Let God Be True!

Paul's Doctrine of Marriage

March 28, 2021 · AM · https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/2021/pauls-doctrine-of-marriage-1/

Introduction:

1. With any study of courting, love, marriage, and sex, God gave us Paul's chapter to keep us balanced.
2. We must follow God's rules for sex, decision to marry, maintaining marriages, godly priorities, etc.
3. This generation, especially America, has perverted marriage, sex, and gender more than ever before.
4. Corinth had a *present distress,* and we may well have our own in the future, so let us be forewarned.
5. Corinth wrote Paul about marriage matters, and his answers to them comprise this seventh chapter.
6. Members had pagan or Jewish backgrounds in a city similar to our own San Francisco or Las Vegas.
7. Thus questions about sex, marriage, divorce, mixed marriages, virgins, widows, discipleship, etc.
8. Paul had just spent two chapters addressing fornication, relevant instruction for a church at Corinth.
9. The following chapter is about idolatry and meat offered to idols, so this chapter goes with previous.
10. The experience and risk of fornication at Corinth explains Paul's initial use of marriage against it.
11. There are at least ten difficult verses here needing the right division (1,6,10,12,14,15,25,29,36,40).
12. The unlearned wrest Paul's words in various directions for destruction by ignorance (II Peter 3:16).
13. Paul gave an important rule for life in this chapter – avoid carefulness, even in allowed things (32).
14. We have much material on the church website about marriage to be consulted for other angles on it.
15. It is discouraging and shocking to see people rank sins and forget mercy in divorce and remarriage.
16. Like teetotalers and Sabbatarians, they pick a ditch and make it their sacred cow against any reason.
17. Readers should note the level of detail Paul addressed in this chapter about all angles of marriage.
18. Real Christians will eagerly attend to every verse, wanting to know God's will clearly stated by Paul.
19. Are you an eager hearer of preaching like Cornelius and noble Bereans (Acts 10:33; 17:11; Pr 18:1)?
20. Or do you have no heart for learning truth and would rather share vain thoughts (Prov 18:2; 17:16)?

Outline of Chapter 7:

1-5 Rules for marital sex

6-9 Rules for single life

10-16 Rules for divorce

17-24 Rules for life matters

25-35 Rules for virgins

36-38 Rules for virgins' fathers

39-40 Rules for widows

Rules for Marital Sex – Verses 1-5

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

A. Paul began addressing the church's marital questions by recommending against it.

B. It is obvious he introduced a new section to his epistle to deal with marital questions.
   1. The previous two chapters covered fornication from a church and moral viewpoint.
   2. Corinth was a lascivious city, and the church had covered vile incestuous adultery.
   3. The next chapter covered idolatry and meat offered to idols, leaving this subject.

C. *Touching a woman* here has little to do with physical contact, but rather marriage.
   1. The rest of the chapter shows the things Corinth wrote about pertained to marriage.
   2. It is as if Paul had said, *Don't even touch women,* or, *Stay away from women,* in which case we would clearly understand that he simply meant to avoid marriage.
   3. *Nevertheless* indicates verse one is the opposite of verse two's instruction to marry.
   4. Verse one introduced Paul's strong opinion against marriage (7:7-8,25-26,32-40).
   5. The Spirit uses *touching* a woman for intercourse with women (Gen 20:6; Pr 6:29).
   6. If you cannot see this sense of the words, what about *looking* at wine (Prov 23:31).
   7. If you cannot see this sense of the words, what of *thinking* on a maid (Job 31:1).

D. A sure solution for marital problems, and with several benefits, is to avoid it totally.
   1. Paul is not far from Solomon, who described horrible pain of women (Ec 7:26-29)
   2. A common proverb says, *You can't live with them, and you can't live without them.*
   3. Every person craving marriage must think soberly about new challenges it creates.

E. Marriage is definitely very good; for Scripture declares it so, even when Adam had not sinned and walked with God (Gen 2:18; Ruth 3:1; Pr 18:22; 19:14; Eccl 4:9-12).

F. However, marriage brings other problems that can greatly complicate a person's life.
   1. It is hard to live intimately with a sinner (Gen 30:1; Ex 21:10; II Sam 6:20-23; Ruth 4:6; Prov 12:4; 30:21-23; Eccl 7:26-29; Matt 19:10-11; Col 3:19; I Pet 3:7).
   2. It is a distraction from serving God as fully as without a spouse (7:32; Matt 19:12).
   3. It is a burden in time of persecution, especially men (7:26; Luke 21:23; 23:28-29).

G. It should not be hard to imagine a number of their questions shown by Paul's answers.
   1. Seeing Paul's single and successful life, zealous ones would want to emulate him.
   2. Having lived as fornicators (II Cor 6:9-11), they would have questions about sex.
   3. Living in a city with loose marital laws, they could easily think lightly of marriage.

2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and

let every woman have her own husband.

A. The sexual drive in both sexes requires men and women to marry to avoid fornication.
   1. In spite of his desire for men and women to remain single like him, he knew better.
   2. Paul did not suggest here that a few or even many get married but rather all should.
   3. He knew the sex drive in both sexes justified it and only exceptions were like him.

B. After puberty, a strong hormonal drive causes sexual curiosity, expression, pleasure.
   1. God knows this drive is quite difficult or impossible to rule without marriage (7:9).
   2. The Lord Jesus created the sexual drive in both sexes, and it is both good and holy.
   3. Frigid or prudish Christian mothers have hurt daughters by ignoring the Shulamite.
   4. Proverbs 31 exalts supreme diligence; the Song of Solomon exalts wild passion.

C. Paul will recommend against marriage for several reasons, but sex requires it for most.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

A. Marriage involves strong sexual duties or an important purpose of marriage is broken.

B. Paul's euphemism is for sex when, where, how, and how often your spouse wants it.
   1. **Benevolence**. Favorable feeling or disposition, kindness, generosity, as an emotion manifested towards another; affection; goodwill.
   2. **Due**. Owing or payable, as an enforceable obligation or debt.
   3. **Due benevolence** = kind and generous, with loving goodwill, to give your spouse all the sex they want the way they want it, a divine obligation and debt of marriage.
   4. Due benevolence ≠ due acquiescence, for benevolence is intentional and proactive; if a spouse must ask, beg, hint, or plead for sex, you force them to use extortion.
   5. Due benevolence ≠ convenient benevolence; you owe it regardless of convenience.
   6. A spouse should never have to ask or suggest; the debt exists by order of heaven, which creates the wonderful situation of both spouses initiating sex for the other.

C. Paul, by inspiration, stated the husband's duties toward his wife first, which is a great point to humble men that know they were made for her and to maximize marital sex.
   1. Many men are selfish, so they only recall she was made for him; this modifies it.
   2. If a man will rightly love a woman as directed here, she can easily outperform him.

D. Since the sexes are different, this requires each spouse to reject their own ideas of sex.
   1. A spouse should not have to tell you; if you are yet ignorant, you may humbly ask.
   2. Much of sexual pleasure in marriage is a choice, not a mystery you must wait for.
   3. A man can choose to be fully satisfied and even ravished by his wife (Prov 5:19).
   4. A wife can choose to be passionately erotic as the Shulamite in Solomon's Song.

4 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.

A. The sexual duties of marriage are such that neither spouse has the right to refuse sex.

B. Open-heart surgery and a severe flu are obvious exceptions to be ignored, for the only people that ever raise exceptions are those with rebellious defrauding in their hearts.

C. **Power**. Possession of control or command; rule, control, influence, authority, or right.

D. A wife does not have control or command of her body; she does not have rule, control, or influence of it; she does not have the authority or right to reject her husband to it.

E. The husband does have control or command of her body; he does have rule, control, or influence of it; he does have authority or right to use it when and how he pleases.

F. The same rule applies to husbands; they do not have the authority or right to refuse sex; their wives have authority and right to their husbands' bodies for sex when and how they desire it, and the husband must cooperate the wife's way to please God.

G. A wife does not have right, let alone any real reason, to deprive her husband of sex.

H. Wife! You have no right to pick when, where, or how your husband wants your love.

I. Man! You have no right to determine when, where, or how your wife wants your love.

J. Since the sexes are quite different, this requires the sacrificial spirit of a loving servant to learn the other spouse's preferences and seek to fulfill them as fully as possible.

K. A spouse should not have to tell you; if you are still ignorant, you should humbly ask.

L. Much more can be said and has been. Consult outlines for couples and the husbands.

5 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.

A. Frequent sex must only be interrupted for fasting and prayer, or it is sinful defrauding.

B. **Defraud**. To deprive (a person) by fraud of what is his by right, either by fraudulently taking or by dishonestly withholding it from him; to cheat, cozen, beguile.

C. Let prudish and selfish wives know the word also describes adultery (I Thess 4:6).

D. Since sex that fulfills and satisfies your spouse is your duty, not giving sex is fraud.

E. Interruption of frequent and regular sex must be (1) by consent, (2) for a short time, (3) for holy reasons, and (4) have a definite end.

F. There is a real danger of temptation to fornicate by Satan, if you reject God's remedy.

G. **Incontinence**. Want of continence or self-restraint; inability to contain or retain.

H. The inability to contain or restrain yourself sexually will be used by the devil, but God gave a remedy for that burning drive and need toward fornication – a happy marriage!

Rules for Single Life – Verses 6-9

6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.

A. Paul's rules for marriage and the sexual union in it were permissive, not commanding.
   1. Paul said, What I have just said about getting married is permissible, not required.
   2. The permission granted was to the Corinthians from Paul, not to Paul from God.
   3. God and Paul are on the same page exactly – marriage itself is not a command.
   4. If you want to be single like John, Jesus, and Paul, it is better than being married.
   5. However, the rules for sex within marriage are not permission, but commands.

B. A question here is to identify the antecedent for the demonstrative pronoun "this."

C. With what began (7:1) and follows (7:7), Paul intended marriage in general (7:2-5).

D. This verse does not teach Paul sometimes only gave his personal opinion in epistles.

E. God did not give Paul permission to express his personal opinion; Paul rather gave God's rules for marital sex, yet marriage itself is by personal choice, not commanded.

F. Corinthians did not have to marry; it was permitted. He suggested against it (7:1,7).

G. Knowing most men and women cannot handle his first recommendation (7:1), he gave inspired permission to marry as they saw fit, though not commanded and with rules.

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.

A. Paul recommended that as many of them as possible use the single life to be like him.

B. Paul was single and avoided marriage cares and difficulties to serve Christ (I Cor 9:5).

C. There is no doubt marriage brings problems, which apostles knew (Matt 19:10-11).

D. There would be no doubt the churches had been stronger with more men like Paul, but most men are not like Paul, in being able to keep his body under without a wife.

E. Paul had a special gift Jesus identified, being a eunuch for the kingdom (Matt 19:12).

F. It is a simple fact of Scripture and nature that most men need a wife to function well.

G. However, marriage brings other problems that can greatly complicate a person's life.
   1. It is hard to live intimately with a sinner (Gen 30:1; Ex 21:10; II Sam 6:20-23; Ruth 4:6; Prov 12:4; 30:21-23; Eccl 7:26-29; Matt 19:10-11; Col 3:19; I Pet 3:7).
   2. It is a distraction from serving God as fully as without a spouse (7:32; Matt 19:12).
   3. It is a burden in time of persecution, especially men (7:26; Luke 21:23; 23:28-29).

H. On this basis of Paul reasoning about marriage, we apply it also to having children.

8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.

A. Paul concisely addressed unmarried and widows by recommending against marriage.
B. To those still single – virgins, divorced, widows – Paul recommended staying single.
C. If sex does not strongly tempt a person, it is a good thing to be servant to Jesus only.
D. Consider Anna. Knowing the joy of marriage, she rejected it for God (Luke 2:36-37).

9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

A. A person's sex drive is the determining factor in choosing the single life or marriage.
B. If a person considers the life of Anna or Paul, they must measure their sexual needs.
C. If they are tempted, or if they would be tempted, then they need to get married instead.
D. It is better to forgo a superior spiritual life, if you will burn in sexual desire for love.
E. Burning here is aching loins of young men and craving heart/body of young women.

Rules for Divorce – Verses 10-16

10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

A. Paul followed Jesus Christ to tell those married to believers that marriage is for life.
B. Having concluded rules on sex and the single life, he takes up those already married.
C. These words do not allow for personal choice as 7:6; they are a command from God.
    1. Paul did not originate this rule of marriage, for the Lord Jesus Christ had taught it already against the Pharisees (Matt 5:31-32; 19:1-9; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18).
    2. Jesus taught, "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt 19:6).
    3. Marriage is a permanent relationship; it is where we start in order to follow Christ.
D. In harsher times, Paul used the case of a woman leaving and divorcing her husband.
    1. Even in the Bible, even a secondary wife, could leave if deprived (Ex 21:7-11).
    2. A woman in a hard marriage might look on Paul's single life as a good alternative.
    3. Corinth, the lascivious and pagan place it was, likely had easy divorce laws/rights.
    4. The Jews, of which this church had some, had also loosened divorce (Matt 19:3).
    5. This woman does not merely leave for a weekend to "have some space," for the context is clearly divorce; she is described in the next verse as being *unmarried*.
    6. Leaving for a weekend to "have space" is sinful defrauding and covenant-braking.
E. The Lord, preaching to the nation of Israel, addressed only marriages of two believers.
    1. He dealt with marriage in the church, for the Jews were to marry other believers.

2. We see this difference by Paul addressing those married to unbelievers (7:12-13).
3. The sense of the verses (7:10-13) does not teach Paul sometimes opposed Jesus!
4. Jesus addressed marriages of believers; Paul addressed mixed-religion marriages.

F. Paul and Jesus taught the same thing – believers should not break marriage covenants.
1. Marriage is a life commitment of companionship, only broken for serious offences.
2. Jesus allowed one specific exception – fornication, or sexual sin (Matt 5:32; 19:9).
3. This verse does not justify her separating or divorcing and remaining unmarried: this verse condemns the separating and divorcing. She is bound to her covenant.
4. Leaving a husband because a woman "needs some space" is a sin against this text and elsewhere. She becomes a defrauder (7:5) and a covenant-breaker (Rom 1:31).

G. There are grounds taught and/or implied and/or illustrated in the Bible for divorce.
1. Detailed study of exceptions beyond fornication is outside the scope of this study.
2. Context here, for mixed marriages, allowed divorce by desertion (7:15 cp 7:27-28).
3. Principles of mercy and intent justify divorce if bad enough (Mat 12:7; Mark 2:27), and these inspired principles are precious wisdom, found also in Prov 21:3 … the Proverbs 21:3 commentary.
4. An oppressive husband or odious wife are not good enough grounds or no one would still be married, for all are guilty of such foolish conduct from time to time.
5. Solomon's proverbs recommend getting out of the house rather than divorce court.

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

A. If a woman sinned and divorced anyway, she should not remarry, so she can reconcile.
1. The first sin was stated in the previous verse – leaving and divorcing her husband.
2. Leaving unlawfully is defrauding (7:5) and covenant-breaking (Rom 1:31) at least.
3. If bad enough to commit the first sin, Paul warned against the irreversible second.
4. If bad enough to commit the first sin, Paul warned her she must be single forever.

B. If such a wife marries another man, she commits an act of adultery (Matt 5:32; 19:9).
1. If such a wife marries another man, she cannot ever return to the first (De 24:1-4).
2. It is this second consequence of remarriage that is the chief objective of the verse.

C. The same rule of divorce covers men, yet a man could retake his first wife, when she was taken from him against his will (II Sam 3:13-16; I Sam 25:44).

D. What about the poor husband in this case of a foolish Christian wife leaving him?
1. He should make every effort to win his wife back while she remains unmarried.
2. If she does not to return, the church will exclude her as an unbeliever (Matt 18:17).
3. Once she is as an unbeliever outside the church, the man may marry a real woman.

12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

A. Paul took up the subject of mixed marriages and commanded men to remain married.
B. The "rest" Paul refers to are the married (7:10), but these were married to unbelievers.
C. Jesus had not dealt with this topic before, so Paul addressed it without the Lord's lead.
D. The sense of this verse, in light of 7:10, does not teach Paul sometimes opposed Jesus.
E. The marriage covenant was still binding, if a man's unbelieving wife still wanted him.
F. The religion difference, even with difficulties, did not sufficiently alter the marriage.
G. All such matters are submitted to God's holy will and providence, who knows all things from creation; He has never given any man a temptation too hard (I Cor 10:13).

13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

A. Paul dealt further with mixed marriages and commanded women to remain married.
B. If a pagan husband was willing to keep her, the believing wife should stay married.
C. Conversion was not enough grounds, based on God's providence, to end a marriage.
D. The exceptional case of Israel's national divorce was Jews marrying pagans sinfully.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

A. A believer in a mixed marriage will have a sanctifying effect on spouse and children.
B. Here is a practical, not spiritual, reason to keep mixed marriages together, if possible.
C. These saints knew marriages to pagans were forbidden, but what if it was too late?
D. Should they end the marriage to be like Paul or to start over with a believing spouse?
E. The sanctification here cannot be saving holiness, but rather God's practical approval.
    1. Any saving influence or effect cannot be intended here, for it is yet ahead (7:16).
    2. Meats, even O.T. unclean meats, are sanctified – approved – by God (I Tim 4:1-5).
    3. The superiority of monogamy, by God's rule, creates an approved seed (Mal 2:15).
    4. The Medes and Persians were His sanctified ones – approved for success (Is 13:3).
F. The believer brings God's sanctifying approval upon the unbeliever for a legitimate union, which is acceptable in the sight of God and good to maintain before the world.
    1. God accepts and approves the unbelieving spouse by the presence of the believer, though a believer must not marry an unbeliever intentionally (7:39; 9:5; 11:11).
    2. The presence of the unbeliever does not pollute marriage; the believer sanctifies it.

3. The context is legitimacy of marriage to unbelievers; keeping a marriage covers it.
4. If marriage was broken for conversion of one, children might be seen illegitimate.
5. The believer brings sanctifying approval by God upon offspring of the relationship.
6. Unclean and holy are only for children of a legit marriage before God and men.

G. There is nothing in this text, when compared with the scriptures, for infant baptism.

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

A. A believing spouse is free from any marital obligations, if the unbeliever leaves them.

B. Jesus gave an exception for active divorce (Matt 5:32; 19:9), Paul for passive divorce.

C. If an unbeliever divorces a believer, the believer lets the unbeliever end the marriage.
1. The unbeliever no longer wants to live with the believer for any reason (7:12-13).
2. The believer can allow a divorce – they are under no need to preserve the marriage.
3. Mixed marriages are not good things; God ends them with an unbeliever divorcing.

D. A believer has no duty to remain unmarried if an unbeliever leaves (7:10-11,27-28).
1. The use of bondage here is not a manmade idea of chasing the unbelieving spouse, for that was already dealt with in the first sentence by the words, “let them go.”
2. The first two clauses do not repeat the same thing – the first clause answered 7:12-14; the second clause about being freed is answering 7:11. This is clear as can be!
3. The bondage of staying unmarried, though divorced, was stated in the parallel text; it is this issue of remarriage that is at stake, or it is not dealt with at all. God forbid!
4. The unbeliever broke the marriage bond, freeing the believer from the marriage.
5. It is amazing to see some grasp “bound” and “loosed” in Romans 7:2 and “bound” and “liberty” in I Cor 7:39, but they willfully refuse to use that sense right here.
6. It is cruel and unmerciful evils of Pharisaism that a believer must remain single.
7. Paul ruled by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost that believers are free to remarry after a marriage is broken and marital bondage ended by an unbeliever (7:27-28).

E. Believers should not try to cause unbelievers to leave; they should honor the marriage.
1. It is wrong for a believer to aggravate the unbeliever at all to cause them to depart.
2. It has been my pleasure to see extreme efforts made to please unbelieving spouses.
3. If the unbeliever still leaves, the believer has a free, pure conscience before God.
4. Paul’s use of “but,” a disjunctive, indicates this clause opposes what went before.
5. If Paul had used “for,” it might mean not chasing after the deserting spouse (redundantly repeating the first clause), but the disjunctive “but” requires opposition to both clauses.
6. Furthermore, the following verse, connected by “for” to this “but” clause, gives a further reason to stay married to an unbeliever – in order to convert them to truth!

F. A child of God with the mind of Christ and knowing the Bible can easily grasp this.

G. It is a terrible evil to make believers subject to unbelievers to the loss of marital joy.
   1. This evil comes from Pharisees – pressing the letter to ruin persons and mercy.
   2. This evil comes from the RCC – preserving the institution no matter the great cost.
   3. These people invent horrible bondage for innocent spouses that can never remarry.
   4. If it is not teetotalism, or Sabbatarianism, then sacred cows are made for divorce.

16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

A. Our God sees everything, including mere possibilities, as reasons to alter our choices.
   1. In addition to the previous reasons to stay married to an unbeliever, here is another.
   2. Do you love souls enough to see our God's stamp of importance on it right here?
   3. God does not care if you have not seen a spouse's conversion yet; He asks for time.
   4. We say, based on David's sick baby, *Pray until the baby dies,* and the same is here.
   5. Compassion and desire for souls, even under stress, is Christ-like and apostolic.

B. A reason to stay married to an unbeliever is the possibility of their future conversion.
   1. This affectionate desire for an unbelieving spouse may not be your first thought.
   2. There will be disconnect and division with a pagan spouse, but saints look higher.
   3. Rather than hope the unbeliever would leave, live in peace hoping for conversion.
   4. But more than hope and pray for conversion, Peter gives advice to bring it to pass.
   5. Though we know from Paul that God must grant repentance (II Timothy 2:24-26).

C. Peter taught it as possible, a goal for believing wives and how to do it (I Peter 3:1-6).

D. Salvation here cannot be eternal, legal, vital, or final; it must be practical (I Tim 4:16).
   1. By God's grace, we have been saved from the eternal life burden of the Arminians.
   2. They give it lip service and bind it on men's shoulders, though none of them live it.
   3. If saving from hell is by their efforts, anything but witnessing and prayer is cruel.

Rules for Life Matters – Verses 17-24

17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

A. The situational position of a man need not be altered by his conversion to the gospel.

B. Paul gave his fourth lesson in the chapter – contentment with other life issues (17-24).
   1. With due respect, it may be a rabbit trail introduced by difficult mixed marriages.
   2. Having covered mixed marriages by God's chose timing, he pursued other matters.
   3. The two matters Paul raised here are Jewish traditions and employment situations.

C. Here is a practical application of God's sovereignty – trusting His timing in your life.
    1. Everything you are or have at any point in your life is by divine choice over you.
    2. This includes your decisions, whether wise or foolish, for God ruled them for now.
    3. The timing of your conversion, which you might wish were different, was perfect.
    4. The circumstances of your conversion are exactly what God gave you to work at.
    5. Do you trust God's sovereignties in real life matters, not just the gift of salvation?

D. God gives abilities, opportunities, or marital status, and no one should revolt against them, nor should their new religion be a reason to greatly alter these ordinary things.

E. Your situation in life with all factors of poverty, education, profession, family, location, experiences, knowledge, wealth, and etc. are by the just providence of God.

F. Timing of conversion – God's call here – is with God's knowledge of all situations, and the converted Christian should learn to serve and worship Christ in that situation.

G. This rule has nothing to do with sinful conduct, rather indifferent matters of liberty.

H. A man's life should not be turned upside down because he has converted to Christ.

I. God's children must not conform to this world, though they live in the world (5:10).

J. This rule of Paul was an ordinance of the gospel applicable to all the churches of God.

K. There have been and are temptations to monastic-like alterations of life for Christians.

L. The cult mentality of worldly isolation in a compound is given a deathblow right here.

18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.

A. The relationship to Jewish tradition did not have to be totally ended by Jesus' gospel.

B. History shows Jews surgically reversing circumcision to please Greeks at nude games, especially for Antiochus Epiphanes, to please him and repudiate Moses (I Mac 1:15).

C. A Gentile proselyte of the Jewish religion converted to the gospel that learns there was no need for him to have been circumcised might very well seek to reverse the stigma.

D. Consider on the other hand new Gentile converts fearing the intimidation of Judaizers.

E. Paul's use of circumcision here applies as well to the whole Jewish tradition and rites.
    1. Jews or Gentiles kept Jewish tradition without rules (Gal 2:11-13; 3:28; 5:6; 6:15).
    2. Paul circumcised Timothy for the truth, but he did not Titus (Acts 16:1-3; Gal 2:3).
    3. Paul kept Jewish rites and allowed them to Romans (Acts 21:20-26; Rom 14:1-6).

19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

A. Whether a man was circumcised or not had nothing to do with pleasing Jesus Christ.

B. Circumcision had no spiritual value at all in the New Testament (Gal 3:28; 5:6; 6:15).
    1. The issue of circumcision was a hot one for Paul and others to fight (Acts 15:1-31).
    2. Paul circumcised Timothy for the truth, but he did not Titus (Acts 16:1-3; Gal 2:3).
    3. Circumcision in flesh was nothing, unless the heart was circumcised (Rom 2:28).
    4. Uncircumcision of the flesh was nothing, without heart circumcision (Rom 2:29).
C. The rule of acceptance with God from a practical view is keeping His commandments.
D. If infant sprinkling replaced circumcision, as Rome and harlot daughters teach, Paul had many opportunities to state the change; but he did not, so we reject the heresy.

20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

A. Paul repeated his exhortation for men to remain in the calling of their conversion date.
    1. Paul had addressed calling with an unconverted spouse and relationship to the law.
    2. Whatever calling, or place in life, a man had, conversion did not alter or change it.
B. Here are two callings – your life's vocation or situation, your conversion to the truth.
C. Christianity and paganism had drastic differences, so there were temptations to revolt.
D. We are sons of God waiting for heaven, but until then we are to live contentedly here.
E. We need not leave the world; though we are in the world, we are not part of the world.
F. The gift of eternal life and gospel conversion are not affected by one's situation in life.

21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.

A. Servants did not need to worry about their economic or professional status in Christ.
B. If a man were converted while a servant of a pagan, he should not let it trouble him.
    1. It might be hard for a child of God to be content as a servant of a pagan Corinthian.
    2. But just like the mixed marriages that went before, a Christian could keep a role.
C. If a man were converted while a servant and could be released, he should get released.
    1. Paul knew a hired servant could be more useful and enjoy life than a bond servant.
    2. But he would then remind the Corinthians of how we should look at our lot in life.

22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.

A. A man's relationship with Jesus exceeds all earthly relations to render them harmless.
B. If a man is converted as a servant of men, he should see himself as Christ's freeman.
C. If a man is converted as free from men, he should see himself as the Lord's servant.
D. Due to our great relationship in the Lord, lesser relationships with men do not count.

23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

A. Since Jesus Christ purchased His church, the relations with men should not bind them.

B. Paul had taught earlier that Jesus had purchased believers, even their bodies (6:13-20).

C. Men of the world, no matter claims or acts, cannot create soul bondage over a saint.
   1. This verse cannot contradict what he had taught – being a servant of men is fine.
   2. Paul rather corrected soul bondage that might exist; their souls were free in Christ.
   3. He also corrected any temptation to compromise with ungodly requests by masters.

24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

A. The gospel should not alter a man's situational position in life; let him walk with God.

B. This verse or related verses cannot justify any sinful living due to previous lifestyle.
   1. Peter said true conversion is no longer running to excesses of others (I Pet 4:1-5).
   2. True conversion breaks your life to enter the kingdom (Matt 11:12; Luke 16:16).
   3. By gospel preaching, lives change (Luke 19:1-10; Acts 19:18-20; I Thess 1:9-10).

C. These verses (17-24) undo false notions that conversion justified revolt against status.

D. The RCC cult mentality of worldly separation in a compound gets its deathblow here.

Rules for Virgins – Verses 25-35

25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

A. Returning to his previous commendation of the single state, Paul added reasons for it.

B. Here is his fifth lesson, where he wrote virgins and singles not under parents (25-35).
   1. To the chapter end he wrote single members listed earlier (7:8); see three classes – singles not under a father (25-35), virgins at home (36-38), widows (39-40).
   2. He identified members he addressed as virgins, unmarried persons living single.

C. Paul had no command from Jesus, as stated (7:6), but he had inspired suggestions.
   1. From Paul's position, he encouraged Corinth to receive his wise and sage counsel.
   2. From our viewpoint, we know God inspired faithful Paul to write holy scripture.
   3. Paul's judgment is only understood short of a commandment in a matter of liberty; he was surely and truly inspired, as his last explication of the case teaches (7:40).

D. As before and as follows, Paul will commend staying single but yet allow marriage.

26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that ***it is good for a man so to be.***

A. Single men should not stress about getting a wife in the difficult times then at Corinth.
   1. There were natural reasons, not commands from God, for men to remain single.
   2. The choice of marriage was still a man's choice, but Paul laid out pros and cons.

B. While we know little of Corinth's persecution, it was not unusual in the early church.
   1. Luke's record of Paul there indicates violent Jews and Greeks (Acts 18:12-18).
   2. Paul alluded to suffering of Corinthians in his second epistle to them (II Cor 1:6-7).
   3. The New Testament history given by God states much tribulation (Acts 14:22).

C. Paul did not lay down a general rule for all time about marriage, but for Corinth then.
   1. Paul did not start a case for monastic living by denying marriage for needy men.
   2. As stated earlier, this recommendation only applied to men able to contain (7-9).
   3. If questions or perceived contradictions in this chapter arise, recall *present distress*.
   4. It should be obvious a man without wife or children would be able to hide, escape, move, go to jail, or suffer martyrdom without the care of a man with one or both.

D. Remember Jesus' similar warning to women about escape (Luke 21:20-24; 23:27-31).

E. We do not have such a present distress now, but we might have one in days to come.
   1. Societal changes like bad civil rulers cause men to hide (Pr 28:12,28; Judges 6:11).
   2. God expects us to wisely adjust as circumstances change, rather than bull ahead.
   3. If Paul warned against marriage, how much more decisions like having children?
   4. For much more about wisely picking your family size in today's world … Family Planning & Birth Control.

27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.

A. To avoid reactions by his life and advice, Paul consoled both married and unmarried.

B. If a man was bound to a believer or unbeliever, it was too late to become single now.
   1. Paul had already covered both situations; divorce was not an option for either case.
   2. Corinth had many marital questions; Paul chose a very careful course in his words.
   3. Here again we see God's sovereign providence in life. Trust Him in your situation.
   4. Though a married man might now see wisdom of being single, he could not seek it.

C. If a man was loosed from a wife, as in 7:15, there were advantages not to seek one.
   1. Remember this text for those who think the loosed person in 7:15 cannot remarry.
   2. By use of *loosed* here in light of *not under bondage* of 7:15, we have the answer.
   3. Paul began this section by addressing virgins, but we see he included the married and divorced, for he is dealing with all possible angles on marriage or remarriage.

28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

A. Marriage in Corinth had its fears, but they could choose it or reject it for themselves.

B. Continuing his previous point of a divorced man, he allowed remarriage, if he wished.
   1. Never forget this verse coupled with the previous allows remarriage after divorce.
   2. By connecting 7:15 and 7:27-27, justified divorce from a pagan allows remarriage.
   3. There is no situation of a justified divorce requiring a person to remain unmarried.
   4. The case in 7:10-11 of remaining unmarried would soon free the innocent party

C. Continuing his large view from 7:25, he also allowed virgins to marry, if they wished.
   1. Since Paul did not give black and white commands, he must use extra explanation.
   2. By this verse allowing marriage, we see Paul was not giving a command (7:25).
   3. By this verse allowing marriage, we see Paul expanded his earlier lesson (7:6-9).
   4. Though there were reasons against marriage we grasped earlier, yet it was not sin.

D. Paul knew that these persons marrying or remarrying would have trouble in the flesh.
   1. Recall throughout this chapter that a present distress was then in Corinth (7:26).
   2. If virgins married or the divorced remarried, they could easily have difficult trials.
   3. He spared them further negative discussion of trouble, for marriage was not a sin.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;

A. Due to necessity of redeeming time they had, Christians should use all things wisely.

B. He pressed them with a sense of commitment and urgency due to shortness of time.
   1. The apostles spoke of the late time, given the last times of Christ (Romans 13:11).
   2. The Bible speaks often of brevity of life and the shortness of a man's age to serve.
   3. Paul's manner included pressing saints to redeem time with wisdom (Eph 5:15-17).
   4. History indicates horrible persecutions did arrive shortly upon saints under Rome.
   5. To use shortness of time in any sense requires a wise and prudent use of all things.
   6. Marriage, which is a future commitment, should be ruled in light of little time.
   7. Boasting of tomorrow is sin in light of the brevity and uncertainty of life (Pr 27:1).

C. To understand this and the following verses (7:29-33), carefully note Paul's use of
   1. *It remaineth,* is Paul's application of very little time to the right use of marriage.
   2. This imperative verb from Paul is for the married to act like they were not married.
   3. Paul did not mean to defraud or divorce a wife (7:5,27), but rather to serve Christ.
   4. A man's priorities and affections, no matter his situation, must be ruled for Christ.

5. The lesson is to set affections above and not be consumed by liberties (Col 3:2).
6. Here is the heart of the spiritually minded – even things allowed should be limited.
7. All things are lawful, but not all things are expedient; we limit bonds (I Cor 6:12).
8. Those that are married should live for Jesus Christ as if they were not married.

D. *Both* connects the exhortation for marriage to weeping and the other cares following.
   1. This is an acceptable use of *both* to connect more than two objects (see the OED).
   2. The KJB gives examples (Rom 14:9; I Cor 4:11; II Cor 9:10; Phil 4:9; Heb 2:4).

30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;

A. Due to shortness of time, weeping, rejoicing, and finances should be governed wisely.
B. You must get Paul's imperative *be* from the previous verse to grasp this verse's sense.
   1. The married were to act as if they were not married to keep the love of Christ first.
   2. Those afflicted with sorrow in life should not allow it to cost them service to Jesus.
   3. Those blessed with favor in life must not allow it to distract from service to Jesus.
   4. Those engaged in commerce here should not let economic ambition cheat Christ.
C. In each case, the grammar is an imperative command to live as if the fact was not true.

31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

A. Christian use of the world cannot include abusing it, for it is very temporal in nature.
B. You must grasp Paul's imperative be from the previous two verses to grasp this verse.
C. Use of the world, economic, educational, or social, cannot exceed God's allowed use.
D. Abusing this world is allowing the use of it to encroach on our call out of it (Matthew 6:24; Romans 12:1-2; James 4:4; I John 2:15-17).
E. All worldly things – fame, estates, clothing, transportation – are temporary and vain.

32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

A. The spiritual need to be without carefulness commends even further against marriage.
B. Three verses warned against marriage by short time and vanity of the world (29-31).
C. Now Paul exhorted to another general rule for Christians – make choices against care.
   1. This is one of the ruling principles of a Christian's life to be consulted in decisions.
   2. *Care* here is worry, fear, or distress coming from excessive duties or ambitions.
   3. For example, being an employee for another is less care than owning a business.

4. For example, having three children to rightly train is less care than ten children.
5. But the argument in this chapter and its context is marriage, not jobs or children.
6. The power of Paul's rule is warning against a thing as noble and good as marriage.
7. Therefore, it does apply to all other things that would steal our devotion to Christ.

D. A single man who chose to stay single for the Lord can dedicate himself to the Lord.
1. He can dedicate his thoughts day and night more to the Lord than can any husband.
2. A married man is preoccupied with loving and providing for his wife and children.
3. This free man will have more time to read, pray, meditate, serve, teach, help, etc.

33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.

A. A married man is preoccupied with loving and providing for his wife and children.
B. Domestic security and tranquility require substantial worldly effort toward his wife.
C. A married man must keep a comfortable home, and that for two persons, not just one.
D. The married man is driven to more care in the world to properly support his wife.

34 There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

A. Paul's lesson here about carefulness in marriage applies to women as well as men.
B. There is a difference between a virgin and wife – a different amount of care in her life.
1. A virgin, an unmarried woman, with a spiritual mind may dedicate herself to Jesus.
2. She can concentrate more fully on keeping body and spirit pure for her dear Lord.
3. Anna did exactly this (Luke 2:36-38); supported widows were to do so (I Tim 5:5).
4. But a married woman, like a married man, is preoccupied with loving her husband.
5. She is forced to greater involvement in the world to be a good wife for her man.

35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

A. Paul's commendation of a single state was not to cause trouble but show a better way.
B. The reason for reviewing three reasons against marriage was their own spiritual profit.
1. First was persecution at Corinth of believers, which marriage complicated (25-28).
2. Second was the shortness of time, which should be used expeditiously as possible.

3. Third was carefulness required in marriage, which took away from serving Christ.

C. His intent was not a sexual snare, for he had already commended marriage for it (6-9).

D. His intent was not negativism about marriage, but rather positivism for loving Christ.

E. His purpose was not to create unnecessary or hard burdens, but to promote spirituality.

F. A person, man or woman, committed to serving Christ without marriage is a comely thing, for they do not have the distractions of soul and body to keep up a marriage.

G. The difference between Paul and Rome is great – they require it as law (I Tim 4:1-3).

Rules for Virgins' Fathers – Verses 36-38

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

A. In light of his advice against marriage, Paul warned fathers against cruelty to virgins.

B. Here is lesson six in the chapter, rules for fathers with daughters still living at home.
   1. For three verses Paul addressed fathers with a choice about their virgin daughters.
   2. The father must in prudence and mercy allow a daughter to marry if she needed it.
   3. Such a father could consult the need, desire, and prospects of a virgin daughter.
   4. Paul will teach consistently that the single life is preferred but marriage allowable.

C. Paul here does not address men of their own virginity and whether they should marry.
   1. Christians can hardly grasp a father's authority to make decisions for a daughter.
   2. The apostle had already dealt with male virgins and the decision to marry (25-28).
   3. The apostle would next deal with widows, using this section for virgins at home.
   4. The language clearly describes a virgin under the authority of her father (36-38).
   5. Note male pronouns for the father and the female pronouns for the virgin (36-38).
   6. Note the plural pronoun *they* in this verse for the virgin and her desired husband.
   7. Some commentators on this passage are so weak they must twist Paul into a knot.

D. In God's wise plan of things for orderly humanity, the father had enormous authority.
   1. He could annul any vow she made to God not in his best interests (Num 30:3-5).
   2. He could forbid a daughter from marrying a lover and seducer (Exodus 22:16-17).
   3. He could sell his daughter to be another man's maid, including sex (Ex 21:7-11).
   4. He could give his daughter in marriage for a dowry, without her knowing the guy.

E. Paul interceded for daughters strongly wanting to marry by allowing liberty to fathers.
   1. A godly, strong father hearing his advice (1-35) would weigh keeping her single.
   2. However, Paul gave grieved fathers liberty to let their daughters marry without sin.
   3. Good fathers know their daughters well enough to wisely discern body and spirit.

4. Of course, there is never a need or reason to let a daughter marry outside the Lord.

F. Unusual language here indicated at what time in life that marriage became a concern.
   1. In our society, where female age at first marriage is 28, these words seem strange.
   2. *Flower of her age* is puberty's end, with sexual ability/desire, called *need* as 7:7-9.
   3. It cannot mean the best marital year, or it leaves only future inferior marital years.
   4. Thus, it must be the initial or usual age of marriage, starting her best years for it.
   5. The age of puberty ending is not our choice but rather God's and conveys wisdom.
   6. Burning leads to fornication, so then God starts the danger earlier than most admit.
   7. He did not pick the age for lust, ability, or temptation with many years to marriage.
   8. Every farmer with animals knows exactly when to breed young cows after puberty.
   9. Naomi used a similar description to describe waiting for boys to grow (Ruth 1:13).
   10. This is not a description of older girls or women for it is *flower,* not fruit or decay.
   11. John Gill, a great Baptist Bible commentator and Jewish expert, said it was 12½.
   12. English history had minimum ages for marriage at 12 for females and 14 for males.
   13. Prior generations did not have so many women single between 18 and 30 as we do.
   14. In the Bible, marriage occurred in youth, so *wife of thy youth* (Pr 5:18; Mal 2:14).
   15. The frustration or fornication gap in our world is 10-15 years (28 – 18; 28 – 13).
   16. Girls in other generations and nations, specially agrarian, knew far more than ours.
   17. Note that flowers of a woman is menses (Lev 15:24,33; 20:18; Ezek 18:6; 22:10).
   18. Consider female maturation elsewhere (Song 8:8-10; Ezekiel 16:7; 23:3,8,19,21).
   19. Note *Finding a Spouse* (#87-102 of 5/19/2021; #173-174, #409-429 of 4/7/2021).

37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

A. Yet, if a daughter had no need to marry, a father keeping her single did a good thing.

B. Remember all that went before, so you understand the sober reasons against marriage.
   1. Many difficulties of married life are missed by remaining single (7:1; Matt 19:10).
   2. Persecution, then present in Corinth, made married life further difficult (7:25-28).
   3. Shortness and vanity of life should lead wise believers to live unmarried (7:29-31).
   4. Distraction of a spouse should lead spiritual saints to live without care (7:32-35).

C. A man with conviction and strength could try to keep his daughter a perpetual virgin.
   1. In light of reasons Paul gave, spiritually minded men and daughters would agree.
   2. However, this verse does not negate Paul's warning of a need to marry (7:7-9,36).
   3. This verse, in contrast to the previous one, describes a daughter able to be single.

4. References to the father's heart and will reflect the serious nature of the decision.

D. Because a spiritually minded daughter could serve Christ better as a single girl at home with her father, he commended the decision as virtuous in light of his warnings.

38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.

A. To save a father from unnecessary grief, Paul commended both decisions by fathers.

B. The man who blessed his daughter with a fine man in marriage made a good choice.

C. The man keeping a spiritually minded daughter serving Christ made a better choice.

D. This liberty to marry or not marry does not conflict with any other place in Scripture.

E. Remember the overriding situation in Corinth of present distress of persecution (7:26).

Rules for Widows – Verses 39-40

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

A. Wives are freed from marriage by a husband's death, but remarriage must be in Christ.

B. Here is lesson seven in the chapter, Paul's inspired rules for widows about remarrying.

C. Some say Paul here and in Romans 7:1-3 only allowed remarriage if a husband died.

1. Paul argued here from a general rule, ignoring many exceptions of both testaments.
2. We understand the Bible in context, which means the exceptions Jesus and Paul both taught, fornication and desertion, respectively, are to be understood here also.
3. The Lord also added other exceptions by mercy and intent (Matt 12:7; Mark 2:27).
4. The law allowed even more exceptions for remarriage than these under certain conditions and/or with a bill of divorcement (Ex 21:7-11; Deut 21:10-14; 24:1-4).
5. This list from the Law of Moses does not include Hagar, David, or Ezra divorces.
6. In the ordinary course of things, marriage is for life – it is a permanent relationship.
7. When we covenant a marriage, we say, "Till death do us part," but divorce and remarriage is clearly implied, if the situation deteriorates to justify a godly divorce.
8. Jesus allowed divorce and remarriage for fornication, Paul desertion by a pagan.
9. If widows and their right to remarry is the lesson here, divorce is not in his mind.
10. See the author's outline for Romans 7 to fully correct the heresy introduced here.

D. Consistent with all Paul said, a widow, freed from a previous marriage, could remarry.

E. But he added a very important reminder – marriage for a believer must be in the Lord.

1. He taught this elsewhere (11:11; 9:5); the rest of the Bible does also (Ex 34:12-16).

2. Saints are free to marry whomsoever they will, but they must marry another saint.
3. See the sermon outline, *Marriage in the Lord,* to define this spiritual rule … Marriage – Only In The Lord (2 sermons).

40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

A. However, a wife that refrained from marriage follows the inspired instruction of Paul.

B. Consistent with all Paul said before, a widow freed from marriage should stay single.
   1. Paul wrote about the benefits of remaining single from the opening of the chapter.
   2. The reasons for a widow staying single are the same as those given for all others.
   3. There was a present distress; it increased life care; it hindered fully serving Christ.
   4. The key here is happiness, not righteousness, like *trouble in the flesh* above (7:28).
   5. Inspired Paul gave a recommendation, like earlier (7:6-9), though not a command.

C. Paul's recommendation does not contradict I Timothy 5:14 when rightly understood.
   1. Keep in mind there was a present distress that colored marriage in Corinth (7:26).
   2. Paul in I Timothy 5 dealt with full-time financial support of widows in the church.
   3. Young widows so supported would have temptations in the flesh (I Tim 5:11-13).
   4. Due to youth and lusts, they would not be able to live like Anna (Luke 2:36-37).
   5. Paul's remedy for young widows was marriage and children to keep them out of trouble, rather than the risk of putting them on the church dole to later regret it.

D. Since we have no present distress, a young widow is fully free to marry or not marry, if her financial situation or family can support her; otherwise, she ought to marry.

Conclusion:

1. We must follow God's rules for sex, deciding to marry, maximizing marriage and peace, etc. Lord, help us.
2. May He bless us to wisely manage our marriages in all the ways dealt with in these few verses from Paul.
3. God gave an important rule to guide all decisions – avoid carefulness, even in allowed things (I Cor 7:32).
4. There are about ten difficult verses here needing the right division (I Cor 7:1,6,10,12,14,15,25,29,36,40).
5. 7:1 uses *touch* in a way that intends marriage, not merely the light contact of hand or fingers to something.
6. 7:6 states that Paul's rules for marriage and frequent sex in the previous verses were a liberty, not a command.
7. 7:10 honors Jesus for first teaching a rule for marriage of believers; Jesus did not deal with mixed marriages.
8. 7:12 identifies Paul as the only one that addressed mixed marriages of believers to pagans, for Jesus did not.
9. 7:14 says that an intact marriage with two parents makes a family acceptable to God and legitimate to

world.

10. 7:15 says a believer is not bound to a marriage, if the unbeliever divorces, but should not provoke the choice.
11. 7:25 is Paul's inspired judgment to prefer the single state due to Corinth's situation, but it is not a command.
12. 7:29 is grasped by emphasizing the verb *be* as an imperative for married persons to minimize marital impact.
13. 7:36 and the flower of her age is the end of puberty that brings a girl to the age of marriage in the mid teens.
14. 7:40 is again Paul's inspired judgment for widows to remain single for Corinth's situation and I Timothy 5:5.

Additional study:

1. Members may consult the numerous outlines from sermons, Couples' Retreats, and Men's Meetings providing thorough details of our marital sexual duties and privileges and other detailed aspects of marriage from the Bible.
2. Sermon outline about only marrying in the Lord, which is much stricter than just a nominal "Christian" … Marriage – Only In The Lord (2 sermons).
3. Expository commentary for Proverbs 21:3 that introduces other allowances for divorce and remarriage … the Proverbs 21:3 commentary.
4. For a simple review of the basic duties of both spouses to make a marriage perfect for both of the spouses … Perfect Marriages.
5. For detailed duties of marriage, see *Maximizing Your Marriage*, *Covenant of Marriage* … Maximizing Your Marriage (10 sermons), Covenant Of Marriage (2 sermons), The Role of the Woman (2 Sermons), The Role of the Man (2 Sermons), Marriage Rules.
6. For detailed qualities to demand and require in a marriage spouse, see these Rate-a-Date quizzes … Who Can Find a Virtuous Woman?, Looking for One Good Man.
7. For Biblical ideas and approaches to improve your marriage, see these other published options … How to Seduce Your Wife, Marital Speech (3 Sermons), this video (Vimeo), Young Couples Retreat.