

## 1 Corinthians 7 and Marriage

### 03-13-22

God desires for men and women to marry. When God created man and woman, He determined that it was not good for man to be alone, and created marriage to perfect our existence here (Genesis 2:18). We know that the marriage is the center of the family, and that many of the offices of the church require marriage to be fulfilled (1 Timothy 3:1-13). In 1 Corinthians 7:2 Paul adds to this list something that could have been understood intuitively; marriage is also to avoid fornication. It is important that the church teaches the pursuit of marriage, particularly to our younger members.

Paul begins 1 Corinthians 7 by discussing the importance of marital intimacy. The Bible sometimes uses the term “the marriage bed”. God desires marital intimacy; Paul says it is important because it avoids sin. But it also is key to the bond of the marital relationship. We cannot ignore the spiritual significance of intimacy. God insists on sexual purity, both in marriage and out of it. Thus it is important to teach on the proper place of intimacy in marriage, and the need for self-control.

After discussing the importance of intimacy in marriage, Paul continues to give us the divine mind on divorce. God’s command on this is simple: don’t. Jesus said as much several times (Luke 16:18), telling us that divorcing and remarrying is an act of adultery. Paul adds to this that if one does divorce, they must “*Remain unmarried or be reconciled*”. Jesus did mention one exception to this rule: if someone put away their spouse for fornication, then they may remarry.

Paul continues on to address the question of when a spouse abandons another. This can be confusing, as some wonder if this is a second exception to Jesus’ law on marriage and divorce. Paul does not address this as an exception that permits remarriage. In the context, he has been speaking about what spouses owe one another regarding intimacy. If a spouse departs, there is no requirement to depart with them, and they are not under bondage because of that obligation.

What God wants us to understand about marriage is that marriage is a “work prepared” by God (Eph. 2:10). Sometimes marriage is not a good thing; when we are not to marry (such as one who is divorced), or when circumstances in our lives (vs. 26). But we also should consider that marriage is not appropriate when our dispositions and attitudes are wrong.