

**“MARRIAGE:  
TO HAVE AND TO HOLD”**  
1 Corinthians 7:1-9

## INTRODUCTION

In 1 Corinthians, chapters 1-6 are corrective. In chapter 7 Paul is answering questions. (Verse 5:9 refers to an earlier letter. Chapter 16 indicates that Stephanas, Fortunatus and Archaicus delivered that one and brought back a letter with questions). Now after covering the issues of sexual immorality, Paul clears up questions on marriage. While not all aspects are covered, he talks about a very sensitive subject, sex within marriage.

## FOR MARRIAGE

**“...It is good for a man not to touch a woman”.** 1 Cor. 7:1 NKJV. It is good not to have sexual relations with a woman, or don't have sexual relations with someone who is not your wife. The challenge in Corinth was their world view of accepting anything. The accepted sexual ethics have become more liberal in recent years, and that has even taken place in the professed body of Christ. There has been a great regression, evidence of the wayside heart condition.

## GOD'S DESIGN

God designed marriage. One man, one woman. Thus, sex is God's invention, but there are godly guidelines and responsibilities that go along with this. The first responsibility is the man's. **“Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.”** 1 Cor. 7:3 NKJV. Rendering the affection that is due to the wife and then the wife to the husband. There has to be agreement between the husband and wife so that there is not a conflict caused by selfishness. Sometimes the husband and wife don't have the same desire, or seem out of sync. When this occurs, out of love, there are factors to consider: sensitivity to previous abuse, to previous infidelity, to prevailing health issues, and/or other issues that may result from lack of trust, bitterness, or anger. You must have a healthy spiritual and emotional relationship first!

## FOR EACH OTHER

When husband and wife exchange vows, loyalty, love, hearts *and* bodies are given. Physical attraction is still part of marriage! When couples are first in love, they really pay attention to this. Maybe now, not as much. We should do our best for our spouses to not let ourselves go. Sometimes, unfortunately, there may be a power struggle, and manipulation that takes place. The one with less desire is in control and may try to manipulate or punish the other.

As Paul mentions, the only reason to not have sexual relations in the marriage are for spiritual reasons such as fasting or prayer. It is not right for couples to go months or years denying their spouse sexual relations.

## CONSIDER

Satan is there to tempt the husband or wife when there is a denial of sexual relations. Since marriage is the only place where God approves of sex, neither spouse should make it more difficult! While giving in to temptation is no excuse, we have to be aware that the enemy of our soul will try to distort it and corrupt sex into something it shouldn't be. Often, worldly advice and expectations are part of that distortion.

Paul's singleness is mentioned in the text. **“...It is good for them if they remain even as I am.”** 1 Cor. 7:8 NKJV. As a former member of the Sanhedrin he was married at one time. (His wife may have died or wouldn't stay with him once he was saved). Some have the gift of singleness. It is not superior, but for what Paul was called to do, it was very practical. ***If you are single, consider that God wants to use you as such. “...for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:” Phil. 4:11 NKJV.***

While many in the church now struggle with the godly guidelines for sex, it is how God designed it. *How can you be a better mate to your spouse? What have you allowed in your life that has hindered fulfilling your role physically in the marriage?* This can be an awkward discussion within a marriage! It takes great maturity to live in a godly fashion. Both husband and wife should strive to be on the same page in the area of sexual relations!

## PRAY .....

- \* for Calvary Chapel Academy and the School of Ministry. May the Lord bring the increase!
- \* for the Men's Retreat at LeTourneau, that men would be strengthened to stand for our Lord.
- \* for the Women's' Retreat, “The Way Home”. May the Lord save and deliver those who have been running from Him!