their marriage. While these are possible reasons why a couple might forego intimacy for “a time” they are certainly not the only reasons.

- Remember that the key point here is that regardless of the reason it needs to be at the consent of both the husband and the wife. This means that the couple is going to need to be constantly talking and communicating with each other about the sexual state of their marriage.
- *that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency*—practically, there is much to unpack in this verse but for now just understand the reason why this instruction is given. The reason why a cessation of sexual intimacy within a marriage is to only be by “consent for a time” is because if it’s not Satan will take advantage of the opportunity to sexual tempt your spouse.
- I Corinthians 7:2—in the context Paul instructed men and woman to get marriage to avoid fornication. What happens when a duly married spouse is defrauded without “consent for a time”? There is going to be a temptation to look elsewhere, outside of the marriage, to get that need meet.
- According to Noah Webster the English word “incontinent” carries the following meanings:
 - Want of restraint of the passions or appetites; free or uncontrolled indulgence of the passions or appetites, as of anger.
 - Want of restraint of the sexual appetite; free or illegal indulgence of lust; lewdness; used of either sex, but appropriately of the male sex. incontinence in men is the same as unchastity in women.
- When one spouse or the other purposely defrauds the other of physical intimacy over a prolonged period of time without mutual consent they are actively, via their behavior, allowing the adversary to gain a foothold in their spouse’s life.

Practical Application: The Intimacy Life Style

- Practically speaking, it is often the case that spouses are not evenly matched in terms of their desire for sexual intimacy.
 - High desire spouse
 - Low desire spouse
- It is a common misconception that the husband will always be the high desire spouse. This is simply not true; over the years I have counseled couples where the wife was the high desire spouse.
- While both husband and wife may have found it difficult to keep their hands off each other when they were dating and newly married things change in the life of a marriage. Jobs, pregnancy, kids, life circumstances, and the aging process all impact each spouses desire/drive for physical intimacy differently.

- Problems come when couples do not follow verse 5 in their marriages.
- When a high desire spouse is continually shut down and rebuffed by a low desire spouse they feel rejected. If this rejection continues over a long period of time the high desire spouse may give up and begin look elsewhere to have their need for physical intimacy meet. This can lead to extra marital affairs and/or addictions to pornography, or worse.
- It is important for low desire spouses to realize that there is nothing wrong with their high desire husband or wife.
- High desire spouses often feel like their low desire spouse calls all the shots and gets to control physical intimacy in their marriage. Given Paul's instructions in verses 4 and 5 this ought not to be the case.
- Low desire spouses are often craving and desiring of other types of intimacy other than just physical. Many times low desire spouses are needing more spiritual and/or emotion intimacy. If these other intimacies are not being meet it can be difficult for a low desire spouses to initiate or desire sexual intimacy.
- High desire spouses should not assume that the lack of interest demonstrated by their low desire spouse means they are unaware or don't care about their physical needs.
- Spouses cannot read each other's minds. As verse 5 suggests married couples need to constantly be communicating with each other regarding these matters. This communication needs to be done in a safe and no threatening manner.
- Reality runs contrary to what the media would have us believe. In TV and movies instances of physical intimacy are always terribly romantic and spontaneous occurrences. If you have been a marriage for any length of time you know that this is unrealistic. The fact is that married people struggle all time with physical intimacy in their marriages.
- About a year ago, after struggling with some of these issues in our marriage Becky and I encountered something that has helped us tremendously in our marriage. It is called the Intimacy Life Style.
- The Intimacy Life Style is based upon the notion of scheduling sex with your spouse.
- It begins with a conversation outside of intimate time where both husband and wife agree together how many times a week they are going to be intimate.
- The resulting agreement should be a compromise for both husband and wife.
 - High desire spouse—less sex than desired

- Low desire spouse—more sex than desired
- The point here is that both parties are agreeing together about what is realistic and appropriate.
- Depending upon the agreed upon frequency of intimacy, each spouse gets a number of days in which it will be their turn to initiate sex with their spouse. This ensures that both husband and wife are being pursued by the other. The high desire spouse is not always pursued the low desire spouse. This system ensures that both spouses feel pursued in the relationship.
- The Intimacy Life Style also includes a discussion(s) about how each spouse initiates sex. What signs or signals indicate that each spouse is initiating sex.. what does your spouse need in order to feel loved, cherished, desired?
- Once an agreement is reached it needs to be followed. Neither spouse can reject or rebuff the other without a conversation and consent for a readjusting of the agreement.
- The Intimacy Life Style requires ongoing communication between husband and wife as they are constantly talking through things together.
- Becky and I encountered The Intimacy Life Style through a Podcast titled *One Extraordinary Marriage*. We have been married almost 16.5 years and our marriage grown considerably over the last 12 months by following much of the advice presented in The Intimacy Life Style.
- I feel that this Life Style is in line with Paul's instructions regarding intimacy in marriage presented in I Corinthians 7. I would highly recommend to all the married couples in this assembly. If you are going to listen, I recommend the following:
 - Listen with your spouse and discuss each episode.
 - Know that they are coming from a Christian perspective.
 - Know that they are blunt about things that happen in an intimate physical relationship.
 - Know that this Podcast covers a host of topics regarding marriage not just physical intimacy.