

Summit Woods Baptist Church
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class

1 Corinthians 7:12-16

Remember to begin your study early in the week so that you have time to really think (and keep thinking) about the passage without being rushed.

❖ Day 1

Read 1 Corinthians 7:12-16.

For these lessons, the sermon text is provided in a format that visually helps display the structure of the paragraph or section of text. The verbs are underlined. The main clauses remain to the left, and the supporting clauses are either directly underneath when they have equal priority to what comes before, or are tabbed to the right when the clause supports, develops or explains previous clauses. Suggested themes in the text are provided in the box on the left.

I. Marriage to a consenting unbeliever:

- Stay married
- 3 benefits:
 1. Holiness for spouse
 2. Holiness for children
 3. Possible salvation of spouse

II. Marriage to an unconsenting unbeliever:

- Let them go
- Called to peace

¹²To the rest I say... that

(I, not the Lord)

if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever,
and she consents to live with him,
he should not divorce her.

¹³If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever,
and he consents to live with her,
she should not divorce him.

¹⁴For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife,
and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband.

Otherwise your children would be unclean,
but as it is,
they are holy.

¹⁵But if the unbelieving partner separates,
let it be so.

In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved.
God has called you to peace.

¹⁶For how do you know, wife,
whether you will save your husband?
Or how do you know, husband,
whether you will save your wife?

1. From whom does the instruction in these verses come? How does he specifically phrase it?

- a. Does this mean that the commands are less authoritative since Paul wrote them himself and is not quoting from Jesus' teachings?

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- b. How does Brett Harris' April 23rd sermon from 2 Timothy 3:14-17 inform your answer?
2. To whom does "the rest" refer? (Hint: Think about who he has already addressed in the preceding verses and who he addresses in these verses.)
3. What is the specific action forbidden in verses 12 and 13?
4. It is conceivable that some believers might fear being "contaminated" by an unbelieving spouse, but what does Paul say instead in verse 14?
5. In addition to the unbelieving spouse, who else does Paul say is made holy?
6. Does this mean that the unbelieving spouse and children are saved? Explain your answer from the text.
7. Describe some practical blessings that an unbeliever might experience through marriage to a believer.

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❖ Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 again.

8. If an unbelieving spouse chooses to separate, what is the believing spouse supposed to do?
9. In verse 15, what does Paul say that God has called the believer to?
10. How might an entrenched refusal to let the unbeliever go or an unceasing obligation to pursue an unbeliever who has left seem like enslavement and not be in accordance with peace?
11. In verse 16, what does Paul say the believing spouse should keep in mind?
12. How should this motivate the believing spouse to persevere through the difficulties that emerge from their differing beliefs?
13. Is the eventual salvation of the unbelieving spouse certain?
14. Why might the salvation of the unbelieving spouse be more likely when living with a believing spouse?

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❖ Day 3

Read 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 again.

15. Based this week's passage and verses 10-11 from last week, what should the believer's attitude be toward pursuing divorce?

16. The world's wisdom says that whatever course of action leads to one's happiness is the right thing to do. How do these passages answer that?

17. How can you pray for and support Christian brothers and sisters around us who are married to unbelievers or who have been abandoned by an unbelieving spouse?

18. How does this week's passage impact your thinking about marriage and divorce?

19. Summarize the passage in one or two sentences.

In preparation for Sunday, pray for the believers among us who are married to unbelievers, that the Lord will strengthen them to persevere with grace and patience, that they will be good witnesses to their unbelieving spouses, and that the Lord would call their spouses to salvation.