

**I Corinthians Lesson # 14**  
**God Established Marriage**  
**Pentwater Bible Church**  
**Daniel E. Woodhead**  
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It is important to trace the path God takes in this book regarding marriage with the world and human sexuality specifically. He starts with the Grace of God and moves to the division in the Church caused by the elevation of human wisdom above God's Word. Far too many Church leaders do this when they want to manage the message of God in their desire to dispense it according to their will instead of letting the Holy Spirit do His work through a clear exposition of God's Word in its entirety. God then demonstrates the foolishness of the wisdom of the world and those who arrogantly *know* they have the truth apart from God alone. We see this book then teaching us not to rely on the wisdom of this world for our path through it.

*Psalm 119:104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way*

God then tells us that Spiritual things are not received by human wisdom and human wisdom can't evaluate them. The things of God belong to God. The Holy Spirit *only* reveals them.

If a person is living in a state of sin or still an unbeliever they will never experience true growth and realization.

**THOSE IN SIN RETARD SPIRITUAL GROWTH.**

Sexual immorality outside God's gift of sexual expression is a sign of unbelief or spiritual retardation. Men and women are to be married for life in order for their sexuality to be expressed according to God.

God explains that without this solid God given mode of expressing our sexuality we will be led into major sexual sins such as the Corinthians who were engaging in incest and celebrating it. God talks about the judgment and how we will be judged and it is not by the world. We must not be indifferent to sin and properly rebuke it in the manner in which God has provided. Remember we are in this world physically and spiritually and behaviorally we must be *not of this world*. We can't take each other to the civil courts and we must honor the sanctity of marriage. We must not be joined in bonds and especially sexually to unbelievers. God uses the illustration of the harlot (prostitute or whore) to explain what He means. Why is he saying these things?

**THE BODY OF BELIEVERS IS HOLY BECAUSE GOD HAS ESTABLISHED MARRIAGE**

*1 Corinthians 7:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*

Some of the Corinthians obviously had written Paul to ask his direction for God's will in their lives regarding their marital obligations. Considering the immorality of Corinth it is appropriate for the question of marriage relationship to be asked. Some as we have seen were engaging in incest and others were practicing some inappropriate celibacy. These are pagan practices and Paul is about to refute them. God given sexuality in marriage will be explained in this chapter. It will also clearly instruct the married and the unmarried. Some in various Christian traditions have used this verse to forbid the clergy to be married. Such is not God's intent. In the practices of the Gnostics some people thought the body was sinful and so then was sexual intercourse. This is nonsense since God created us as sexual beings to enjoy its expression within His plan. Paul's statement is simply saying that for the individual who is gifted in this area it is good for him or her. It is not a commandment for all Christians to strive for unless led into this by the Lord. For those called into this they should realize that is it a calling and should use it to further God's work.

*1 Corinthians 7: 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.*

We should not deprive ourselves of the natural sexual drives that God has given to us. Any artificial deprivation will lead to fornication. Fornication is simply any sexual relations outside of marriage. If we try to engage in celibacy apart from a genuine God leading gift the end result will be fornication. This is obviously not God's plan. He made the sexual desire strong for marital bonding and propagation of the human being. Jesus' words say it best:

*Matthew 19: 3-12 And there came unto him Pharisees, trying him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery. The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. But he said unto them, Not all men can receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs, that were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, that were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, that made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.*

**Therefore:**

*I Corinthians 7:3-5 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

Since God has given us sexuality to be used within the marital relationship He defines one aspect of it here. We are not to withhold sexual relations from one another in marriage. The text speaks of two basic ideas here.

1. The intentional withholding of sex because one partner wants to harm the other for some reason or other.
2. Sex is withheld for some false religiosity. Such as chasing after a pagan god or false practice.

This does not mean that if one partner is suffering a physical ailment the other is to demand sexual satisfaction. On the contrary the basic discussion here focuses on the Christian marriage and sex must not be withheld because God gave each of us the other's body for enjoyment. If the couples clearly and forthrightly communicate their desires and conditions many issues in this area can be overcome. In appealing to the false religion celibacy state God offers the following for the Christian.

If you truly want to spend some serious time in prayer and fasting to connect with God then by all means abstain from sexual activity but only for a short while. The strength of the urge for sex will overcome many and cause a temptation to fornication.

In all areas of marriage it is important to consider the basic discussion of our relationship to our spouses as ordained by God.

*Ephesians 5:21-33 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

Through the process of mutual submission we achieve Christ's desire for us in our marriages. We are human and we will make mistakes. Apart from Christ the world will never understand this. They will only see subjugation and misery. Many in the women's movement have debunked this as completely unworkable and cite unbiblical marriages as examples. This instruction is *only* for believers. That is truly born again regenerated believers. Not pretenders or some false practicing Christian. Real believers will regard God's Word as our life's direction and seek to attain God's will in all areas of our lives especially within our marriages. That is because true believers have a mutual submissive attitude toward each other. The wife must obey her husband as the leader of the family in its ordained hierarchy. But the major onus is on the husband to love his wife to the degree that Christ loved His Church.

### **HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR IT.**

It is only when we realize the level of love that makes this commitment can we see how husbands must love their wives if they want to realize the respect and submissive spirit from their wives. As sinful people we must realize through our wives revealing our faults and God's Spirit imposing on us so that we can restore a broken relationship and become truly one-flesh with our spouses and please God.

*1 Corinthians 7: 6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.*

Paul presented this as possibility for temporary abstention from sexual intercourse in marriage as a concession if the preceding stipulations were met. He did not want his advice construed as a command. He is saying that God wants you to work according to His plan not the world's. He just wanted to make it clear. If you decide to abstain from sexual relations purposely then do it as a couple and for the sake of prayer and fasting. Don't do it for too long for you will be tempted and that should be avoided.

*1 Corinthians 7: 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.*

Paul was celibate and found it to be acceptable for the furtherance of the Gospel. In his case he was very successful being called into Christian work directly by Christ Himself. Each of us when we receive Christ gets gifts of the Spirit for work to be carried out in the Body of Christ, the Church. Some who have the desire for remain single are as Paul describes. That was his gift and he realized that it was only for some. Remaining unmarried is not God's plan for many or there would be no children born. That does not make sense given His commandments and Christ's words in Matthew 19.

*Genesis 1: 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

*I Corinthians 7: 8-9 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.*

What Paul wrote in verses 1-2 he now applies specifically to those in Corinth who were unmarried but were sexually experienced. The unmarried included divorced persons of both sexes as well as widowers, with widows mentioned separately. For these Paul affirmed the suitability of remaining single, if they had the appropriate enablement from God. Paul answered the practical question of how a person can know whether he or she is able to remain celibate. Paul gave his simple self-evaluation; if one has sexual desire he does not have the gift of celibacy, and should marry. Quite simply those who do not have the gift of celibacy will know it by their continued strong desire for sexual intercourse. They should not deny it in a false attempt to deny that Godly desire. But they must satisfy it within the confines of a committed heterosexual Christian marriage.

Questions? Contact Daniel Woodhead at: 616-928-0974 or e-mail at:  
[Pentwaterbiblechurch@scofieldinstitute.org](mailto:Pentwaterbiblechurch@scofieldinstitute.org)