

# Marriage

(Part 3)  
1 Corinthians 7

We must remember that truth always harmonizes with truth.

*Matthew 5:32 "But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication..."*

*Matthew 19:9 "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication..."*

## Context

- ▶ CORINTH: Its culture and history:
- ▶ "Things whereof ye wrote..." (verses 1, 25, 8:1)
- ▶ The issue is: *Is it right for one unmarried to marry, or if already married, to remain married?*
- ▶ The issue is not: the eligibility of one to get married. *cf. Matthew 14:4*

## Context Of 1 Corinthians 7

The Corinthians had questions regarding the morality of marriage itself.

1. Some evidently doubted that a Christian could marry and engage in sexual relations, and were inclined toward celibacy. (verses 1-7)
  - a. Some who were married were abstaining from sexual relations (cf. verse 5)
2. Others were considering separating from their mates (verses 10-11).
3. Some were confused as to what they should do if they were married to an unbeliever (verses 12-15)
4. May a Christian widow marry? (verses 39-40)

## Instructions To Believers Married To Unbelievers

1 Corinthians 7:12-16

### Desertion and remarriage? Verse 15

CONTEXT: To answer the questions and concerns of the Corinthians.

1. Should a Christian man married to a non-Christian woman sever the relationship? (verse 12)
2. Should a Christian woman married to a non-Christian man sever the relationship? (verse 13)
3. Are Christians defiled by such a relationship, as they were in the OT? (verse 14)
4. Are children born to this relationship illegitimate? (verse 14)
5. Is the Christian guilty of sin if the non-Christian leaves? (verses 15-16)

### Verse 15 “NOT UNDER BONDAGE...”

Does it allow remarriage?

- ▶ We are “*not under bondage*” to subject our faith to an unbelieving mate any more than a slave does to his unbelieving master. (cf. verses 22–23)

### “Pauline Privilege”

Puts a premium on mixed marriages.

- ▶ Why would Paul make it acceptable for a Christian to remarry after a non-Christian departs?
- ▶ Yet, in verses 10–11 he forbids the married couple from divorcing or from remarrying?

### “Pauline Privilege”

Denies the universality of God’s marriage law.

*Matthew 19:9 “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.”*

### Believers Married To Unbelievers Encouraged By The Possibility Of Converting Their Spouses.

*Verse 16 “For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”*

*1 Peter 3:1 “In like manner, ye wives, (be) in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of their wives”*

### “Remain In Your Calling”

(verses 17–24)

*Verse 17 “Only, as the Lord hath distributed (assigned KJV) to each man, as God hath called each, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all the churches.”*

*Verse 20 “Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called.”*

*Verse 24 “Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God.”*

### “Remain In Your Calling”

(verses 17–24)

Context Is Celibacy Versus Marriage:

- ▶ Unmarried and widows – *Celibacy not wrong. (verses 1, 8, 40). Marriage with obligations. (verses 2–7)*
- ▶ Those already married – *(verses 10–11) “depart not...”*
- ▶ Mixed marriages – *(verses 12–13) Believer not to initiate separation.*

“Remain In Your Calling”  
(verses 17–24) Context...

Issue has not changed!  
The issue is: *Is it right for one unmarried to marry, or if already married, to remain married?*

The issue is NOT eligibility for marriage. (cf. Matthew 14:4)

“Remain In Your Calling”  
(verses 17–24) Context...

- The issue IS NOT the same as that addressed by Jesus, “*Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every cause?*” Matthew 19:3
- The issue IS NOT whether the put away fornicator may remarry.
- The issue IS NOT whether unscriptural marriages contracted before conversion may continue.

“Remain In Your Calling”  
(verses 17–24) Context...

- What the context is NOT teaching.  
Those who are involved in sinful relationships, whether it be adulterous, incestuous, homosexual, or polygamous may “*remain in your calling.*” (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9–11)

“Remain In Your Calling”  
(verses 17–24) Context...

- What the context IS NOT teaching.  
“Some of us have gone through marriages that didn't work out – I want you to be encouraged today that it's alright. You know what? Serve God where you are. Build the strong marriage where you are.” (Terry Harrison)  
<http://qhcoc.org/media-resources/sermons/>

“Remain In Your Calling”  
(verses 17–24) Context...

- What the context IS teaching.  
Paul is only considering situations that God “*assigns (KJV)*” to each, all of which are NOT sinful conditions.

“Remain In Your Calling”  
(verses 17–24)

- Paul illustrates this principle with circumcision (verses 18–19) and slavery (verses 21–23).

### “Remain In Your Calling” (verses 17–24)

#### ➤ Circumcision.

*Verse 18 “Was any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Hath any been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised.”*

*Verse 19 “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God.” (cf. Galatians 5:6)*

### “Remain In Your Calling” (verses 17–24)

#### ➤ Slavery cf. Onesimus (Philemon) cf. Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22ff

*Verse 21 “Wast thou called being a bondservant? Care not for it: nay, even if thou canst become free, use (it) rather.”*

*Verse 22 “For he that was called in the Lord being a bondservant, is the Lord’s freedman: likewise he that was called being free, is Christ’s bondservant.” (cf. Galatians 3:28)*

*Verse 23 “Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men.” (1 Corinthians 6:20) Christian has become the slave of Christ.*

### “Remain In Your Calling” (verses 17–24)

*Verse 24 “Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God.”*

*Verse 17 “Only, as the Lord hath distributed to each man, as God hath called each, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all the churches.”*

*Verse 20 “Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called.”*

### “Remain In Your Calling” (verses 17–24)

#### ➤ Proper application:

- Social relationships that are not sinful in themselves may continue.
- To become a Christian does not demand the slave to be a freeman, the Gentile to be circumcised, the married to become celibate.
- To become a Christian does not demand or forbid the ditch digger to become a physician.

### “Remain In Your Calling” (verses 17–24)

#### ➤ Improper application:

- To relationships that are sinful; adultery, bigamy, homosexuality.
- To void the demands (fruits) of repentance.

### “Remain In Your Calling” (verses 17–24)

*Verse 24 “Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God.”*

NOTE: To apply this principle of “remaining” to those who are involved in sin is a major abuse.

The issue IS: Marriage versus celibacy.

The Issue IS: Remaining married versus separation.

THE ISSUE IS NOT: May sinful relationships (adultery, incest, polygamy) continue?

## Instructions Regarding Virgins (and the reasons...)

1 Corinthians 7:25–38

*Verse 25 "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy."*

- Indicates another question asked by the Corinthians.
- "Virgins" – can apply to men or women (cf. Revelation 14:4)
- "Virgins" – here used to apply to unmarried women.
- Contrast verse 34 with verse 32. Used of a virgin woman in verses 36–38.

*Verse 25 "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy."*

- Contrast between a direct statement of the Lord & Paul's own inspired statement. (cf. verse 40)

**Verses 10–11 GENERAL** *"But unto the married I give charge, (yea) not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife."*

**Verse 12 MIXED** *"But to the rest say I, not the Lord: If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her."*

**Verse 25 VIRGINS** *"Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy."*

### "The Distress That Is Upon Us" (ASV)

*Verse 26 "I think therefore that this is good by reason of the distress that is upon us, (namely,) that it is good for a man to be as he is."*

Used interchangeably:

*Verse 26 "Distress" (Greek *ananke*) "denotes a necessity, imposed whether by external circumstances, or inward pressure." (Vine's) cf. Matthew 24:21*

*Verse 28 "Tribulation" (Greek *thlipsis*) "a pressing, pressing together, pressure." (Thayer) Cf. Luke 21:23*

### "The Distress That Is Upon Us" (ASV)

*Verse 26 "I think therefore that this is good by reason of the distress that is upon us, (namely,) that it is good for a man to be as he is."*

**Must be understood in the sense of verses 17, 20, 24**

## Bound Versus Loosed

*Verse 27 "Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife."*

**Bound** (Greek *deo*) - a married woman is under the law of her husband as long as he lives.  
*Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39*

## Bound Versus Loosed

*Verse 27 "Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife."*

- How may one be "loosed?"
  - Never married. (verse 25)
  - Companion dead. (verse 39)
  - Lawfully divorced. (Matthew 19:9)

## Bound Versus Loosed

- Some conclude from these verses that no marriage or remarriage is sinful. Remember truth always harmonizes with truth!
- Some remarriages constitutes adultery. Matthew 19:9
- Some commanded to "*remain unmarried.*" 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

## "Seek Not To Be Loosed" (verses 25-28)

- Paul **is** addressing himself to the unattached man who does not have a wife, and **NOT** to the **unlawfully** divorced man who is under the restraint of divine law to be reconciled or remain unmarried.