

Sunday, December 04, 2016—I Corinthians 7:25-28: Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage Given the Present Distress

### Introduction

- Last Sunday during our time together we studied verses 17 through 24. In this section Paul address the questions of the Corinthians by instructing them to abide in their calling.
- Verses 18-20—dealt with the futility of circumcision during the dispensation of grace and instructs believers to abide in whatever stated they were called.
- Verses 21-23—addresses those who got saved out of a state of slavery.
- This morning we want to move on through the passage by looking at verses 25-28 where Paul specifically address virgins and resumes his discussion of divorce and remarriage.

### I Corinthians 7:25

- **Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.**
- Verse 25 begins a new paragraph that runs through the end of verse 28.
- Many have struggled with the language that Paul uses here as it relates to inspiration. Paul says that he has “no commandment of the Lord” of the Lord concerning virgins. Yet, he is going to give his judgement.
- Yet, what Paul wrote to them is considered scripture. This is evident by the very fact that it was included in the book of I Corinthians.
- I Corinthians 14:37—Paul did not say, “Everything I wrote unto you were the commandments of the Lord except that part in chapter 7 where I offered my own judgement.” No, everything Paul wrote to the Corinthians was to be taken as the commandments of the Lord even the part where Paul offered his own judgement in chapter 7.
- I Corinthians 5:9—Paul wrote other things to the Corinthians that did not qualify as scripture because they were not written by inspiration of God. Consequently, they are not found in the cannon because they were not inspired. Yet, Paul’s judgment recorded in I Corinthians 7 is.
- Therefore, Paul’s judgements in I Corinthians 7 would be subject to other verses regarding inspiration (II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:21). Paul, on the basis of a mind that had been stirred by God the Holy Spirit and saturated with the words of God through the process of inspiration, was able to, out of that mind, write something that the Holy Spirit considered scripture.

- I Corinthians 7:40—the Spirit of God in Paul was able to bear witness to the authenticity of Paul’s judgment. In other words, Paul’s judgment was completely congruent with the mind of God the Holy Spirit on the matter.
- *Virgins*—is clearly a reference to an unmarried person who has never engaged sexual intercourse.
  - Matthew 1:23
  - Luke 1:27, 34
- I Corinthians 7:25—given the context of chapter 7 it is reasonable to assume that the Corinthians had asked Paul specifically about virgins.
- Many commentators assume that Paul speaking primarily to and/or about women when he references virgins in verse 25. This is curious because in verse 26 he specifically applies the term to “a man.”
- *as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful*—this part of the verse has always puzzled me. Paul is giving his judgment to virgins “as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.” What does this mean?
- I Corinthians 7:7-9—we already know that Paul was not married when he wrote I Corinthians. We also know that in verse 7 he spoke of a supernatural gifting of God the Holy Spirit that would allow one to remain in a state of singleness and do so without committing sexual sin.
- I Corinthians 7:25—could it be that Paul is offering his judgment to virgin members of the body of Christ as one who had obtained such mercy from the Lord.

### **I Corinthians 7:26**

- **I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.**
- *I suppose therefore*—Paul’s statement in verse 26 is based upon his judgment as one who had obtained mercy from the Lord in verse 25.
- *that this is good for the present distress*—Paul is referring to the current social and political conditions at the time of his writing in the first century. It would not be long before the Roman Empire would begin persecuting Christians.
  - Galatians 1:4
- Because the “present distress” Paul supposed that it was “good for a man so to be,” i.e., to remain a virgin or unmarried.

- Has there ever been a time during the dispensation of grace when the body Christ was not facing distress?

### I Corinthians 7:27

- **Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.**
- *Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed*—the present distress was not grounds for believers to seek a divorce. Generally, believers should not be seeking to be loosed from other believers regardless of the socio-political circumstances. The world is always going to be the world.
- Ephesians 4:31-32—believers should be endeavoring to show and exhibit the love of Christ one to another.

### *Reasons Marriages Fail*

- There are two primary reasons that marriages fail and they both center around properly understanding Ephesians 5:32.
  - *Unrealistic Expectations*
    - *Unrealistic*—inappropriate to reality or fact
    - *Expectation*—the act or state of expecting, anticipation
  - *Unrealistic Expectations* are anticipating and/or expecting that someone is going to do something for you that is above and beyond their ability to accomplish.
    - *Misplaced Dependences*
      - *Misplace*—to put in a wrong or inappropriate place, set on the wrong object or eventuality
      - *Dependence*—the quality or state of being influenced or determined by or subject to another.
  - *Misplaced Dependences* are relying on someone or something that cannot provide what one desires.
  - Have you ever said or thought any of the following?

- I'll be happy when I get married
  - I got married so that all my problems would be taken care of
  - I got married so that I would have unconditional love and acceptance
  - I got married so that I could retire
  - I expect my spouse to
  - This was not what I signed up for
  - I am so unfulfilled
  - My spouse is a loser that doesn't meet any of my needs.
- There are people in this room right now who are disillusioned with their marriage and/or spouse because of *Unrealistic Expectations* and *Misplaced Dependences*.
  - Your marriage is not what you signed up for because you seeking to get from another human being what you can only get from Jesus Christ.
  - If you are seeking to have your deepest emotional needs meet by another human being, you will always end up disappointed because you are asking them to do the impossible.
  - Romans 5:8-9—how much does Christ love you? He died for you when you still a sinner and an offence to him.
  - Colossians 2:9-10, 3:2—you are complete in Jesus Christ we need to look to Christ to meet these needs not our spouses. Because when we ask our spouse to meet these needs for us we are setting them up for failure and therefore our disillusionment with their inability to measure up.
  - Ephesians 1:6—if you have trusted Jesus Christ you are loved and accepted and secure in and at peace with God.
  - Understanding these realities frees you up to serve your spouse in love knowing that all your soulish needs are meet in Jesus Christ and therefore not expecting your spouse to do something they are not capable of.
  - Ephesians 5:32—that's why Paul uses the example of Christ and the church.
  - Marriage relationships are constantly changing. Attitudes shift, emotions fluctuate, and the way spouses treat each other ebbs and flows between loving and not loving.

- Some changes are beyond our control (medical diagnosis). Other changes we create for ourselves, but sometimes with unexpected consequences (moving).
- The combination of our emotions, attitudes, and actions will determine which season our marriage is in at any given time. We feel emotions; develop attitudes based on those emotions which in turn spur us to action. The interweaving of our emotions, attitudes, and actions creates the quality of our relationship in the various seasons of marriage.

<i>Emotions</i>	Hurt, anger, disappointment, loneliness, feeling rejected
<i>Attitudes</i>	Negativity, discouragement, frustration, hopelessness
<i>Actions</i>	Destructive, speaking harshly, not speaking, violent
<i>Climate of Relationship</i>	Detached, cold, harsh, bitter. In the winter season of marriage, couples are unwilling to negotiate differences. Conversations turn to arguments, or spouses withdraw in silence. There is no sense of togetherness. The marriage is like two people living in separate igloos.