

First Corinthians

VERSE-BY-VERSE

1st Corinthians

59 A.D.

Ephesus

Keep in mind to whom the author (in this case the apostle Paul) was writing. In 1:2 Paul tells us he is writing to the "church of God which is at Corinth." Then he goes on in that same verse to tell us more about the Christians who made up the church, "to them that are **sanctified** in Christ Jesus." The word "sanctified" in Greek (the original language of this letter) is *ἁγιασμός* *hagiazō*. It is from the root word, *ἅγιος* *hagios* which means holy, or holy ones and is translated "saints" in this same verse. Also, in chapter 1:30, another form of the word is used, and states that Jesus Christ is our **sanctification**. Then again in 6:11, Paul makes the claim that this church is **sanctified**.

With that background, we find that while this church is *holy* they are also messed up in their behavior. Holiness is *imputed* to all who believe. Holy is how God sees us, and it is how we can stand before him—all because of Jesus Christ, not because of anything we do. Therefore, when we misbehave and don't live a holy life, it is because we fail to recognize where we stand in Christ. The point? Behavior does not determine holiness.

Paul is writing this letter to encourage them to live up to their standing in Christ! "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17.

In chapter 6 (our last session), Paul wrote to the church in Corinth to warn them to "Flee fornication." Fornication is translated from the Greek word *porneo*. When a person commits fornication, he or she *sins against his or her own body*. We looked at how sexual sin creates more personal damage than other sins like lying, or stealing, etc. We fornication takes place in the church it tears a church body apart.

Chapter 7:1-9 | Marriage is the countermeasure against sexual immorality (i.e., fornication).

Verse 1–

He begins by saying **it is good for a man not to touch a woman**.

- Enemies of Christianity like to take verses such as this and say, "Look how narrow, and strange, and weird Christians are!"
- This verse is not the end of the story.

Notice he writes, **the things whereof ye wrote unto me**.

- There was correspondence between Paul and the local church. We do not have the letter written to him. [If that letter were to be found today, while it would be interesting, it would not be considered Scripture. The canon of Scripture was closed after John wrote the Revelation. We have all of God's Word preserved for us (the doctrine of the preservation of Scripture). Therefore, what Paul writes about when it comes to marriage is all that we need].
- Does Paul mean a man must practice celibacy? We must read on to find out.

Verse 2–

To avoid fornication. There were sexual problems going on in the church, beyond the individual's sin in chapter 5.

- Paul stated in verse one that a way to avoid unhealthy sexual desires is for a man *not to touch a woman*.
- But Paul also knows the Scripture that states, *It is not good for a man to be alone* (Genesis 2:18). So what's the solution to **avoid fornication**?
- Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.**
 - Marriage has been degraded in modern society. Over the past 30 years, the marriage rate has dropped significantly. It has become to some, nothing more than a piece of paper.
 - A commitment in a union between one man and one woman goes far beyond a mere contract.
 - A healthy marriage helps a man (and a woman) avoid fornication.
 - Marriage is key to the control of God-given sexual drives. Like any emotion or desire, a sexual drive can be profitable or unprofitable.
 - A healthy Marriage keeps the body's desire in check.

Verse 3,4–

Render unto the wife due benevolence...likewise wife unto the husband. Paul is discreet or circumspect in his writing about sexuality.

- Today there is TMI (Too much information) when it comes to advising on sexuality. We don't need every detail of a sexual relationship.

- Paul is not giving advice, he is presenting the proper God-ordained solution to fornication, that is, a healthy marriage.
- We are sexual beings and were created as such. The Bible is clear that one purpose of marriage is for the full expression of sexuality.
 - This expression goes back to the Creation of Adam and Eve when they walked in the garden, *naked and not ashamed* (Genesis 2:5).
- Marriage is a safety zone for sexuality which should be enjoyed.
 - Anything outside of that degrades God's purpose and plan for a man and a woman.
- Verses two and three present a picture of a perfect marriage, Christian or otherwise.
 - It is one of sexuality, love, and respect.

Verse 5–

The Greek word **Defraud** is ἀφουστερέω *apostereo*, which means to *keep something back by fraud*.

- The English word *fraud* means to illegally obtain money from someone by deception.
- The context is about marriage and sexual relations between a husband and wife. He is speaking to couples.
 - The husband and wife are not to deceive each other from *due benevolence* (vs. 3).
 - To do so is to defraud the other of what God has given to the marriage.
- There is an agreement that takes place in a healthy marriage, where each **consent for a time** to forego sexual relations.
 - The reason for the cessation of sexual relations for a time is so the husband and wife may, **through fasting and prayer**, become strengthened in their spiritual walk with the Lord.
 - This is the way humans are made; with a need for a sexual outlet.

A husband and wife need to come together so that **Satan tempt you not for your incontinency**. Incontinence means a *lack of self-control*. Husbands and wives need a sexual outlet and they are not to defraud each other of it.

Verses 6-9–

What Paul has just written to the Corinthians is **not of commandment**. It is not any less accurate, and it does not negate the fact that what Paul wrote is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16).

- He has received permission (from the Lord Jesus Christ) to make the statements.
- It is not a command from the Lord that if sexual relations are withheld for the wrong reasons that it is a sin.
- It is probably not wise to withhold sexual relations since it could open the door for one spouse to give in to sexual temptations due to lack of self-control.

-For a good marriage, make sure there is good sexuality within the marriage.

Likewise, if we want a good society, there needs to be a healthy understanding of sexual relations within that society.

The Lord gave Paul permission to share about sexual relations within marriage, now Paul gives a wish for every man.

- His desire: **I would that all men were even as I.**
- Paul was single--but he had the spiritual **gift** of singleness.
- Everyone has a **proper** spiritual **gift, one after this manner, and another after that.**
- How would one know if he or she had the gift of singleness?
 - It would have to be gauged by their self-control or lack of self-control in sexual issues.

Some say that maybe Paul had been married once and was now a widower since he speaks to **the unmarried and widows**, that if they have the gift of singleness like he does, **it is good**.

But if they cannot contain, in other words, constrain themselves in sexual matters, get married: **for it is better to marry than to burn**.

- The context is not talking about *burning in hell*.
- All sin is forgivable so that cannot be the meaning of the word.
- It is a metaphor. In context, he *means to get married, so you don't burn with lustful sexual desires*.