

## Separation, Divorce and Remarriage

1 Corinthians, Vol. 11

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1 Corinthians 7:8-16

Genesis 2:24: *For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*

The design is:

|       |                         |
|-------|-------------------------|
| _____ | (one man and one woman) |
| _____ | (leave)                 |
| _____ | (cleave)                |
| _____ | (one flesh)             |

If we had only this chapter, you might think Paul was down on marriage, but that would be wrong. He didn't dislike marriage. He puts it in perspective and faces head-on several problems related to it. As we come to verse 8 of this chapter we hit the discussion of the dark side of marriage. You're going to see what God says about dealing with some of the ways His standards can be violated.

### I. To The Unmarried (8-9)

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

***But I say:***

***unmarried:***

***widows:***

***it is good:***

***remain even as I:***

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

***have self control:***

***let them marry:***

***better to marry than to burn:***

Observe the balance: It is good to be single for serving God, but it is better to marry than to wrongfully attempt to remain single.

**Footnote #1:** Keep your balance on this! 1 Timothy 4:1-3 calls requiring singleness for spirituality or spiritual leadership a ***doctrine of demons*** authored by ***deceitful spirits***. Anyone or any organization requiring celibacy for serving God is helping do Satan's work for him. In chapter 9 of 1 Corinthians we're going to see the right of every missionary to ***take a long a believing wife***.

**Footnote #2:** ***“Let them marry”*** doesn't say anything about how to go about seeking a spouse. Part of the beauty of God's word is its profound simplicity and adaptability to every generation in every culture.

II. **To The Married (10-11)**

1 Corinthians 7:10-11: *But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.*

***To the married:***

***I give instructions:***

***Not I, but the Lord:***

The words of Jesus to which Paul refers: Mark 10:9: *“What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”*

Matthew 5:31–32: *It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE'; but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*

Matthew 19:9: *And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.*

### III. **To The Mixed-Married (12-16)**

1 Corinthians 7:12-16: *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, he must not divorce her. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. 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. 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. 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?*

This is addressed to a believer married to an unbeliever. We know it's sin for a believer to marry an unbeliever.

1 Corinthians 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.*

2 Corinthians 6:14: *Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

There is no guarantee that things will get better if the Christian partner endures persecution and abuse at the hand of a recalcitrant unbelieving spouse. Even such sacrificial devotion may be of no avail as far as the conversion of the unsaved mate is concerned.

It is true that the power of a godly life is the best witness possible for winning the unbelieving one into the kingdom, but there isn't a promise.

Our text also makes it clear that it's better to have the positive influence for godliness exerted by a believer on the children in the home, in addition to the unbelieving spouse.

Along the way, while you navigate the treacherous waters of being a believer married to an unbeliever, you must not compromise God's standards in order to save a marriage. You may not disobey God in order to please a spouse. The burden is on the unbeliever to choose to continue living with a **Christian** spouse. You shouldn't be preachy or obnoxious, but you can't refuse to read your Bible or consistently stay away from church, or participate in evil deeds because your spouse pressures you.

The believer is **not to try to dissolve the marriage**. That's why I like the translation **must not send away**, because it gets to the heart of someone who might try to sabotage a marriage by making it unbearable for the unbeliever. It has to be the decision of the unbeliever to refuse to live with the believer, who is living as a Christian.

1 Corinthians 7:12-13: *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**, he must not divorce her. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and **he consents to live with her**, she must not send her husband away.*

A crucial word is **consents**:

The other crucial word is translated **live with**:

If an unbelieving spouse, knowing what his or her Christian mate is committed to, is content to remain in the relationship, the believer should not think about divorce. You should seek to show what the relationship is meant to be like between Christ and His Church.