

I Corinthians

Chapter 7

Let's open with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

We stop to acknowledge you and to thank you for another opportunity that you have given to us that we might look to you and your Spirit to minister to us.

Open up our hearts and minds to be receptive to your word, to understand your word, and to receive from the ministry of your Spirit. These are such important scriptures, especially for us in these last days, and we confess our need of your Spirit to help us understand them. Draw us to you as we begin this study. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen!

First, let's take a look at where we have come from and where we are going.

We've taken the introduction, the first 9 verses of Chapter 1. We've taken the section on correction as some from the house of Chloe came over to Ephesus to tell Paul about some of the things going on in the church.

So we have taken Chapter 1 Verse 10 through Chapter 6, dealing with those problems.

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Now, we begin the second main section of 1 Corinthians, which is chapter 7 Verse 1 through Chapter 16 Verse 9, and it is the instruction. Remember the first part is the correction, and this is the instruction.

Paul starts out in Verse 1 by saying, now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me:

So he's now going to answer the questions that they had. So not only did the delegation come and tell Paul about the problems in the church, but also the people had questions.

Chapter 7 is the marriage instruction for Gentiles. I emphasize this because this will be a different teaching than what we studied in Matthew Chapters 5, and especially in Chapter 19 on the ministry of marriage to the Jews, to those who are under the law.

Chapter 7 is very important. At the end of Chapter 6, Paul finished out that section about morality by saying "flee fornication."

Every sin that a man commits is outside of the body. But he that commits fornication, and again that is sexual immorality, he sins against his own body.

He says What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you, which you have of God and you are not of your own. And you are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are Gods.

So he finishes that section by saying that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And that's what has caused them to write back to him and ask questions.

Remember that we have studied that he had wrote a letter to them before this one that we don't have. And he's ministering some of the same things, especially about morality, and about how one treats one's body, that it belongs to Christ.

And we have been purchased by Him and His Spirit lives in our body. Our body was made for the Holy Spirit to live in.

So the Gentiles in Corinth, and remember that Corinth was one, if not the most immoral cities in the Roman Empire. In fact, any immoral person, anybody involved in immorality throughout the

kingdom of the Roman Empire was called a Corinthianized person, even if they never lived in Corinth, because everybody knew what a Corinthianized person is.

They had pagan religious ceremonies where prostitution was taking place right in the ceremonies. There was immorality all over the city and you had to be there with your family, your children, whatever the case may be. So they had questions now that they have received Christ.

What about if my marriage partner is not saved and I just got saved, am I to not let the marriage partner touch me because my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that person is not a Christian, so what am I supposed to do?

They had all these questions about various social relationships and various questions about marriage in and of itself.

The reason why we have emphasized that these are marriage instructions for Gentiles is that there are remarks and teachings made in this chapter that is not found anywhere else in the bible.

It's because it was made specifically to Gentiles, again who were not raised under the law, the Tanak, the Old Testament, but who still had questions about relationship.

C.O.

1 Corinthians 7
The Marriage Instructions
for Gentiles

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

It is good for a man not to touch a woman. You can get various commentaries and they will tell you the different views about what the word touch means.

It doesn't mean just to come in contact with somebody. In fact, the Greek word is the word *Haupto* and it means to cling or to be attached.

And you might put as a reference there from John Chapter 20 Verse 17. Remember when Jesus, after He rose from the dead and Mary saw Him in the garden and thought He was the gardener. And when Jesus called her name, Mary, she recognized Him as being the Lord.

Well, she came up to Him, and Jesus said "Don't touch me." But actually, she was clinging to His ankles and she wasn't going to let Him go. And He's saying that you have to stop clinging to me because I have not yet ascended up to my Father.

And so you get this fastening, this clinging, or this attachment. Some people describe this word as representing the physical relationship between a man and a woman and that it's not good to get involved in those kinds of relationships.

But Verse 2 says:

2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, that is sexual immorality, the Lord has provided, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

The reason why I am giving you this expanded view as to this word *Haupto* is because this is the theme throughout Chapter 7. You are going to hear some things that you may or may not agree with. You are going to hear some things that are pretty harsh.

And some people have actually said that this chapter proves that Paul is against women.

But the whole thread through this thing, and I want you to keep in mind 1 Corinthians Chapter 7 Verse 35 which reads "And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, which means proper, and that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction."

That's it! Paul is going to say I've got some commands from the Lord, I've got some things that I want to teach you, and by the way, I've got the Holy Spirit. You can take it one way or another but this is what I teach in all the churches, as Paul is going to tell us.

But he says you don't have to listen to me. If you don't go by these principles, your devotion to the Lord is going to be distracted. At one place, and under certain relationships, he says that it good for them to stay unmarried.

But then if they get married, they haven't sinned, but such will have trouble in the flesh. Paul says that such will have trouble in the flesh because it will be a distraction, but if you cannot stay single then go ahead and get married.

Now I want you to see not only the thread here, but as it starts here in Verse 1, it is good for a man not to be attached, occupied, or addicted to a woman.

And you will see this all the way through. Paul is not actually saying celibacy or singleness. What he is saying is that's the best route to go. And we will see this as we go through as to why he's saying this.

So he says that it is good for a man not to be attached or occupied with a woman. Nevertheless, and remember that we are in Corinth now, but to prevent fornication, God has provided for every man to have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

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

Then he says let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence:

In the Greek, it's that which is owing to her. So that which is owing to her, and likewise also the wife what is owing to the husband.

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.

The wife has not power, and that's literally the word authority. 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.

Hitting at the very source, probably the biggest problem in a marriage relationship is when people play games with the physical side of the relationship.

Paul says that is not to be because your body belongs to the partner for what satisfies him or her. And this so that a person can avoid fornication. If he or she is happy, they won't go looking around elsewhere.

So God has made that provision within the marriage relationship.

But then in Verse 5, under depravation. That is when one of the marriage partners deprives the other.

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.

It says defraud not one the other. And there are four exceptions listed here.

Number one: Except it be with consent for. It's an agreement.

Secondly: It's for a short time.

Thirdly: For the purpose that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer;

So the only excuse or reason that Paul gives for a married couple to be physically separated and not be there to minister and serve one another is if both agree that it's for a short time, and it's for the purpose of the man going and praying and fasting and seeking the things of the Lord. According to Paul, there is no other reason.

Fourthly: And that they come together again, denoting quickly.

The purpose: That Satan tempt you not for your incontinency, that is for your lack of control.

So don't let Satan interrupt the relationship, but be ministering and serving in the relationship for which God intended it so that Satan does not tempt you.

Now he says in Verse 6 that this is all said out of concession.

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

There's no commandment of the Lord when He was here and He didn't teach anything about this.

So Paul says, and we will see this later on where he says I believe that I have the Holy Spirit. He says I speak this by permission and not by way of commandment. He says I can't quote any scripture to you for this.

His position in it in Verse 7:

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.

For I would, or wish that all men were even as I myself.

Paul is not married even though he probably was married. The reason was that he was a member of the Sanhedrin when persecution broke out against the early church, and one of the requirements for being in the Sanhedrin is that the person be married.

So Paul's wife had either passed away or she divorced him because of his conversion. Whatever the case may be, we don't know. But he says I'm single, and I wished, not commanding, but I wished that everybody was as I myself.

But every man hath his proper gift. That's the word Charisma. He says that everybody has his gift from God, one after this manner, and one after that. Some people just cannot be single.

Beginning with Verse 8, the principles for the unmarried and the widows:

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

I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, that it is good for them if they abide even as I am.

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

But except for the passion factor, if they cannot contain themselves, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

That's what it means. So if a person cannot contain, it is better to get married, and he will pick that up for us in a moment again as to the problems even in that relationship.

The principles for partners in marriage:

Now obviously, a believer is either married to a believer, or a believer can be married to a non-believer.

He says first of all in Verses 10 and 11 about separation. There are three different Greek words that are used. One of them is separation but all three of them have to do with divorce.

So we are not talking about a temporary arrangement here. We're talking about what is commanded for married people to do in the midst of their difficult circumstances.

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

He says to the married I command, not I, but the Lord. So he says we already have some commands from the Lord on this.

Matthew 5:31 and 32, and Matthew 19 Verse 5 through 8 is the command of the Lord. He says the only reason for divorce as it was originally designed, and God did design divorce. Numbers Chapter 24 gives us some commands about that.

He says its sexual immorality based on one of the partners in the relationship. It doesn't mean a person has to divorce them, but He says that is the only reason behind divorce because of sin.

So he says the Lord has a commandment here. He says let not the wife depart from the husband: That's a command!

One key word through all relationships that we're going to see is that the believer is commanded not to initiate anything, not divorce, not separation, nothing! What the other marriage partner does, He has some commands about that.

But first of all, let not the wife depart from her husband, whether he's saved or unsaved, she is not to break the relationship.

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.

But if she does depart, and you say wait a minute, I thought you said that she's not supposed to? Well, some people do it anyway! And he says that under those circumstances, she only has two choices: let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband:

Those are the only two choices that she has. If she marries outside of that, she is living in adultery.

Here's the command for the husband:

And let not the husband put away his wife. Again, the technical term for divorce. Both marriage partners are not to initiate the breaking of the relationship.

Now when we have mixed marriage under sanctification:

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.

But to the rest I speak, not the Lord:

So he says we don't have anything from the Lord on this. But here's what Paul teaches in the churches about these relationships.

First of all, just by a mixed relationship to begin with, we're commanded in scripture in 2 Corinthians 6:14, do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

A believer is never to marry a non-believer. For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion has light with darkness? There is no spiritual unity!

And we know from Ephesians Chapter 5 that marriage was designed by God to represent the relationship between Christ and His church. The man represents Christ and the woman represents the church, and they are to be a testimony for the Lord in their relationship.

So he says if any brother has a wife that believes not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, the command is let him not put her away. Let him not divorce her.

This is a Christian man who has a non-believing wife. Now how did that situation come in? Obviously two non-believers go married and then later on one of them got saved when Paul came through town.

So now one of their questions is since my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, am I supposed to have anything to do with this non-believer?

Paul says if she is pleased to live with him anyway, then he is not to divorce her.

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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.

And the woman who has a husband that does not believe, and if he is pleased to dwell with her anyway, let her not leave him.

The reason:

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.

That verse has caused much by way of debate, because many believe the word sanctified means salvation, but it doesn't.

It does have to do with salvation in that the act of the Holy Spirit and being set apart, and that's what he is saying here, is that if a non-believer is pleased to dwell with the believer, that person is living under the influence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life.

Also, notice at the end and I'll give you the literal translation about children. It says else were your children, but it is literally else are your children unclean; but now they are holy.

It doesn't say that they are clean. They're still unclean. The word holy is the same word for sanctification. They're unclean but they are set apart for under the Lord's influence.

And we will see in a moment that we're to take into consideration why is the non-believer supposed to stay with the believer, and the believer is not to initiate divorce or the breakup of the relationship.

It is because the non-believer says "If you follow the Lord, I'll stick around. I don't want to leave."

So it's not compromise. If you follow the Lord and the non-believer says it doesn't bother me any, it's that the non-believer is set apart to be under the influence of Christ in your life.

An example is in 1 Peter Chapter 3 Verses 1 through 7 about the woman who had a non-believing husband. He says live your life from out of your heart in front of him.

Don't try to impress him with outward dress and appearance, but let him see the hidden person of the heart so that there's a possibility that he might be saved. There's no guarantee. So that's the message.

The non-believer is still not forgiven, he's not saved, the children are still unclean, but they are set apart under the influence of God's Spirit in the believer.

But then there's the rejection part. What happens if the non-believer rejects and says I'm out of here?

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.

But if the unbelieving departs, and this is a command: let him depart.

I emphasize that because there is a tendency to go the other way with it where the believer sees the non-believer saying "If you're going to be a Christian and you're going to follow the Lord, I'm out of here!"

And as soon as they go out the door, the believer goes running after them. It's a command to let them depart!

The conclusion at the end of Verse 15:

A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God has called us to peace.

In other words, if the believing brother or sister is faithful to Christ, and the other marriage partner decides he or she does not want anything to do with it, the believer is not held in bondage. The one who has departed is.

This brother or sister, and in fact, the term bondage is a perfect tense. The believer is not held in bondage. They are free to re-marry.

Consideration:

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?

That's why he says that if they are pleased to stay with you, let them stay. But if they want to go, let them go because God's called us to be at peace and not have contention.

And remember the thread throughout this entire chapter that your devotion to the Lord will be without distraction. That's what it's all about!

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.

But as God has distributed to every man, as the Lord has called every one, so let him walk.

That's another thread throughout this entire chapter, is that whatever condition or circumstances you are in when you got saved, that's how you are supposed to serve the Lord.

So in Verse 17, Paul says that this is his decision. And so ordain I in all the churches. This is his teaching for the Gentiles in the churches.

We're getting into some heavy stuff here right after this section. Every principle and precept of life is found right here in 1 Corinthians Chapter 7.

You can apply the teachings in 1 Corinthians Chapter 7 to any circumstance in life. It's what the whole bible is teaching. The believer is not to initiate anything.

They're supposed to serve the Lord in whatever circumstances they are in, and if they're faithful to Christ, they are not held in bondage.

The precepts for life:

The first illustration in Verses 18 to 20 is about race, that is Jewish or Gentile.

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

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

So just keep God's commandments. If you're Gentile, you don't have to become Jewish. If you're Jewish, you don't have to become un-Jewish. It's in the heart!

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

However you were called by God, whenever you were saved, that's how you are to serve Him.

Next, the illustration of status:

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

Are you called being a servant?

Literally slave. That's a literal slave that has been purchased out of the marketplace, and some human being owns him.

Did you get saved while you were a slave? Let it not be a concern to you:

And you can just see the "slave union" marching down Main Street and saying "Now that we are Christians, we want our rights!"

Paul is saying "What rights? God saved you as a slave and He wants to use you to minister to the other slaves. Don't let it bother you. Whatever your circumstance is, you serve Christ!"

But if you may be made free, use it.

And you can go the other way too, where your master comes up to you and says "You're free to go. You don't have to be a slave anymore." Oh no, no, no, I was called by God to be a slave so I am not going to take my freedom.

Paul says if you are offered your freedom, take it, but serve the Lord in the way you were called!

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.

For he that is called in the Lord, being a slave, is the Lord's freeman:

If a slave receives Christ, he's free in his heart. And he has found the profession or occupation through which God is going to use him to minister to other people. But he's free!

Likewise also he that is called, being a free man, is the Lord's slave.

So just because in the human sense, I might be more free than a slave to move about and do as I would choose, where a slave cannot, what he is saying is that the people who are free and not in slavery, they have just as big a problem because they don't have that freedom, they are a slave of Christ!

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

You are bought with a price;

At the end of Chapter 6, that's what he said. You are purchased with a price.

Just as the physical slaves were purchased out of the marketplace, so Christ, when He died on the cross, he purchased us with His life!

Do not be slaves of men.

Paul in Galatians Chapter 1 Verse 10, he says I am a slave, a servant of Christ. If I should become a slave of men, I would no longer be a servant of Christ. Do not be slaves of men!

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

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

The principles concerning virgins:

Verses 25 and 26 leads us into some other teachings that are very important:

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.

He says, now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord:

Some of the men were saying "Well, I have a daughter who's never been married and you know how corrupt this town is and the men that are in it, and I don't want my daughters to come near those immoral men of the city." What are we to do?

Paul says I have no commandment from the Lord, but I'm going to give my judgment, as one that has obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

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

I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, and that's what Paul called it there in Corinth, the present condition of distress.

I say that it is good for a man so to be.

Listen to this, these are good:

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

Are you bound unto a wife? That's the word for marriage. Do not seek to be loosed.

You see, don't initiate. If you are married, don't seek to become un-married.

Art you loosed from a wife? And again, the word "loosed," again is the technical term for divorce. Are you loosed from a wife? Then do not seek a wife.

But listen to this:

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.

But and if you marry, thou have

If you have been loosed from a wife, do not seek a wife, but if you do marry, you have not sinned.

Some people say "Well, that has to do with the virgins up in Verse 25, not with the person that has been loosed from a wife."

But look what he says next:

And if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. It's talking about both people, not just one.

Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh:

You ought to take that one and cut it out and take it down to the print shop and have it expanded stuck all over your house to remind you, especially on the inside going out, because that's usually where you want to go when the house is in turmoil!

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Such will have trouble in the flesh. It's a fact of life. Whether you like each other or not, there's going to be trouble in the flesh.

But I spare you.

Paul says if you don't want to go by my council, and by the way, I'm convinced I have God's Spirit with me to give me this council, I don't have any quote from the Lord, I don't have any scripture. And you can make that excuse if you want to, but guess what? You're going to say "Forget what Paul said, I'm want to do something different."

Paul says I know what you're going to do. Next time I see you, you're going to be complaining about all the trouble in the flesh!

Why did Paul, and remember in Verse 35, the motive for Paul teaching this way is to say so that your devotion to the Lord will be without distraction.

The principles of life:

1 Corinthians Chapter 7 Verses 29 through 31 is probably one of the most important texts in the bible.

These are the principles of life and there are five of them. If you apply these principles to every situation in life, you have God's message to His people.

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

This I say, brethren, the time is short:

Either he expected the Lord to come back or he's just making a statement. We only have a few years here compared to eternity.

James says in James Chapter 4 that our life is like a vapor, here and gone, that's it! We are not here very long compared to eternity. Time is short.

So here's what he says to do.

Number 1: It remains, that both they that have wives should be as though they have none;

That doesn't mean that men can date if they're married!

Do you see how we are connecting the principles? In Verse 1, it says I say for a man not to be attached to a woman. In other words, when you get into any relationship, your devotion to the Lord changes. It changes!

Once you get married, you cannot be solely devoted to Christ. You are divided. You're in conflict all of the time. Here's what the Lord wants me to do, but here's what that person wants me to do, and this person over here is not happy!

A married man is supposed to live in total devotion to the Lord as if he's not married. Now that doesn't mean that he avoids the wife. Do you understand what I am saying? It's talking about his devotion. He has to seek the Lord as to what the Lord wants him and them to do.

In other words, it's the opposite of compromise. Time is short!

Secondly in Verse 30:

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;

And those who are weeping should be as though they are not weeping;

In other words, go ahead and cry. There's times when you have to cry. Just don't get into it. It's like cry, get it over with, and move on. That's what he is saying!

And they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; He says that even in the rejoicing times, rejoice as though not rejoicing. Don't get into it. It's not going to last very long!

And they that purchase, as though they do not possess;

Now that's a good one! Do you own anything? Or should I ask the question differently, does anything own you?

Purchase as though not possessing it, even if it's in your name. It can really distract your devotion. The more possessions you acquire, the more time, effort, and money it takes.

And then the Lord leads you down a road to serve Him or learn of Him or something and there's too many things that I possess that need to be taken care of.

Fifthly:

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

And those that use the world, as not abusing it:

The word abusing is literally "over using." We have to use the world. We've got to eat. We have to work. We have to take care of our necessities.

But he says don't over use it. We tend to not use the world for our necessities, but we get totally occupied.

There's a bumper sticker that says "I owe, I owe, so off to work I go!" We're enslaved and we try to fit the Lord in whenever we can.

These are the five principles of life. Whatever you have to take care of, if it's time to cry, if it's time to laugh, if it's time to purchase something, take care of it but don't get into it!

There are people who have lost loved ones, and not only have they grieved for their death, but they stayed grieving for the rest of their lives.

I can understand the grief. There has to be a time to heal and there has to be a time to move on. You always carry that grief. But don't let it occupy you.

The problems in marriage:

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:

Paul says, but I would have you to be without carefulness.

There are two Greek words, Merimna, and Merimnao, and it is a Greek word that means to have the attention of your mind occupied. It is Satan's only weapon against the believer as the bible says.

Jesus said do not be anxious for your life, what you shall eat, drink, or what you shall put on. That's the word Merimna. And right before that in Chapter 6, it says that a human being was created with the capacity to only serve one thing. You cannot serve God and mammon, which is physical things. It's impossible!

I can say I do because I believe it with my head, but with my life, who am I serving? What am I serving?

So after I am saved, my soul belongs to Christ. And then what Jesus wants me to do is He wants me to go hear His word so that my mind will be renewed, transformed, and changed.

So you can see why that's Satan's only weapon. It keeps our mind occupied. People can even go to church or go to bible study, and really it means absolutely nothing because their mind is thinking of all the things they're going to do when they get out. They are not even paying attention. They are not focused on the things that we should be focused on.

Satan's only weapon is the occupation of the attention of the mind, not the occupation of the mind, but the occupation of the attention of the mind. He attempts to keep our minds busy and to wear them out to where we have nothing left for Christ. I want you to be without Merimna.

Here's the teaching on devotion:

He that is unmarried cares, and that's the word Merimna, is occupied for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

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

But he that is married cares, and again that's Merimna. He's occupied for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.

Now he's not saying "sometimes." And he's not saying that these are people that are not good Christians. He's saying that this is just the way it is.

If you're not married, you have the focus on one thing. You can serve the Lord and do what He wants you to do.

That's why earlier he says time is short. Let those that have wives be as though they don't. I mean that's the kind of approach and devotion you have to have with Christ!

Now that I'm married, I can't say "Well Lord, if I wasn't married, I could obey you, but you know, I'm in the Adam Club!"

Back in Genesis Chapter 3, God came to Adam and said "What's this breaking of the commandment that I gave you? Did you eat of the fruit that I said not to eat of?"

Adam says "The woman you gave me!"

And do you know what his judgment was based on? He says because you listened to the voice of your wife and not unto me. Wow, compromise!

And it is normal and it is natural because not everybody is on the same frequency all of the time.

There might be times when you are looking forward to the word and your marriage partner says let's go to the movies. And in your mind you might say "Oh well, we went to church three times last week so we can go." And so there's this conflict!

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.

He says there is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord, again the word cares is the word Merimna.

In order that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married cares, Merimna, for the things of the world, and how she may please her husband.

M.V.

I Corinthians 7:35

Now in Verse 35, you see how this all fits in:

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.

And this I speak for your own profit, or benefit; not that I may cast a snare around you, but for that which is proper, and that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction, period!

It doesn't make any difference if a person is married or not married. He's saying that the benefit of being single is that you have a single devotion to the Lord.

But if you are distracted with all the passions that go on, then it is best to get married, but you're going to have trouble in the flesh because you're going to say "Okay, I got married and settled down so here I go, I'm going to start serving the Lord."

What do you mean I can't serve the Lord? What do you mean you don't want to go? What do you mean if I leave, never come back? There's conflict!

And I think that it is interesting, and this is just a side note, but in this text, this is the only place where the word Merimna and the word for distraction are found in any literature except for one other place.

And that other place is in Luke Chapter 10 with Mary and Martha. And that's where many believe Paul got the teachings for this text. It's the only time that distraction and occupation are found in the same places in all of literature.

Remember, Jesus came to the house of Mary and Martha and Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and was listening to Him teach, and Martha was in the kitchen "Stewing," literally!

She's making food. And she's got all of these people in her house and Mary is not helping her. Mary knows that the Lord is teaching so she decides to go out and listen to Him.

So Martha, and I'm going to give it to you the way the Greek reads it because it's very dramatic. Martha gets "fed up," and she comes in, and the Greek text says that she stands over Jesus, and she says to Him "Don't you care that my sister has left me alone to serve?"

Now there is no answer in the text except that Martha comes back and says "Well then tell her to help me." Obviously Jesus nodded His head. "Don't you care that my sister has left me alone to serve? Well then, tell her to help me if you care!"

Jesus said "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and distracted about many things. Mary has chosen the only thing that's necessary in life, which I will not take away from her." That's what He said!

She is eating that portion of spiritual food and He told Martha "Yea, I care that she has left you alone, but not so that she come help you, but why don't you shut the burner off and you come out here!

Even "service to Christ" can be a distraction when it takes you away from the word!

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There are actually people who join churches and volunteer to do "church work" to get out of hearing the word. "Oh, I am just so busy in my church." Well, do you ever sit in on the church service? "Nope, I never have time. I have so much to do." Do you ever hear the word? "Well, you know, I have my devotions, but I never get to hear the word." Always busy. You cannot serve God and mammon!

Now in Verses 36 and 37, we are back to the father who has the virgin daughter:

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.

But if any man thinks that he behaves himself improper toward his virgin daughter, and she passes the flower of her age, that is she enters into a phase where she is now able to bear children, and need so require, that is she wants to get married, then let him do what he will, he does not sin: let them marry.

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.

Nevertheless he that stands stedfast in his heart, and that's number one, firm in his heart.

Number two, having no necessity. You don't have Mr. "I'm interested in your daughter" standing on your doorstep. No necessity!

But has power over his own will, and has so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin daughter, he does well.

Conclusion:

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

The principles for the wife in Verses 39 and 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.

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives;

Genesis Chapter 2 Verse 24 is your text. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives. But if her husband be dead, she is at freedom to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. It must be to a believer.

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

He's not against women. He's not against marriage. He says that for some people, God hasn't given them the grace to be single. So if they get married, that's just considered the normal social thing.

But he says here's what you're going to find. You'll have trouble in the flesh. You'll have distractions all over the place. And time is short. How many distractions can you have? How long can you go with all the distractions?

If you say it looks like there's no "let-up" for the next fifty years because I have all the things and people to take care of, watch out for the trap!

He even ministers to those who aren't married. You're going to go through a natural process where you're going to have to choose between what the Lord wants you to do and what your marriage partner is pulling you to do in another direction.

So men, he says, you're the heads of the family. Seek the Lord and your devotion to Him as if you're not married. You only have one devotion and that's to Christ.

When we get married, when we have friends, when we have close friends, it should add to our relationship with the Lord, not take away from it.

There's a lot of wisdom in Chapter 7, and as I said, if you take these principles, and if you catch the thread that's going right down the middle, you can apply it to any situation in life.

If I were to sum up the chapter, it would be "Whatever you got to do, take care of it and move on. Don't get stuck in it!"

Let's close with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

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Again we thank you for this time and opportunity to learn from you. There are so many important truths that we need to understand. We confess our total dependency upon your Spirit to take these truths and minister them to our hearts and minds.

There are so many times that we get caught up in the everyday distractions of life and we get busy, sometimes to the point of exhaustion to where we don't have the time to spend in your word.

We ask that you teach us to slow down. Teach us what it means to truly follow you. We cannot put you second. You must come first. So we pray that by your Spirit, you will lead us and guide us and keep us on the right path so that we might continue to run the race that you set before us.

Help us to grow through your word. We pray for those who have not yet surrendered their lives to you that they might be drawn by your Spirit, and that they might come and be saved. We thank you again for who you are and for your provision, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen!