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 Port Gardner Church
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1 Corinthians Part 14
Principles for Marriage
1 Corinthians 7:1-5

1 Corinthians 7:1-5 [7:1] Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: **“It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”** [2] But because of the **temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.** [3] The husband should give to his wife her **conjugal rights**, and likewise the wife to her husband. [4] For the wife **does not have authority over her own body**, but the husband does. Likewise the husband **does not have authority over his own body**, but the wife does. [5] **Do not deprive one another**, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your **lack of self-control**.

Principles Regarding Marriage

Paul answers a question about sexual relations in marriage.
 (Verses 1-2) He expounds on the principle of purity.

1 Corinthians 7:1-2 [7:1] Now concerning the matters about **which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”** [2] But because of the **temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.**

Concerning the matters about which you wrote: Chapter seven begins a section where Paul will deal with specific questions asked him in a letter by the Corinthian Christians.

It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman: This was probably a statement made by the Corinthian Christians, which they were asking Paul **to agree with**. Paul will agree with the statement, but not without reservation – and we see this because verse 2 starts with “But”...

The Corinthian Christians are suggesting complete celibacy? Why would they suggest this? They probably figured that if sexual immorality was such a danger, then a person could be more pure by abstaining from sex altogether, **even in marriage**.

There was a small movement in the church at that time suggesting that celibacy was “more spiritual” than the alternative of Christian marriage. It was even suggested that you could become “more spiritual” by abstaining from sex even in the marriage relationship.

This is a common legalistic course when trying to overcome problems in the church. Throwing the baby out with the bath water. When we have a problem that is overcoming us in life we tend to overreact and force our pendulum to swing completely to the other side of an issue without seeking God’s direction through his word and prayer.

We try to solve spiritual issues of our **identity in Christ** by making hard core physical changes that in the end only exacerbate the problem. I’m not saying we shouldn’t make hard decisions and subsequent changes to our lives, I’m only saying that generally, the roots of sin in a believers life are directly connected to our understanding of who we are as sons and daughters of God. **Our behavior is birthed from who we know ourselves to be.** We are either masters of our own destiny controlling our thoughts and deeds in accordance with our own finite mind and will... or we worship, and obediently serve our God as sons and daughters of the King through the salvation of Christ.

Paul goes on to say... *But because of the **temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband:***

Sexual immorality is all around and is blatantly advertised as enticing, fun and exciting. It was the same if not worse in the Corinthian culture. Many of us married folks struggled against this as single Christians. Paul is saying that he knows we will be tempted and that to keep us from sin, he encourages us to marry.

He is also saying that it is good and appropriate for husband and wife to **have** each other in a sexual sense.

Does The Bible Allow Sex For Pleasure?

There are some religious people who feel that the only reason for sex is reproduction. Others believe that there are **higher reasons for sex**: The ultimate joining together of a man and woman--the joining together of two spirits; the joining together of two minds; and the joining together of two bodies.

In the Old Testament the term for sexual intercourse was "to know" (a husband or wife). The most intimate knowledge of marriage partners comes about through these three joinings in a Christian marriage. This is why Christians can have a much more stimulating sex life than non-Christians. Because sex isn't just a biological act, we are able to combine the physical, the mental and the spiritual.

Now many Christians have entered into marriage with a pre conceived idea about what "Christian" Sex should be. Many church leaders want to put dos and don'ts onto this issue. But the truth is that the Bible is pretty clear on this.

Hebrews 13:4 [4] *Let marriage be held in honor among all, **and let the marriage bed be undefiled**, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.*

1 Timothy 4:3 [3] *who **forbid marriage** and require abstinence from foods **that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.***

And let the marriage bed be undefiled: The Bible strictly condemns sex outside of the marriage commitment (**fornicators and adulterers God will judge**). But the Bible celebrates sexual love within the commitment of marriage, as in The Song of Solomon.

Perhaps through a past of sexual sin, many people have a difficult time really believing that the marriage **bed** is **undefiled**. Guilt and sexual hang-ups are appropriate to extra-marital sex, **but not in marital sex**. But this is where the guilt and sexual hang-ups often exist, and where they most frequently cause trouble.

The enemy of our souls wants to do everything he can to encourage sex *outside* of the marriage **bed**, and he wants to do everything he can to discourage sex *inside* the marriage **bed**. We need to recognize this strategy and not give it a foothold among us.

Though God allows real freedom in the variety of sexual expression in marriage, all must be done with a concern for the other's needs and in love (1 Corinthians 7:2-5 and Ephesians 5:21-33).

For more details on sex in marriage, there are some good resources. Song of Solomon is one. The book by Mark and Grace Driscoll, **Real Marriage** is another.

Paul is not commanding the Corinthian Christians to get married (an issue he deals with later in the chapter. He is saying that husbands and wives **should be having sexual relations**.

How sad that a wife or a husband, thinking themselves wiser than God destroy the peace of their family by acting so holy and spiritual as to dishonor His commandments and deny themselves the wonderful benefits He has provided in marriage.

Paul is not saying sex is the only reason for marriage, or even the most important reason for marriage. Paul is simply answering their specific questions about marriage, not trying to give a **complete theology of marriage**.

For more on a complete theology of marriage, see Ephesians 5:21-33 and Colossians 3:18-19.

(Verses 3-6) The principle of mutual sexual responsibility in marriage.

1 Corinthians 7:3-6 [3] *The husband should give to his wife her **conjugal rights**, and likewise the wife to her husband. [4] For the wife **does not have authority over her own body**, but the husband does. Likewise the husband **does not have authority over his own body**, but the wife does. [5] **Do not deprive one another**, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your **lack of self-control**.*

Verse 3 in the New King James version says *(3) Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.*

A husband is to **render to his wife the affection due her**. It is wrong for him to withhold affection from his wife.

This is not just sex.

Paul emphasizes what the woman needs: not merely sexual relations, but **the affection due her**. If a husband is having sexual relations with his wife, but without true affection to her, he is not giving his wife what she is due.

Affection also reminds us that when a couple is **unable** – for physical or other reasons – to have a complete sexual relationship, they can still have an affectionate relationship, and thus fulfill God’s purpose for these commands.

and likewise the wife to her husband. – the wife is not to withhold marital affection from her husband. Paul strongly puts forth the idea that there is a mutual sexual responsibility in marriage; the husband has obligations towards his wife, and the wife has obligations towards her husband.

Husbands: Do you demand sex? Do you force your will upon your wife? Do you get mad when you don’t get what you want? Many a Christian man has used these verses to support their false idea of dominance over their wife.

Wives: Do you use sex as a bargaining chip? Do you withhold sex as a punishment... or a vehicle to get something you want?

Render to his wife: The emphasis is on giving, on “I owe you” instead of “you owe me.” In God’s heart, sex is put on a much higher level than merely being the husband’s privilege or the wife’s duty.

It’s about a unity that is exemplified by Christ and His church. Jesus loves and serves His church and His church loves and serves Him. They are not to be at odds with one another demanding their own way. And they do not punish each other when the relationship is not what it should be.

The wife does not have authority over her own body: In fact, these obligations are so concrete, it could be said that the wife’s body does not even belong to herself, but her husband. The same principle is true of the husband’s body in regard to his wife.

This does not justify a husband abusing or coercing his wife, sexually or otherwise. Paul's point is that we have a binding obligation to serve our partner with physical affection.

It is an awesome obligation: out of the billions of people on the earth, God has chosen one, and one alone, to meet our sexual needs. There is to be no one else.

I want to take a minute and talk about body types. That sounds weird doesn't it. But there is a stereo typical body type that many of us adhere to. We see the perfect body on TV or versions that accentuate this part or that part of the body. It used to be "tall dark and handsome" or a "blonde bombshell". But Satan has taken this kind of thought to a whole new low. He wants you to be dissatisfied with your marriage and your sexual relationship therein. He wants you to be sexually immoral because he can then cut you from the herd and devour you and eventually your entire family.

The bottom line is this: If you have a "body type" that you are attracted to other than your spouse... you are giving yourself over to sin. Husband or Wife (and many wives now have the same issues that men have had for years and years) Our culture has pushed us into the "50 shades of Gray" era.

Your perfect "body type" is that of your spouse. Not what they used to look like, not what you hope they would look like... but what and who they are right now. That person is the gift that God has given you. For you to reject God's gift and look elsewhere is certainly sin.

Proverbs 5:18-19[18] Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, [19] a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.

Song of Solomon Chapter 4:

Do not deprive one another: Paul says that their idea that husband and wife could be more holy by sexual abstinence is false. In fact, much harm can and will come if you deprive one another. You open the door to temptation. You begin to look at the other side of the fence and see what is perceived to be as "greener grass".

The word for **deprive** is the same as **defraud** in 1 Corinthians 6:8. When we deny physical affection and sexual intimacy to our spouse, we are cheating them.

Sexual deprivation in marriage isn't just about frequency and such. The overarching principle here is to not deprive one another of Romance and Affection. This is why Paul tells husbands to **render to his wife the affection due her**. Deprivation gives opportunity for the deprived to look elsewhere for fulfillment – to the destruction of the marriage.

For your lack of self-control: It's easy to think that self control is expressed by abstaining from sex in marriage, but Paul says that to **deprive one another** is to show a **lack of self-control**, and a lack of self-control that will leave one to be tempted by Satan.

except perhaps by agreement: God will permit (reluctantly) a married couple to abstain from sexual relations for a short time, for the sake of **fasting and prayer**. (this was common among the Jews and they would abstain from certain activities including sexual relations in marriage during spiritual events and holidays). But if this **concession** is used, it is only to be **for a time**, and then husband and wife must come **together again** in a sexual sense.

Paul is probably saying this because it was specifically addressed in the letter / communication he received and involved in the questions he is trying to answer for them in this portion of His epistle.

God is not commanding, or even recommending, such abstaining from sex within marriage; but it can be done for a brief time for a specific spiritual reason.

The principle in this passage is important. God makes it clear that there is nothing wrong, and everything right, about sex in marriage. Satan's great strategy, when it comes to sex, is to do everything he can to encourage sex outside of marriage, and to discourage sex within marriage. It is an equal victory for Satan if he accomplishes either plan!

This can be seen in the way some of the Corinthian Christians thought it was just fine to hire the services of a prostitute (as in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20), and other Corinthian Christians thought it was more spiritual for a husband and wife to never have sexual relations!

I would ascertain that there are more Christian marriages struggling with the issue of Sex and Intimacy than those that are experience the fullness of God's blessing.

I would say this to those that may be struggling.

Maybe you have a past that you can't seem to leave behind...

Maybe you have a guilt or shame that you struggle to overcome...

Maybe you have been hurt by someone you trusted...

Maybe you were taken advantage of or you were forced into something...

Whatever your struggle is... Jesus died to save you from it. He saw you before you were even born and knew you would have these issues and that's why He went to the cross.

This is not about the behavior of your Husband or your Wife. It's about who you are in Christ. Jesus has forgiven you. Jesus has delivered you. Jesus gives you new life. And it starts again today.

It doesn't matter if you were a Christian or not. It doesn't matter if it was consensual or not. It doesn't matter if you had control or not...

Jesus went to the cross to deliver you from your sin. He has taken it and you don't get to own it anymore. It belongs to Him. He has separated it from you as far as the East is from the West. You are a new creature in Christ. You are not your own. You don't belong to you... you belong to Jesus... and He wants you free from the past. He wants you free from the sin of the present and He wants you free from the sins of the future. His work is done... the question is.. Do you believe that your sin is too great, your shame is too great, the offenses against you are too great to be paid for by the life of the son of God?

This isn't about what you've done or what's been done to you. It's about who you are right now in Christ. You can choose to stay in the courtroom and continue to be accused and continue to suffer... or... you can take on the garments worn by a child of the King. Take on the life lived by a child of the King. Take on the Love the Salvation the Redemption that is afforded a child of the King.

When Jesus went to the cross, He didn't just save your soul... He saved EVERYTHING! He Redeemed EVERYTHING!

Romans 8:38-39 [38] *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

It's time to stop living a lie. It's time to remember who you are in Christ or it may be time to learn who you are in Christ. Most of the time we don't know because we don't seek.

This is not about pulling yourself up by your bootstraps or willing yourself to a new sense of accomplishment. It's about knowing Jesus. Knowing the God that saved you.

The first step in knowing Jesus is knowing what he did for you on the cross.

Romans 3:23 all have sinned and come short of the glory of God

Romans 3:10 None is righteous, no not one

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:8 but ⁴God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 10:9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Romans 10:13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:38-39 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Pray.