

## I Corinthians 5-7 Consolidated Notes

### A. Outline<sup>A</sup>

#### 1. Party Spirit in the Church, chs 1-4<sup>B</sup>

#### 2. Moral Disorders in the Church, chs 5-7 –

- a. Ch. 5 – A Stern Rebuke; Dealing with Sin, Specific & General
  - i. 5:1-8 – Sin Defiles the Church; (Paul focusses on) Specific Immorality Addressed; Rebuking Immorality; Recognising & Dealing with Sin;
  - ii. 5:9-13 – Purify the Church; Immorality (Sin) Requires Judgement; Separate Yourselves from the Unworthy
- b. Ch. 6 – Judging Needed; Judgement by the Saints; Guidelines for the Church; Rule Believers Should Live By; Wrong Living vs. Right Living
  - i. 6:1-8 – Bases for Judgement; Don't Take a Brother to Court, But to the Church
  - ii. 6:9-11 Unforgiven Sin That Excludes from Heaven; God's Deliverance from Sin
  - iii. 6:12-20 – The Body Is the Lord's; Be Holy; Proper Use of Our Bodies
- c. Ch. 7 – Marriage Concerns at Corinth
  - i. 7:1-9 – Marital Matters: Inter-Gender Purity
  - ii. 7:10-16 – Marital Matters: Separation, Divorce, Remarriage
  - iii. 7:17-24 – Don't change your social condition just because you are now saved.
  - iv. 7:25-40 – Some Further Notes on Marriage for the Corinthian Situation

#### 3. Social Relations in the Church, chs 8-11

#### 4. Spiritual Gifts in the Church, chs 12-14

#### 5. Fundamental Doctrine of the Church, ch 15

#### 6. Conclusion of the Letter, ch 16

### B. Ch 5:1-8

*(See titles for this section above)*

#### 1. Vv 1-2: Titles

Dealing with Immorality; Lack of Self & Church Discipline;  
Wrong values, wrong behaviour

- a. <sup>1</sup> It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.
  - i. **Key ideas:** (A specific case of) immorality; Corinthian Christian acting unsaved.
  - ii. **Does this mean this never happened among Gentiles? No. What then? – Even Gentiles considered this wrong & not want it to be 'commonly (everywhere) reported.'**
- b. <sup>2</sup> And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst.

<sup>A</sup> Major outlines from Thinking Through the Bible by Rev'd. Dr. John McNicol © 1944

<sup>B</sup> Scripture is taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. For readability, sections all in capitals have been changed to quoted lowercase bold, and spelling to British standard.

- i. **Key ideas:** Unrepentance; No church discipline; Their wrong response; Their acceptance of immorality is condemned.
- ii. **What heresy is here refuted; cf Rom 6:1, 15 (yes, it is prevalent today!)? – The sin of a Christian doesn't matter for it is easily forgiven: 'I can do what I like. We are under grace not law.' It is called *antinomianism*; the NT refutes this idea (Gal 5:22ff).**

#### 2. Vv 3-5: Titles Temporary Consequence for Sake of Eternal Security (Salvation?) A Matter, a Time and a Place for Judgement; Immorality Judged;

- a. <sup>3</sup> For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present.
  - i. **Key ideas:** Paul has judged; ... in absentia, but present in spirit; Judges as though present physically.
  - ii. **On what basis was this judgement given? – Paul's authority in Christ; (but still applicable on the authority of Scriptures, Jesus & Holy Spirit's presence in church.)**
- b. <sup>4</sup> In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,
  - i. **Key ideas:** They need spiritual discernment; The Lord Jesus is with us; Church represents name, power and unity of Christ
- c. <sup>5</sup> I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
  - i. **Key ideas:** Apostolic verdict; Paul's sentence and hope; Paul pronounces a stern remedy; Spirit more important than the flesh; A frightful sentence.
  - ii. **What does 'delivering to Satan' imply (cf., 1 Timothy 1:20)? – in some way God's protection removed from saint; purpose of restoration though beyond help.**

#### 3. Vv 6-8: Titles Lessons from Leaven; Illustrated by Yeast Realise your Salvation & Behave Accordingly

- a. <sup>6</sup> Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?
  - i. **Key ideas:** Sin's contagion; Boasting spreads; A little pride (sin) negatively affects the whole person (whole church)
  - ii. **What quality of yeast is in view here? – it puffs up; it permeates, spreads**
  - iii. **How does it illustrate the effect of this sin? – its effects spread: from first to the immediate people involved, through the whole church.**
- b. <sup>7</sup> Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.
  - i. **Key ideas:** Cleansing needed; Get rid of sin; Purge yourself of fleshly pursuits; Be renewed in the work of Christ
  - ii. **Why is the Passover example so appropriate? – Householder sweeps the place aggressively to remove every bit of leaven (representing sin), cleaned thoroughly.**
- c. <sup>8</sup> Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

- i. **Key ideas:** Restored relationship; Celebrate Christ in sincerity & truth; Rejoice in our forgiveness and renewal;
- ii. **What are the inevitable results of acceptance of sin, particularly this one?** – it brings malice (anti-love), wickedness (deeds of sin); destroys sincerity and truth.

C. <sup>9</sup> I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; <sup>10</sup> I [did] not at all [mean] with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. <sup>11</sup> But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler – not even to eat with such a one. <sup>12</sup> For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within [the church]? <sup>13</sup> But those who are outside, God judges. ‘Remove the wicked man from among yourselves’<sup>c</sup>.”

D. I Corinthians 5:9-13 – fill in the title for these verses in the section above

- I. V 9 – <sup>9</sup> I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people;
  - a. **Key Idea(s):** “I told you so!”; Sanctification reminder; Separation from immoral people; Reference to past letter.
  - b. Where is that letter found in the NT? – It is not!
  - c. If a letter should be discovered that appears to be that letter, should it be added to the NT? – No. The books in the NT canon were selected by the early church as valid based on ‘first & second generation’ testimony of individuals & churches. A new discovery has no such validation and could be a ‘forgery’ inspired by Satan.
- 2. V 10 – <sup>10</sup> I [did] not at all [mean] with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world.
  - a. **Key Idea(s):** “Don’t be hermits”; “I’m not referring to unbelievers”; Clarification of separation’s meaning - not referring to unbelievers
  - b. If Paul’s words had been misunderstood in that fashion, what other Biblical command would not be obeyed? – the Great Commission, Matthew 28:19-20.
- 3. V 11 – <sup>11</sup> But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler – not even to eat with such a one.
  - a. **Key Idea(s):** It’s immoral Christians needing rebuke; “I’m referring to disobedient believers”; Stay away from those claiming Christ but not living it out
  - b. In what realm were Paul’s instructions to be understood? – the kingdom of God on earth – the visible, local church.
  - c. What means of discipline was to be used? – ostracisation, particularly in the matter of table and social fellowship; possibly more specifically at the Lord’s Table. (cf Jude 22f)

<sup>c</sup> Deuteronomy 17:7, 21:21, 22:21, 24:7 –

4. V 12 – <sup>12</sup> For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within [the church]?

- a. **Key Idea(s):** Judge insiders, not outsiders; Judge Christians only
- b. **What should the focus of the church body be?** – on the Name of Christ and how it is upheld by the good reputation of the church, whose people name that Name.

5. V 13 – <sup>13</sup> But those who are outside, God judges. ‘Remove the wicked man from among yourselves’.

- a. **Key Idea(s):** God judges outsiders; Different group, different judge
- b. **What is the context of the OT quotation?** – see footnote on previous page. – The OT law, primarily national, how Israel was to live in the land with God as King. In these particular instances it prescribed execution for transgression of a specific law.
- c. **Why does that context not apply in the church?** – (1) we are citizens of the spiritual kingdom of God but also are residents & subject to secular government, to which belongs the power of the sword (Romans 13:4), not to us; (2) we are under grace, not law. So we apply the principle (removal) not the method (execution).

E. I Corinthians 6:1-8 – DIY, or, see the titles above

I. (1-3): Our Responsibility of Judgement; “You Do the Judging”

- a. verse 1 – Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbour, dare to go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?
  - i. **Key idea(s):**– Let the church decide legal matters; Laws of heathen unsuited to settling matters between believers; Don’t settle differences in secular courts; Their wrong lawsuits
  - ii. Who are these saints (I Cor. 1:2)? – Believers with ALL that implies.
  - iii. What makes this surprising in light of I Cor. 5? – Their attitudes and actions do not match what they really are in Jesus Christ.
  - iv. What makes this unexpected in light of I Cor. 1-4? – They boasted in their particular ‘leader’ but failed to follow their ultimate leader, the Lord, Jesus.
- b. verse 2 – Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?
  - i. **Key idea(s):**– They should be able to do this (judge) ...; Wisdom makes us competent to judge; Saints will judge world so can judge minor matters; Their competence to judge.
  - ii. What is covered by “the smallest law courts?” – other translations are “the smallest matters” (NKJV), “trivial cases” (NIV), “petty matters” (Weymouth) – similar to today’s “small claims court”
- c. verse 3 – Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, matters of this life?
  - i. **Key idea(s):**– ... since we shall judge world and angels; Future judgement of angels; Confirmation of status as judges; The extent of this competence.
  - ii. Read Acts 17:31 (Jesus is the Judge); what then is our part in this judging? –

(1) virtual judgement by our lives (2 Corinthians 2:14-16); (2) judge=rule; see 2 Timothy 2:12, Revelation 20:6; (3) we = the church as part of her union with Christ

2. (4-6) – **No Secular Courts! Judgement by the Saints; Proper Judgement; Shame on You!**
  - a. verse 4 – If then you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? NB: commentators disagree much
    - i. Key idea(s):– (1) Unbelievably you appoint those unworthy; They chose those unsuited to judge (2) Why be judged by unbelievers? Inapplicability of secular judges.
    - ii. “who are of no account in the church” – to help us to see others’ viewpoints!!!
      - 1) reasons to understand as secular judges are:– the context of verses 1, 6
      - 2) reasons to understand as least notable in church are: AV translation, ‘the least esteemed in the church’; command, ‘appoint the least esteemed to judge’
  - b. verse 5 – I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, NB: 5a ends sentence of verse 4
    - i. Key idea(s):– Choose a wise brother to judge; Not one wise man is to their shame; Rebuke for not using those gifted with wisdom among them.
    - ii. From 1 Cor 1-4, why should choosing a wise man not have been a problem? – if they had been listening to any one of their claimed teachers, they would not have had a problem in choosing a wise man.
  - c. verse 6 – but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?
    - i. Key idea(s):– Their disputes handled amiss; Emphasises wrong in taking internal church strife outside the church; Christians seeking judgement by unbelievers.
    - ii. How was this an especial shame to the Corinthian church? – immaturity; they were boasting about their leaders and then getting caught in petty grievances.
3. Titles (7-8): **Even if You Win, You Lose! Don’t Wrong Your Brother**
  - a. verse 7 – Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?
    - i. Key idea(s):– Their defeat by insisting on their rights; Lawsuits show failure; Should be settled by Matthew 5:39-42 (turn your other cheek to an evil person)
    - ii. Explain what this defeat was – in their: ... Impaired witness; ... Not growing; ... Lack of love (Jn 13:3) or Uncharitableness; ... Disobedience
  - b. verse 8 – On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud, and that you brethren.
    - i. Key idea(s):– Such actions wrong brothers; No underlying attitude of love and forgiveness remains when heathen courts involved; Some of you wrong brothers.
    - ii. How did their actions constitute wronging & defrauding? – Not doing their duty; Giving wrong examples of correction; Placing a brother before a heathen court rather than one of Christian brethren, and its inevitable results.

#### F. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 – Sins from which God can save!

- I. NASB: 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor

homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

2. AV: 9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

3. Verse 9: Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,

- a. Key idea(s): Specific items for Christian obedience; Qualities dismissed from God’s kingdom; Only righteous will be in heaven; Unrighteous excluded from heaven; (Mainly) Sexual criteria for non-acceptance. Note: Verse 8; Jn 5:29; Mt 25:31-46; Ro 2:5-10
  - b. What is the expected answer to the question “Or do you not know ...”? – – – “Of course we know!”

4. Verse 10: nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

- a. Key idea(s): – Completion of this list of unrighteous behaviour; More criteria for non-acceptance ... exclusion from heaven ... from God’s kingdom ... etc.
- b. Compare this list (and that in preceding verse) with Revelation 21:27, 22:15
  - i. How do they differ? – This list has more specifics and details, while the lists in Revelation are broader & more general. Both passages in Revelation add ‘lying’. We noted that Satan ‘is a liar, and the father of it’ (John 8:44).
  - ii. What categories of unrighteousness are in this list in 1 Corinthians? – to some extent they parallel the 10 commandments: sins against God, others, self. But this is not precise for sins as stealing, coveting are be against both God and others, or drunkenness against both self and others. All sins are against God (Psalm 51:4).
  - iii. The Roman church has classified sins as either ‘mortal’ (requiring penance & repentance to avoid damnation) or ‘venial’ (excusable not involving damnation). We may deny this, but often act as though it held in making judgement of ourselves & others. How do we seem to rank these sins, from worst to ‘best’? – We tend to rank as worst, those that others do! ... or those with which we aren’t particularly tempted or susceptible; ... or those which are most blatant and evident.
  - iv. Why do we do this? Why is this incorrect (give Scriptural support)? – it allows us, perhaps, to consider our own weaknesses as excusable, to condemn others with a ‘holier than thou’ attitude. This is wrong because all sin brings equal guilt before God: James 2:10, compare Matthew 5:18-19.

5. Verse 11: And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

- Key idea(s): What God has done; Christ made them righteous; God changes lives
- What does this tell us about the saintliness of the Corinthians believers? – despite all their failures, spoiled saintliness, yet they stand changed in Christ in the eyes of God.
- How did this (saintliness) come to pass (i.e., into being)? – it is the work of God, by the design of the Father, the work of the Son at Calvary, the application by the Holy Spirit. It is the outcome of the gospel, the power of God to salvation.
- What is the difference between immaturity & disobedience? Which were they? – there is an excuse for children which does not apply at maturity, nor is immaturity an excuse when age and experience should have brought maturity; disobedience is deliberate, true immaturity reflects innocence. All these were present in that church.

G. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 – Choose the Good, Shun the Evil – see also above

1. Verses 12-14 – Titles: – While Free from Law, Maturity Will Voluntarily Restrict What We Do; Freedom to Choose the Best.

- Verse 12 – All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. – Key Idea(s) – Difference between Lawful & best; Not all things are profitable; Not all allowed things are necessary; Just because I'm allowed to do something, doesn't mean it's a good idea. – Suggest some lawful but unprofitable things. – depending upon one's attitude & motive, the following may be (some may apply to one person, but not to another): TV, Movies, Sports, Food & drink (see next verse), Hobbies, etc.
- Verse 13 – Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food; but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body – Key Idea(s) – Physical needs transitory; Food & immorality illustrate v. 12; Body not for immorality but for the Lord; Our bodies are for the Lord – What are some practical steps to live this out? – Showing stewardship of our body in matters such as sleep, exercise, etc.; Avoiding abusing our bodies by misuse, self-indulgence, sloth
- Verse 14 – Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. – Key Idea(s) – Our bodies will be raised up; Resurrection assured of Christ & His Church; Christ's & Our Resurrection – What is implied by Christ's resurrection? – Col. 3:1, we are new creations; Our own future resurrection; The future nature of our physical bodies.

2. Verse 15-17 Don't Commit Immorality; Stay Pure, Abide in Christ; Our Bodies in Union

- Verse 15 – Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? May it never be! – Key Idea(s) – Proper use of our bodies; Don't defile yourself; Our bodies are members of Christ's; We are in God's image. – What is the interaction here (see 12:26)? – The physical affects the spiritual and vice-versa; "One bad apple spoils the barrel."

b. Verse 16 – Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, 'the two will become one flesh.' – Key Idea(s) – Mystical significance of sexual relations; There is a union with sexual activity; We are one with whom we join our bodies. – Given verse 15, what is the result to the church? – Where one suffers, all suffer; Sin in the church affects the community.

c. Verse 17 – But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. – Key Idea(s) – Mystical significance of salvation; Our union with the Lord is spiritual; Instead members with the Lord. – On the other hand, what is the result of purity? – Right living leads to harmony; ... leads to witness; Unfettered witness; Being in the Lord with one spirit; Enhanced union & abiding in Christ

3. Verses 18-20 – Glorify God in Your Body (& Spirit – also for whole section); Use Your Body as Belonging to God; The Holy Spirit Dwells Within Us.

- Verse 18 – Flee immorality (porneia). Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body – Key Idea(s) – Immorality is a sin against our body; Avoid sin against the body; Sexual sin's peculiar effect. – What is the current popular attitude? How does this show it to be false? – "If it feels good, do it.", "It's my own business."; "It's OK if it doesn't hurt anyone else." – sin still damages
- Verse 19 – Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? – Key Idea(s) – Recognition of our body's Owner; Body is temple of the Holy Spirit – How is 'No man is an island' particularly true of the church? – An unhealthy part sickens the whole.
- Verse 20 – For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. – Key Idea(s) – Honour our Owner; Because we are valuable, glorify God; Glorify our Owner, God. – What is the price with which we have been bought? – His death (violently, as a criminal); His Humiliation in the Incarnation, His suffering (personal, rejection, empathetic pity on the needy), His poverty, weariness, physical limitations.

H. 1 Corinthians 7:1-9, Marital Matters. Purity

1. 7:1-2 – Titles: Opening Principles of Marriage; Gender Relationships; Have Pure Motives; The Marriage State.

1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

- Verse 1 – Key idea(s) – Keep your motives pure; (With respect to the current situation, v 26) celibacy is good; remain celibate if able; General intimacy is wrong (Proverbs 6:20-29)
- Verse 2 – Key idea(s) – Marriage protects morals; Marriage is good; Intimacy is to be kept within the marriage bonds.
- What shows this is a new subject, not to be confused with earlier ones in the letter? – It is introduced by 'Now' to distinguish it from what precedes, and it deals with a subject raised by the church in Corinth, 'concerning the things about which you wrote'.

### 2. 7:3-5 – Titles: Mutual Responsibility & Authority; The Pleasant Duties of Affection.

3 Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

- Verse 3 – Key idea(s) – In marriage affection responds to needs of each other; Fulfill your spouse's needs; Husband and wife have mutual responsibilities; Give mutual affection.
- Verse 4 – Key idea(s) – Husband and wife have mutual authority with respect to their bodies; An natural aspect of marital union.
- Verse 5 – Key idea(s) – Abstain only for prayer but beware Satan's temptations; Considerations in agreeing to abstain. Do not break up the union!
- What characterizes the exceptional interruption specified? – (I.e., the interruption of the normal marital relationships). (1) it is for spiritual purposes (prayer, fasting & such). (2) it is for only a limited period of time.

### 3. 7:6-7 – Titles: Paul's Wish in the Current Crisis (v. 26); The Gifts of Marriage and Celibacy

6 But this I say by way of concession, not of command. 7 Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

- Verse 6 – Key idea(s) – Speaking in permission rather than authority; Paul's viewpoint
- Verse 7 – Key idea(s) – Each one gifted; People's gift (re marriage) differ
- To which of the instructions in verses 1-5 does the "this" in v. 6 refer? The possibilities are (a) what follows in v. 7; (b) 'stop depriving' in v. 5; (c) 'let the husband ... the wife' in v. 3; (d) 'let each man ... woman' in v.2. The answer is (d), because
  - v. 7 is not instruction, but Paul's opinion given the circumstances
  - v. 5 is not optional, but a command (permission does not apply)
  - v. 3 is and what follows is not optional but a command (permission does not apply)
  - v. 2 is not a command (to marry) but a permission to do so, so that the person beset by this weakness may be delivered from it.

### 4. 7:8-9 – Titles: – Advice to Unmarried & Widows; Advise to Those Alone

8 But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. 9 But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.

- Verse 8 – Key idea(s) – The advantages of Paul's state; Good to say unmarried / alone.
- Verse 9 – Key idea(s) – If passion burns, then marry; Cure for lacking self-control.
- What wrong teaching and practice has arisen from misunderstanding this verse? – that one had to be unmarried to serve God aright: led to celibacy of priests, monks,

nuns; this failed to take into account the exceptional nature of this chapter.

### d. Verses to consider in studying this chapter:

- 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ...' Jeremiah 17:9
- 'For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing...' Romans 7:18
- 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' 1 Cor. 10:12

## I. 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 – Marital Matters, Separation

1. Note: Verses 10-11 could have been included in the section starting with verse 1 of this chapter as many commentators do. It continues the theme of marriage between believers, while verses 12-16, of marriage where only one spouse is a believer. Because Paul's just wrote about 'concession', 'I wish' &c., some have misunderstood the phrases 'not I, but the Lord' (v 10), and 'I say, not the Lord' (v 12) as though Paul was expressing his own opinion. Rather it means that verses 10-11 reiterate the teaching of the Lord Jesus to the house of Israel (Mt. 5:32, 19:3-9; Mk 10:2-12, Lk. 16:18). In verse 12-16, Paul by the Holy Spirit teaches about a new Christian situation, mixed marriage, where one partner has come to salvation subsequent to marriage, while the other has not, and after a period of time, the marriage bond is now threatened.

### 2. Verses 10-11 – Titles: To Christian Couples (re Separation, Divorce, Remarriage)

10 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband 11 (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away.

- v. 10 – Key idea(s): The Lord's instructions to the married; a wife should stay with her husband; Paul applies the Lord's command; The Christian wife is not to leave her Christian husband.
- v. 11 – Key idea(s): The Christian husband should stay with his Christian wife; (Parenthetical: how to handle the exception when separation does occur.)
- Some versions make clear that the first part of verse 11 is parenthetical; when this is recognized, what is the overall force of the sentence? – Divorce is not for Christian couples, but if separation should occur remarriage is out, reconciliation is in.

### 3. Verses 12-13 – Titles: To Mixed-Marriage Couples re Separation; Instructions on Mixed Marriages

12 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, let him not send her away. 13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away.

- v 12 – Key idea(s) – The Christian husband is not to initiate separation; Stay with the unbelieving wife (if she desires).
- v 13 – Key idea(s) – The Christian wife is not to initiate separation; The gender converse of verse 12.

c. The translations 'send away' and 'leave' are essentially the same; what do they mean? – Divorce, dissolution of marriage, separation.

4. Verses 14-16 – Titles: – Benefits of a Christian Spouse; Reasons to Stick It Out; Respecting God's Design of Marriage

14 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. 15 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. 16 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?

a. v 14 – Key idea(s) – Unbelieving spouse is sanctified; Believing spouse sanctifies the other and their offspring; A holiness to the family by association.

b. v 15 – Key idea(s) – Accept the unbelieving spouse's departure; Unbelieving spouse is free to leave the marriage; Believers not bound by the unbeliever. Peaceful separation.

c. v 16 – Key idea(s) – Consider the spiritual possibilities – 1 Peter 3:1; Faith; The future is unknown; Think what God might do!

d. What are the advantages of remaining together? – God's blessing / relationship to the believing spouse benefits the whole family. In some fashion which men may not understand, God sets apart the unbelieving partner.

J. I Corinthians 7:17-24, Saved? Don't Change Your Status Because of It.

I. Verse 17 – Titles Yield (Submit) to the Lords Sovereignty (Choice for You)

17 Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the churches.

a. verse 17 – Key Idea(s): Walk as the Lord directs each of us; Christians to maintain the same 'manner of walk' (i.e., their life circumstances (course in life), vs 1 Peter 1:15 or Ephesians 4:22)

b. This states a general principle:

- i. What specific case has just preceded it? – (vv 1-16) Marriage; (vv 10-16) not separating for Christian couples (vv 12-16) avoiding separation in mixed marriages
- ii. What attribute of God leads to this principle? – holiness, immutability, sovereignty

2. Verses 18-20 – Titles: (Un)Circumcision Not Important; Obedience, not External Matter

18 Was any man called already circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. 20 Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called.

a. Verse 18 – Key Idea(s): Don't switch between being Jew or Gentile; "Just as I am",

One's calling occurs without respect to their physical condition.

b. Verse 19 – Key Idea(s): Obedience, not ancestry, is what counts; Outward act must reflect inward change (reality)

c. Verse 20 – Key Idea(s): Stay in the life in which you were saved; One's (personal) calling will not change.

d. What specific case of the general principle is here being dealt with (cf. Acts 15:1f)? – Circumcision (of Gentiles) or Uncircumcision (of Jews) on becoming Christians

e. What is the relation between circumcision, the 10 commandments and the Law?

– Circumcision was a mark of the covenant to Abraham & his descendants, not covered in the ten 'words' (commandments), nor by the Law (except to confirm its continuance, Lev. 12:3). In the 40 years in the wilderness wanderings, no boy-child was circumcised.

f. How does this put the lie to the Jewish accusations of Acts 21:20-21? – Paul did not advocate Jews becoming Christians to become uncircumcised in their practice.

3. Verses 21-24 – Titles:

21 Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. 22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brethren, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called.

a. Verse 21 – Key Idea(s): Saved as a slave not a worry, but if opportunity arises, be free

b. Verse 22 – Key Idea(s): Relation to God supercedes that to men; If free, don't become indentured

c. Verse 23 – Key Idea(s): Christians belong to God first of all; Freed from sin by Christ's death; His death our emancipation price.

d. Verse 24 – Key Idea(s): Be satisfied in your human condition – God is. God's choices is what is best for us; Our calling (vocation) is from God.

e. To what specific subject is the general principle here applied? – The condition of being a slave or free when a person comes to Christ for salvation.

f. What is the general attitude of these verses towards that state? – Being enslaved is not necessarily a life condition, nor a preferred one. (About 30-40% of those living in Italy were slaves; slaves basically came from prisoners of war).

K. I Corinthians 7:25-40, Special Notes to the Unmarried

I. EBC: 25-35 Paul argues that "because of the present crisis" it is better for a man or woman to remain in their present state, whether married or single (v.26). He advises this because there is such a short time to do the work of the Lord (v.29); and anyway the material conditions of this world are changing and disappearing – "this world in its present form is passing away" (v.31). Paul introduces certain corrective statements lest the

Corinthians draw false conclusions from the main principle. In saying that they should stay married, he insists that marriage itself is not a matter of right or wrong (v.28). Paul also argues that the real problem they face in their present world situation is the proper expenditure of their time and energies. He is desirous that they devote their energies to the service of the Lord, and this they can do better if they are unmarried (vv.32-34). But he hastens to add that he does not mean to hamper them in such a way as to keep them from marrying – he only wants to help them. His advice, he implies, is not an argument for the superiority of celibacy or the obligatory nature of it (v.35).

2. 25 Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. 26 I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But if you should marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you. 29 But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; 30 and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; 31 and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away

- a. Is this inspired instruction regulatory or advisory in nature (v 25-26)? – it is not regulatory ('no command', 'an opinion') as does the wisdom literature of the OT Proverbs giving general truths for guiding our living, to be applied as suitable (see Prov 26:4-5).
- b. Does released mean by death or by divorce (v 27)? – It could be either: divorce in the first case, death in the second (since remarriage is not an option for a divorce Christian, 1 Cor 7:10-11: Hodge: "Christ had already taught that marriage could not be dissolved ... because it is ... a covenant for life between one man and one woman ... yet it can be annulled (wrongfully) by breach of the contract ... adultery annuls ... so does desertion." ).
- c. If a man and virgin marry, is it sin (v 28)? – Hodge: "Marriage is inexpedient, not sinful"
- d. Is this 'trouble' (v 28) the hardship (i.e. of marriage) or a result of sin? – It is of sin only in the general sense that all trouble results from sin; here it is of trouble that the married state would make worse.
- e. From what are we spared (v 28)? – The additional problems that marriage add due to its responsibilities, in perilous and trou bous times (verse 26).
- f. What does it mean 'the time has been shortened' (v 29)? – It could mean that there is less time for serving God in the married state (a debatable point) but the more natural meaning and the context is that the 'present (or impending) distress' is coming very near. In a more general sense, this is true in all ages, that our appointed time is but brief.
- g. What forms of distress could cause the problems cited in v 29FF? – War, famine, plague, persecution

h. What does 'use the world' (v 31) mean? – also translated the 'fashion, or form, of this world'. Though the things of this world are given richly by God (1 Timothy 6:17), accepting, expecting, depending and counting to use them overmuch is wrong (Colossians 3:1-3).

i. Are 'the present distress' (v 26) and 'the form of this world is passing away' (v 31) referring to the same event(s)? – The 'present (or, impending) distress' makes the pursuit of the normal course and activities of life inexpedient. 'The form (fashion) of this life, &c' sums up the list in verses 29-31a, that in their situation, life is transitory (a general truth) but also the normal expectancy of life are uncertain (See James 4:13-15).

3. EBC: 32-35 Paul goes on to argue that if they want marriage, they must realize that it brings extra cares. And he wants them to be free from concern. They must observe that married persons, whether men or women, have their attentions centered on the desirers and needs of their spouses (vv 33, 34). In saying that the unmarried woman or virgin is concerned with how she may please the Lord (v 34), Paul implies that the married person is apt to neglect this Christian duty. Since the apostle upholds the right and privilege of marriage even for himself (1 Cor 9:3-5), he must here be advising against marriage because of particular abuses and tensions in Corinth. He gives the advice, he says, for their own profit of benefit, not to restrain them or put them in a noose. Rather, he wants them to live properly in complete and undivided devotion to the Lord(v 35).

4. 32 But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; 33 but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. 35 And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

- a. What does the unmarried man care for (v 32)? – about his spiritual relationships and activities, 'the things of the Lord', and in particular, doing those things that please Him. Hodge: "Christ, and to his wife is, or may be, the greater object of his solicitude." .
- b. What does the married man care for (v 33)? – particularly in times of distress and persecution, he has a family to provide for and to protect.
- c. What does the virgin care for (v 34)? – What is true of men is true also of women, this and the next verse.
- d. What does the married woman care for (v 34)? – Hodge: "There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The difference is, that the virgin may devote her whole time to the Lord (None: this was in a culture where the virgin was provided for by her family, which is seldom the case today.); the wife must be involved in worldly cars for the sake of her husband. The Greek literally rendered is, Divided is a wife and a virgin. Their interests are diverse. The one has a husband to divider her attention; the other is free

from such distraction.”

- e. Does not (or should not) an unmarried woman & virgin mean the same (v34)? – In the context this is addressed to Christian women. An unmarried woman could be a widow, divorcée, one having had illicit sexual relations before, or even after, being saved.
- f. Are verses 32-34 a normative statement or due to the ‘present distress’? – (Normative means applicable to all situations.) The Roman church takes this as normative, declaring only a virgin can be truly holy (and therefore ‘sainted’). 1 Peter 3:5 shows this to be false. The Bible shows marriage to be God’s normative state for man and woman, not celibacy (see Genesis 2-3, Hebrews 13:4, Jesus’ teachings.).
- g. Which status results in split devotion? ... which in focussed devotion (to God)? – Marriage, in the establishment by God and its very covenant made before God will divide the married persons focus, while singleness permits focussing upon the Lord.
- h. How is this reconciled with OT priests being expected to marry? – Those priests:
- Followed a strict regimen in their spiritual duties
  - Were judges of civil cases, in which being married was of assistance by experience in judging between man and wife.
  - Needed marriage to pass on their hereditary office.
  - And marriage is the normative purpose of God for man and woman.
- i. How is this view of marriage compatible with Genesis 2:18-24 (also 9:1ff), as well as the high view of marriage as found throughout Scripture? – only if it is taken to apply under exceptional calling or circumstances and not as a general rule.
5. <sup>36</sup> But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin *daughter*, if she should be of full age, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let \* her marry. <sup>37</sup> But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin *daughter*, he will do well. <sup>38</sup> So then both he who gives his own virgin *daughter* in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better. \* **Literally, ‘let them marry’.**
- a. What are the reasons for the translators to add ‘*daughter*’? What other meanings are possible (v 36)? – The verb ‘marry’ in v 38 (not in v 36), is usually causative: i.e., ‘Let him cause to marry’, or, ‘give in marriage’. Then, the ‘them’ in v 36 refers to the bride and groom. Other possible meanings it that it refers to a man with respect to his fiancée; but this would not hold, at least for Jewish members of the congregation for whom engagement was equivalent to marriage; it could apply to Gentiles for many of whom that would not apply. One other explanation is that it refers to a ‘spiritual marriage’ in which the bride remains a virgin; an idea without historical support and contrary to the Biblical teaching on marriage.
- b. Is a virgin daughter a virtual ‘slave’ to the wishes of her father (v 36)? That is, if ‘*daughter*’ is correct what custom does it reflect? – Not a slave, but in most times & nations reflecting the fact that generally an unmarried daughter is dependent upon her father for support. Until relatively recent times, the father’s permission was needed for marriage.
- c. If he gives his daughter in marriage, how is he to be evaluated (v 36)? – as acting

in a perfectly proper manner.

- d. If he keeps his daughter from marriage, how then (v 37)? – also as acting in a perfectly proper manner.
6. <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.
- a. How long is a wife bound to her husband (v 39)? – This verse says, ‘For life’, as do the traditional marriage vows.
- b. Why does Paul not also say that the husband ‘is bound as long as his’ wife lives, etc.? – Jesus has already effectively taught the converse, Matthew 19:3-9, so Paul doesn’t need to do so. Also, the Bible doesn’t always repeat the converse or corollary of a truth, especially when it has been shown the teaching applies in both directions as here – look back to verses 3 & 4, for example.
- c. What about the Old Testament practice of men having two or more wives without the practice being condemned? – Jesus’ quoting of Genesis 2:24, shows that this was not God’s intention. Sin spoiled God’s perfect plan. The Law was later given to condemn sin (Romans 5:13), but by then it had become an acceptable custom (by man). It was also specifically ordered in Levirate marriage to preserve the family inheritance.
- d. When Paul was writing, was bigamy or polygamy common? ... among Jews? ... among Gentiles? – The divorce laws of the Jews were supposed to preserve monogamy. The Roman empire was nominally, but not in practice, monogamous. Hence the requirement for bishops & deacons to be the husband of one wife.
- e. How can marriage, though blessed by the Lord, be a distraction from the Lord? – at any time its legitimate responsibilities being close at hand (see 1 Timothy 5:8) can divert focus from responsibilities to the Lord; in troubled times, this is aggravated.
- f. What is one restriction on our Christian freedom? – marriage, like other contractual associations, is not to be with unbelievers: ‘Be not unequally yoked.’
- g. When is it better to remain single and ‘married only to the Lord’? (whence does that expression come?) – When it is occasioned by birth, by circumstance, or by God (compare Matthew 19:11-12). The expression is Romanist, mandating the celibacy of priests.
- h. Why is verse 40 not said concerning ‘virgins’? – as already noted in the chapter, a virgin’s marriage is not under her own control.
- i. What is it that makes a woman happier (v 40)? – Possibly in avoiding the coming distress; as a mature woman in knowing contentment (cf., 1 Timothy 5:3-16 on accepting widows into the care of the church).