

1 Corinthians 7b

We continue a look at chapter 7, the second longest chapter in this letter. The discussion centers around marriage, sexuality, and the commands of the Lord.

¹⁷ Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches. ¹⁸ Was any man called *when he was already* circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised. ¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but *what matters* is the keeping of the commandments of God. ²⁰ Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called.

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, each one is to remain with God in that *condition* in which he was called.

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 marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, 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.



In our culture, marriage

is not given the high honor that God has upon it (Heb 13:4).

- Jesus said what God has joined let no one pull apart (Mt 19:6)
- God allows only ONE cause for divorce (Mt 19:9)
- So serious is this, the disciples said, "It is better not to marry" (Mt 19:10)

A. Having answered the Corinthian question about spirituality and sexuality, Paul continues with more thoughts

1. (17-21) Each one must remain in the condition in which he was called (20, 24)
2. Contextually, Paul is telling the Christians who have married unbelievers, to remain married
 - one can glorify God in that state just as one who is circumcised or uncircumcised or as a freeman or as a slave

Two Important Statements:

1. So I direct in all the churches (17)
2. You were bought with a price (23; 6:20)

B. Concerning the unmarried (25-31):

- consider the present circumstances

Being married presents trouble (28). What did the apostle mean?

1. Paul seems to have the coming in Jesus in mind
 - the time has been shortened (29)
 - form of this world is passing away (31)
 - rejoicing, weeping, marriage, buying are all parts of life, but they are not life
 - what matters is the keeping of the Lord's commands (19)

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. 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 This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and *to secure* undistracted devotion to the Lord.

³⁶ But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin *daughter*, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry. ³⁷ 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. ³⁸ 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.

³⁹ 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. ⁴⁰ But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

- ☐ Running through this chapter is the powerful thought that our relationship with Christ is more important than our relationship in our marriage (Like 14:26)
- ☐ Nothing ought to hinder our walk with the Lord

Face Responsibility Honestly (32-35)

1. The dominate thought is "Concern"
John 10:13 the hireling is not concerned about the sheep
2. Paul's thoughts are about "undistracted devotion to the Lord" (35)
- Luke 8:14 the word of God can be choked out

Distracted Disciple:

- What are things that distract our attention from the Lord today?
- What can we do to be better focused?
- What do you think the apostle would tell us about our lifestyle today?

Returning to the subject of Virgins (36-38)

The NIV addresses the man as if he is the one engaged to the virgin

The NAS addresses the man as if he is the father

- each situation is unique.
- if she marries she does well (28)
- if she does not marry she does better

Marriage is for life (39-40)

- this follows the thoughts in Romans 7:1-3
- the widow is free to marry in the Lord
Similar expression in Eph 6:1
- Paul is backing up his opinion with the Holy Spirit (40)

Why would the widow be "happier" if she remained unmarried (40)?

On another occasion, Paul tells young widows to get married (1 Tim 5:14).

- Why the difference?

