

1 Corinthians 7:8-16 (May 22, 2022)

OPENING QUESTION:

SERMON DISCUSSION: How were you impacted by the sermon? What new thoughts or lessons did you discover? In what ways did you find yourself challenged and/or encouraged?

READ 1 Corinthians 7:8-16

1. “The basic question addressed in verses 8-9 is what single people are to do if they find that they do not have the gift of celibacy. First, Paul notes in verse 8 that it is good for single people—whether they have never been married, are divorced, or have lost a spouse—to remain unmarried. Singleness is not to be despised in the church, and unmarried people should not be treated as second-class citizens. Moreover, to treat single men and women as less than married people is to forget that Jesus Himself did not have a wife during His earthly ministry and that key biblical figures such as Jeremiah and Paul were also unmarried.”
(Ligonier.org regarding 1 Corinthians 7:8-9)

In what ways might the church idolize marriage and marginalize single people?
How can the status of marriage and singleness both be valued?

2. In 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, Paul says, “not I, but the Lord” and uses the oral traditions of Jesus’ words to give instruction concerning marriage and divorce (Matthew 5:32, 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18 were written later). Discuss the instructions concerning marriage and divorce. What are the key points? (NOTE: There are cases where believers can divorce without sinning. In this passage, Paul is addressing situations where there are no biblical causes for divorce.)

3. Note in 1 Corinthians 7:12, Paul says, “I, not the Lord.” Why do you think Paul says this? How can his teaching be considered valid (1 Corinthians 7:40; 14:37)?

NOTE CONCERNING 1 CORINTHIANS 7:12-16 FOR QUESTIONS 4-6: Paul speaks to those who are already married, and one spouse becomes a believer. He is not dealing with the issue of believers choosing to marry an unbeliever, which is unbiblical (2 Corinthians 6:14-16).

4. What directives does Paul give for those who become believers and are married to a nonbeliever? What is the purpose of these guidelines?

5. Consider the stresses that unequally yoked spouses may face. Why would a believer be tempted to divorce an unbelieving spouse? For what reasons might an unbeliever choose to leave a believing spouse? What does this reveal about the transformed life of a believer?

6. Calvin said, "The godliness of the one does more to 'sanctify' the marriage than the ungodliness of the other to make it unclean, not in the contracting of marriage but in maintaining those already entered into." (1 Corinthians-A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary p. 108-109 by Anthony C. Thiselton)

How can the unbelieving spouse and children be called holy (or sanctified) because of the believing spouse/parent (Genesis 15:18, 17:7, 18:26)?

Does this mean they are saved? Explain your answer.