



# MATTERS OF MARRIAGE, SINGLENESS, AND DIVORCE

1 Corinthians 7:1-16

## LESSON THEME

God, in His sovereignty, has ordained the roles and boundaries of both marriage and singleness, ordering each not toward self-fulfillment but toward sacrificial faithfulness and service for the sake of His glory.

# Three Responses to the Corinthian Church

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- I. Paul's Response to Celibacy and Intimacy (1-5)
  - A. Celibacy is Honorable (1)
  - B. Married Couples Intimate Responsibilities (2-5)

# Six Charges for Covenant Couples

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## Christian Husbands

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### 1. One Woman

- *“each man is to have his own wife,”* (2a)

## Christian Wives

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### 1. One Man

- *“and each woman is to have her own husband.”* (2b)

# Six Charges for Covenant Couples

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## Christian Husbands

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1. One Woman

### 2. Sexual Obligation to Wife

- *“The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife,” (3a)*

## Christian Wives

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1. One Man

### 2. Sexual Obligation to Husband

- *“and likewise also the wife to her husband.” (3b)*

# Six Charges for Covenant Couples

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## Christian Husbands

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1. One Woman
2. Sexual Obligation
- 3. Authority Over Wife's Body**
  - *'The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does;'* (4a)

## Christian Wives

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1. One Man
2. Sexual Obligation
- 3. Authority Over Husband's Body**
  - *"and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does."* (4b)

# Six Charges for Covenant Couples

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## Christian Husbands

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1. One Woman
2. Sexual Obligation
3. Authority Over Wife's Body
- 4. Do Not Deprive Your Wife**
  - “*Stop depriving one another,*” (5a)

## Christian Wives

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1. One Man
2. Sexual Obligation
3. Authority Over Husband's Body
- 4. Do Not Deprive Your Husband**
  - “*Stop depriving one another,*” (5a)

# Six Charges for Covenant Couples

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## Christian Husbands

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1. One Woman
2. Sexual Obligation
3. Authority Over Wife's Body
4. Do Not Deprive Your Wife

### **5. Commit to Praying for Your Wife**

- *“except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer,” (5b)*

## Christian Wives

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1. One Man
2. Sexual Obligation
3. Authority Over Husband's Body
4. Do Not Deprive Your Husband

### **5. Commit to Praying for Your Husband**

- *“except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer,” (5b)*

# Six Charges for Covenant Couples

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## Christian Husbands

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1. One Woman
2. Sexual Obligation
3. Authority Over Wife's Body
4. Do Not Deprive Your Wife
5. Commit to Praying for Your Wife
- 6. Avoid Satan's Deceptions**

- *"and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control," (5c)*

## Christian Wives

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1. One Man
2. Sexual Obligation
3. Authority Over Husband's Body
4. Do Not Deprive Your Husband
5. Commit to Praying for Your Husband
- 6. Avoid Satan's Deceptions**

- *"and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control," (5c)*

# Three Responses to the Corinthian Church

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- I. Paul's Response to Celibacy and Intimacy (1-5)
- II. Paul's Response to Singles and Widows (6-9)
  - A. Cognizant of each Person's Gift (6-7)
  - B. Call to Remain Celibate (8)
  - C. Concede to Marriage if Self-Control Lacks (9)

“How, in practical terms, can people know whether they have the gift of singleness? Throughout the history of the church, many men and women, like Paul, remained single and were able to effectively serve the lord. Scripture does not claim that people who are gifted to be single have no sexual desire and no interest in the close companionship that marriage offers. Instead, those who are gifted to be single can be content without being married and are able to keep sexual desires under control.”

Jim Newheiser, *“Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage”*

# Three Responses to the Corinthian Church

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- I. Paul's Response to Celibacy and Intimacy (1-5)
- II. Paul's Response to Singles and Widows (6-9)
- III. Paul's Response to Divorce (10-16)
  - A. Exhortation from God to Remain in Matrimony (10-11)

# Exhortation from God to Remain in Matrimony (10-11)

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## Christian Husbands

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- **Do Not Divorce Your Christian Wife**
  - “*and that the husband should not divorce his wife*” (11b)

## Christian Wives

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- **Do Not Divorce Your Christian Husband**
  - “*that the wife should not leave her husband*” (10b)

# Exhortation from God to Remain in Matrimony (10-11)

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## Christian Husbands

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- Do Not Divorce Your Christian Wife
- **Do Not Divorce to Remarry Another**

## Christian Wives

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- Do Not Divorce Your Christian Husband
- **Do Not Divorce to Remarry Another**
  - *“but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried,” (11a)*

# Exhortation from God to Remain in Matrimony (10-11)

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## Christian Husbands

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- Do Not Divorce Your Christian Wife
- Do Not Divorce to Remarry Another
- **Do Not Divorce, but Reconcile**

## Christian Wives

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- Do Not Divorce Your Christian Husband
- Do Not Divorce to Remarry Another
- **Do Not Divorce, but Reconcile**
  - *“or else be reconciled to her husband,” (11b)*

# Three Responses to the Corinthian Church

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- I. Paul's Response to Celibacy vs. Intimacy (1-5)
- II. Paul's Response to Singles and Widows (6-9)
- III. Paul's Response to Divorce (10-16)
  - A. Exhortation from God to Remain in Matrimony (10-11)
  - B. Exhortation from Paul to Remain in Matrimony (12-14)

# Exhortation from Paul to Remain in Matrimony (12-14)

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## Christian Husbands with Non-Christian Wives

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- **Remain in Marriage (12).**

*“if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her.” (12)*

## Christian Wives with Non-Christian Husbands

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- **Remain in Marriage (13)**

*“And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away.” (13)*

# Exhortation from Paul to Remain in Matrimony (12-14)

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## Christian Husbands with Non-Christian Wives

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- Remain in Marriage (12)
- **Consecrate Your Unbelieving Wife (14b)**

*“And the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband;” (14b)*

- **Consecrate Your Children (14c)**

*“for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.” (14c)*

## Christian Wives with Non-Christian Husbands

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- Remain in Marriage (13)
- **Consecrate Your Unbelieving Husband (14a)**

*“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife,” (14a)*

- **Consecrate Your Children (14c)**

*“for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.” (14c)*

# Three Responses to the Corinthian Church

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- I. Paul's Response to Celibacy vs. Intimacy (1-5)
- II. Paul's Response to Singles and Widows (6-9)
- III. Paul's Response to Divorce (10-16)
  - A. Exhortation from God to Remain in Matrimony (10-11)
  - B. Exhortation from Paul to Remain in Matrimony (12-14)
  - C. Exonerated from Remaining in Abandoned Matrimony (15-16)

# Application

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1. In singleness or marriage, purify your heart and renew your mind with the Word of God. (Psalm 119:9-11; Rom.12:2)
2. In singleness or marriage, remain content in the sovereign plan of God. (Phil.4:11-13)
3. If you desire to be married, prepare yourselves to lead or submit to a godly spouse. (Eph.5:22-33)
4. In your time of singleness, commit yourselves to serving the Lord faithfully. (1 Cor.7:32, 34b)

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

- How does Paul's view of singleness challenge the idea that marriage is necessary for a full or meaningful life?
- How can singles cultivate contentment without suppressing godly desires for marriage?
- What dangers arise when marriage becomes an idol rather than a gift?