

# Bible Study: 1 Corinthians

## (Part 2—Chapters 4-7)

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### Chapter 4

“It is God’s perfect will that there be order in everything we do, because this is God’s character.”

On the outline we have covered so far:

#### I. The Unity of the Church vs. Divisions Chapters 1-3

Now we would like to look at:

#### II. The order of the Church vs. Disorder Chapters 4-11

(1) We are to think of our leaders in the church as ministers (servants like Jesus was to His disciples), and not put them on a higher level than human beings. Yes, we respect them, but they are not any different than us other than their office. “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 4:11) Leaders are not to glory in the praise of men, but the praise of God. We are to give the glory to God at all times! We do not want to be like the religious leaders in Jesus day.

“What mysteries are we talking about?” you ask. Could it be how God could form the Church out of both groups, Jews and Gentiles? These things were not really explained in the Old Testament, even though they were hinted at. It does say things about the Gentiles having a part in the kingdom of God, but it does not go into detail. There are other mysteries we could be talking about, such as how Christ can be God and man at the same time. It could be the mysteries that surround the Holy Trinity, and on and on the list could go. So we have been given a “charge,” and that is to take good care of the preaching of the truth of the Word of God.

(2) As stewards we are responsible to our Boss that we do our job of preaching the Word in such a way that it pleases Him. As a steward we do not own the ministry, but we are only serving as long as He sees fit. During this time we are to be faithful. “For a bishop (overseer) must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine (parainos

“near wine” or drinking parties, see wine articles), not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. James 3: 1 says, “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”

(3) Paul was not really concerned about the Corinthians comments like “Is Paul really an apostle, etc.” (2 Corinthians) He knew how he stood before God, and that was all that mattered. It should not matter too much to us what people think about us, but what does God think about us and our ministry. Too much introspection by us can be dangerous. Ask God to put His finger on what is right or wrong in our lives. He knows best, we or others will make mistakes.

(4) He knew of nothing in his own conscience that would condemn him, yet he still was not satisfied with this, he wanted God to put His search light on his life, if he needed it. Our own heart may become calloused and not sensitive to long standing sins in our lives. God is the best judge to go to in these cases. “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.” (1 John 3: 20-23)

(5) Since Christ is going to judge us, why should we be judging one another? We are really wasting our time and causing disorders, because the One who even knows the motives of everyone will do the judging one day. This judgment is spoken about in Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10 and 1 Corinthians 3:12-15. He will also have rewards for us at that time; these rewards will be with us through out eternity.

(6) Paul was using himself and Apollos in reference to this sin of causing disorders by judging one another. Still Paul knew it wasn't just himself and Apollos they were attacking. The point is, do not be doing this to anyone! Some people like to cut others down to build themselves up. Someone has said, “He who throws mud loses ground.” When people think they are better than someone else it is kind of like a blow-fish, they blow themselves up so they look bigger than they really are.

(7) We are no better than any other Christian; every Christian has to put their pants on one leg at a time. The believers were acting like children, “I'm better than you are.” By the way, where did you get what you have anyway? Was it something you came up with by yourself? No, these spiritual gifts were given to them by God, so how can they boast about them?

(8) Paul tries to get them to reason things out in verses six and seven, but now he uses satire in verses eight through thirteen. He does this because they thought that they had attained. They even thought they were better off spiritually than Paul and other leaders. Paul says if this were so it would be good, then you could help us out a bit, but really this was not the case. They were far from being spiritual or obtaining anything. The truth of the matter was they were backslidden. Isn't it interesting that the people who think they know the most, or think they are the most spiritual, are really not knowledgeable or spiritual? Those who are really spiritual do not think of themselves in this way.

(9) Paul tells them a little of his life, you think you are kings; we are the least of men because we are treated as those condemned to die (on death row). It is like they were in an amphitheater with men and angels all around watching how they would die. Of course at this time the Romans had their amphitheater where people did watch men die. That is as far from being kings as you can get. You see we are kings in God's sight, but we do not come into our kingdom until we get to heaven.

(10) People thought of Paul and his associates as mentally retarded. The Corinthians thought they were brilliant. People thought of Paul as being weak in character, at least this is what the world thought, because he didn't run around with the "boys" as they did. Us men sometimes have this "macho" mentality, we think we have to be well looked upon by other men or else we just aren't real men. This is so far from the truth and has led many men astray by getting them involved in drinking with the "boys," and other vices such as gambling, etc. that cause them to stumble. This is how the world thinks, but it is not how God wants us to think! We are to be holy and separated from these types of thoughts. You think of yourselves, Paul says, as real "men," and you want people to think of you as outstanding, while Paul was without esteem in the eyes of men.

Isn't this thinking of the Corinthians, the way the "world" thinks of success? If you have money, power, fame then you are someone. If you do not have these things, the world thinks of you as a nobody. Do you see how carnal minded these Christians had become? Do you see how we too can start thinking like the world thinks, if we are not careful? "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1John 2:15-17)

(11) To that very day Paul was writing this letter he was without much food and drink. He did not have nice clothes; he had been beaten up a lot and had no home to call his own.

(12-13) Paul chose to serve God as a tent maker Christian (in other words he worked to support himself in the ministry; we sure could use a lot more of these types of Christians today). He could have had the opposite of these things, but he gave it all up to serve the Lord. He was an educated successful man before he got saved. He also made tents to support himself and the ministry; it was not as if he were begging. Oh, that Christians today lived to serve the Lord with all their means to get the gospel out!

When people, including Christians, made fun of Paul he would still bless them. When he was persecuted by the world and Christians he would endure it. He would not give up. Someone has said, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going!" Being "made little of" by others, Paul would encourage them back and spoke softly to them. Proverbs says, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Proverbs 15:1)

Paul did the opposite of what the world teaches. The world says, "Do to others before they do to you." God says, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that

leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Matthew 7:12-14) Let us not follow the world’s way because we know where it leads to, let us follow the narrow way, the way the world despises.

(14) Paul is a kind spiritual father to these people. He had led them to the Lord, now he wants to help them, and this is the reason he writes to them. If he did not love them he would not write back at all. Aren’t you glad God loves us, and He does not treat us like we deserve to be treated, but always gently disciplines us to keep us close to Himself.

(15) If the Corinthians had many teachers, they still could have only one who led them to the Lord. Paul had led them to the Lord and he was their spiritual father, who had brought them the truth in Christ.

(16) Children should have good fathers that they can copy. So too, Christian converts need good examples to see in the church. Paul says you can follow my example (as I follow Christ).

(17) Timothy was led to the Lord by Paul. He had learned from Paul, now he would be used to instruct these Christians. It sounds like they needed to be reminded of the things he had taught them before, isn’t this true of us often? Hopefully after being instructed again in the basics, they could learn from their mistakes and disciple others.

Paul had told Timothy, “But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” (2 Timothy 3:10-12)

(18) Some thought Paul would never visit them again, so they were acting proudly. It must have been hard for Paul to visit them again after the way they were treating him.

(19) Paul said, “If God wills I will be coming your way soon, then I want to find out if these people are working in their own strength and pride and not in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

(20) We can say anything; it is another thing to live the way we speak.

(21) Paul wanted them to get things right before he came so he would not have to go on talking to them like this. He wanted to be gentle with them in Christian love.

## **Chapter 5**

(1) Here in this chapter Paul gets down to the “nitty-gritty,” and “where the tire meets the road, as they say. He gets down where they really are spiritually, and that is immorality was prevalent before their salvation, and now some were there in the church that were going back and picking up the old habits again. They had one person who was actually living in sin with his mother or

step mother. Leviticus 18:8 warns, “The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness.” This person may have been a Jew because of the comment by Paul that even the majority of Gentiles would not do such a thing. This hits close to home today for us in the Church, immorality is at our finger tips all the time. Christians today may not be into incest (which is what this was), but they are tempted by pornography.

(2) They as a congregation did not admit that this was even a problem. They did not seem to care what it was doing to their testimony in front of the world. They should have asked him to leave the assembly and not return as long as he was living in sin. This is the case so often in churches today; Christian leaders are not willing to confront sin in their own congregations. As a result the world makes fun of the Church and the way of Christ, is maligned. The Psalmist says, “He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” (Psalm 23:3) God’s name is Holy, and we are to live holy lives! If we do not, the world is quick to notice it, and yes, they should notice it. The point is the church needs to deal with sin as soon as it knows it is present.

Look at what happened at Ai in the Joshua chapter 7. God had told the Israelites not to take any of the spoil from Jericho, but Achan decided he needed some of the nice clothes, silver and gold. As a result 36 men were killed and Israel lost the battle. You see God does not take lightly sin in individuals or in the church as a whole. What if someone was in your church that you knew was a practicing homosexual, should they be allowed to continue in the church? Now if they are coming to hear the truth and want to repent that is different, but if they are there to convert others to his or her way of thinking, then they should not be welcome in the church. In my little flower garden, sometimes I do not get to the weeds right away, and I think, “Oh, I will do it latter,” guess what happens? You guessed it, soon they take over! This is what happens in the church when we do not address the sin problem!

(3) Even though Paul was not there physically, he had the right to tell them what to do as a church (since he was an apostle).

(4-5) The church was to tell him to leave, since he was not going to get right with God. Paul was praying that something physically would happen to him so he would see how serious his sin was. It would be far better for this person to suffer now, and realize his sin, than to spend eternity in hell. We believe this prayer was answered because of what Paul says later in his second letter to them, “But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe. This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.” (2 Corinthians 2:5-8). Discipline in the church must be done in love with the motive of helping the person get right with God.

(6) Boasting is never good, but they seemed to be proud even of their conditions. I had some cucumber plants like that, they had lots of flowers, so I thought there would be lots of cucumbers, but there was none. The Corinthians were boasting of being something, but in reality they were not producing fruit for the Lord.

They also, needed to realize that even a little sin in their midst could destroy the whole church. You know what happens when one potato gets rotten; if you do not take it out it will spoil all the potatoes. They had more than a little sin in the church, and were well on the way to major disorders if something was not done, and done soon!

(7) What they needed was revival! Leaven is used as a type of sin in most of the Bible. It is used as an example of good growth in only one parable. In the other places it is mentioned in Scripture, it is as a picture of sin spreading around. He reminded them of the Passover typology, and Christ as our Passover. They would have been well aware of the teaching of the cross that formed over the door post by the blood of the lamb. The blood was to be sprinkled on the top of the door and on both sides, not, however, on the floor. You can see how this would form a cross, but the blood was not placed on the ground, even though Jesus feet were bleeding, we are not to trample underfoot the blood of Jesus. Jesus blood was like the blood of the lamb that was sacrificed. Jesus is our sacrifice! When they placed the blood on the door posts (outside), when the angel of death passed over the oldest child would not be killed. When we place the blood of Christ on our hearts and lives Jesus blood saves us from the angel of death (or the second death, hell)!

Before the Jews had the Passover, or even today, when they have it they will get rid of all the leaven in their homes. This is a picture of getting all the sin out of our lives. Christians do not practice sin; study 1 John for more on this subject. We are told be Holy, as God is Holy! "...but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'" (1 Peter 1:15-16)

(8) When Jews celebrate the Passover, even as it is for Jews today, they eat unleavened bread or unleavened crackers. These Corinthian Christians would understand that Paul was saying to them, that they were living like they did before they were saved, with sin in their lives (old leaven). Christians are supposed to live victorious lives. Victory over sin is a mark of a spiritual Christian. We are not to go back to the worldly things we were in before we were saved and wallow in these sins. "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'" (2 Peter 2: 20-22)

Paul is talking about keeping the Lord's Supper without sin in our hearts, but being right with the Lord and with each other. Sincerity, or it's root word "sincere," comes from selling of pottery without any covered up flaws. We are to confess our sins as Christians, and forsake them, 1 John 1:9.

(9-10) Paul, it seems had written at least one letter before this one in which he instructed them. This letter was not inspired and therefore we do not have it, because it was not meant for the whole Church. In this letter he had instructed them to keep separate from those who were immoral. They may have misunderstood and thought that he was talking about staying away from the unsaved as well as Christians. So in case there were any doubts in their minds, he tells them plainly, stay away from immoral people who call themselves "Christians." Christ even was

around unsaved immoral people, He did this to win them to Himself. We too, should go to reach them; we may even have some as our friends. But we are not to partake of their sins, nor make them our best or closest friends.

(11) Now Paul is saying there will be some who claim to be Christians that do these immoral things too. Lest you are considered like them, and your testimony be damaged, Paul says, “Stay away from them!” I have run into this several times in my ministry. I was even pastor of a church when a fellow minister was found to be sleeping with wives in his congregation. I cut off all fellowship with him and his congregation. It took some time before his congregation and denomination did anything about it. In the mean time, you can imagine the damage it did to our witness in the community as Christians even though we were in different denominations. Some Christians were upset with me because I said something. They wanted to go on pretending as if nothing had ever happened.

You can see why Paul had to speak to them the way he did, seeing how human nature is. Interestingly enough, it seems human nature and Christians have not changed much since when this letter was written. Now you know why God wants us to study, and put into practice the teachings of 1 Corinthians!

You ask, “How do we know what is immoral?” Maybe you think God’s standards have changed through the years. Let me assure you that the same standards that God set up in the Old Testament on immorality still apply to us today. You say, “How do you know that God still says homosexuality, incest, fornication, adultery, etc. are still wrong today?” The reason I know, is because from the outset of the Church and in all the letters of the apostles, they made it very clear that the moral laws still apply to us today. Look at the conclusion of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:20a. “...but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality...” So this means that any Old Testament law that has to do with immorality is still for us today. Even though we are not under the law, the principles apply to us in the Church. Then of course, we have the Ten Commandments that still apply. Many, many New Testament passages talk about immorality. (Please look at these other articles I have written on this subject.)

(12) We have no authority to discipline unsaved people, they need the Gospel. The saved may need discipline though.

(13) This should be a warning for us today in the Church that we are to discipline in “love,” those who claim to be believers, but are living in open immorality. These should be asked to leave, or if they will not leave, people should give them a “cold shoulder,” in other words do not make them feel welcome. It should not be anything physical we do to them, God does that part. Our part is to speak to them, but if this doesn’t work, the church will be notified that until so in so repents they will not be allowed to hold leadership positions, nor be welcome in the church.

## **Chapter 6**

(1) God has said, “If we are to have order in the church then Christians cannot be going to court

against other Christians.” I do not know the name of the group, but there are Christian lawyers that will mediate between Christians if this is needed. You see our testimony is extremely important! Remember we are His name sake, you see we are called Christians or (little Christs). Someone has said, “The only Bible some people will ever read is you and me.” So we do not want to do things that will bring shame on the name of Christ.

It bothers me that some Christians could care less, it seems, how their testimony is before nonbelievers. For example, often I have heard of Christians in businesses that have done shady deals. You and I have heard or seen Christians taking things back to a store and being very rude about it. We have seen them in stores being rude to store clerks. Sometimes we have to accept the wrong if we are to continue to serve God as Christ did. All of this is part of our testimony and could affect the way we are viewed as Christians. Some people say, or at least think, when they see Christians acting in anger, “If that is what it means to be a Christian, I do not want any part of it!” How would we feel when we get to heaven, when Christ is going over your life or my life, and He shows us how some people did not get to heaven because of our poor testimony? How ashamed we will feel, but it will be too late. We need to always realize that eternal souls are at stake in the way we live our lives.

(2) People, get a grip, don't you realize we are going to judge the world? It says in Scripture in several places that we will rule and reign with Christ. I personally believe some of this will take place in the millennial reign of Christ on this earth. I'm not sure if we will be behind the scenes like the angels are now, or if we in fact will be sitting on thrones in different cities and towns, etc. (Revelation 5:10; 20:6) “And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.” “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Paul says, “What business do we have as Christians going to the world's lawyers to drag another Christian into court, can't you be responsible enough now to take care of these “rather small matters” in comparison to judging the world?” Our responsibility starts as soon as we become Christians, and know the difference between right and wrong. We have the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth!

(3) To make the argument even stronger, that we are to take care of matters in the church, he says, we will judge the fallen angels (demons). It seems fallen angels (or demons) cannot get saved, but they will be judged for how sinful they have been in their fallen state. We will be responsible for judging these, so it would seem ironic if we are going to be judging spirit beings, and we cannot even judge matters among us humans now.

(4) This does not make any sense, Paul says, you have people going to court as Christians to be judged by the unsaved. Do they really have wisdom like Christians? Then why bring them into our problems?

(5) There should be those in the church with enough wisdom to judge between two Christians.

(6) This is a Biblical principle, believers should judge their own, not the world! Oh that today this would happen in the Church, so that our testimony would be excellent among the unsaved at all times! Anytime there is a disorder in the church the world hears about it, and uses it for an excuse not to receive Christ. It also brings disrepute on Christ's name. The opposite should be

true. The world should see love between believers, and thus come to know Christ.

(7) These people wanted to win their case against their brothers. They may very well have won the cases, but lost their good testimony. Wouldn't it be far better to see someone saved than get our own way? The Bible says one soul is worth more than the world (Matthew 16:26). Then which is more important our rights, or the unsaved souls? You need to accept the wrong rather than making it an issue in the courts. Remember how to spell JOY, Jesus, others, and you. The world says, put "you" first. God says, put yourself last, Jesus first, and others before yourself. This is the love of Christ living in us that helps us do right to others.

(8) The unsaved were not the only ones that were being hurt, in this childish behavior, but the saved were being hurt as well.

(9) The Church is very large, and there are those who sit in its branches (pews, or benches) that are not truly "born again." "Then he said, 'What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.'" (Matthew 13:18-19) These in the list are not saved, but they may go to church with us.

As 1 John points out, Christians do not "practice" sin. We are not perfect until we get to heaven, but we hate sin, we hate what it does to us, we hate what it does to others. We will sin probably every day, but we confess (1John 1:9) our sin and go on, and ask God to give us the victory over it. However, if a person is living a "life-style" of "fornication" (a general term for sexual sin and immorality, but usually it means sex outside of marriage) that person is not saved. "Idolaters" are people who worship someone or something other than the God of the universe. They may even say or think they are worshiping the true God, but if they do not give God the attributes that the Bible gives Him, it is an idol or false god that they are worshiping.

Those who worship in a false cult are not going to heaven, unless they repent and are saved and delivered from this group. There are hundreds of these false cults, but here are a few of the main ones: Hinduism, Islam, Christian Science, Spiritualism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Armstrongism, Mormonism, Eastern Mysticism, The Way International, Unity, and Unification Church. These all deny the Lordship of Jesus Christ, or that He is God. This is a good way to find out if a group is a cult by asking them who Jesus is, if they have a hesitation in saying "Jesus is Lord," they are not true Christians.

Nor "adulterers," this is a popular sin today, and television glorifies it. This is a person who is married, but having sex with someone other than their spouse, but Jesus also said that if you even look at a woman with lust, you are committing this sin. "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28)

Jesus addresses men because, no doubt, we are more prone to sin this way, but it also applies to married women as well, as they look at men or other women with lust in their hearts. Think about how many people are being led to hell today by pornography. If you are sinning as a Christian in this area, you best get right with God now or else this thing will destroy you also.

“Homosexuals” are not going to heaven, unless they repent and get saved. The reason there are two different words here is, because this first word means “catamites,”-- those submitting to homosexuals (could be women or men).

Then there are “sodomites” and these are male homosexuals (anal copulation of one male with another, a male having anal or oral copulation with a member of the opposite sex, copulation with an animal). “For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.” (Romans 1:26-27) There is further information in our tracts Homosexuals and the Bible, and Lesbians.

Christians, we are living in this age before Christ’s return, get ready for it, because you are going to see a world much like the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, and a world like it was before the flood. Soon around the world you will be considered a person who is committing hate crimes when you read or say what the Bible has to say about these subjects. Already in several countries this is taking place, sadly, we are not far behind here in the United States. But we must not water down what the Word says about these subjects, we must be brave to tell the truth no matter what the cost. It is like a house that is on fire, that has people in it, are we going to be afraid to disturb them out of their sleep?!

Also, we need to preach and teach that God hates the sin, but He loves the sinner. We are not to call them names either, like I heard some Christians on television doing, as they “witnessed” to homosexuals. Jesus never witnessed this way, yes, He did call the religious leaders names, but then again He is God. We all are just sinners saved by grace, and except for the grace of God, we would be right where these people are. This is what verse eleven is about.

(10) You notice that Paul does not pick all the sins; he does not even pick murder, maybe this would be too obvious, that it is a sin that shows a person in an unsaved condition. Probably he is speaking here of the most common sins in Corinth, sins the church was familiar with, or as was shown earlier, that some were involved in, or just some of the sins as a sample. Nor thieves, some would think it is not wrong to steal a little, but it is still wrong. I was shocked to see in a store one day, a man teaching his family how to steal. Then my wife worked as a manager at a store where she saw the same things, with her own eyes, through a one way mirror.”

Then there are the “covetous,” (pleonektes) or greedy. We have a lot of these people today. Look at the head of companies that could care less about their employee and their needs, all they want is more for themselves. They have more than they could ever use in many life times. That is what happened to the rich man in Jesus’ parable. “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. ‘And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”’ “But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12: 16-21) How many are trapped by the greed of materialism today?

Nor “drunkards,” it is a very serious thing to be drinking alcohol. Some people think they can drink just a little, but they are really playing with fire. Why would anyone in their right mind want to play with fire? Just like stealing one thing will not send you to hell, but it is sin to steal one thing. However, if you are practicing stealing or drinking and getting drunk, it shows you are not saved, or in a backslidden state. For a further study on this please read the article, Wine in the Bible, and or Beer and Other Alcoholic Beverages in the Bible.

Nor “revilers,” (LOIDOROS) “to denounce with abusive language, to use abusive language,” using God’s name in vain, or cursing is being a reviler. Matthew 27: 39, 40 “And those who passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who destroy the temple and build it in three day, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’” Then in Mark 15: 32, “‘Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.’” Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.” Remember though, one of the two received Christ as his Savior later before he died.

Nor “extortioners,” a person who uses their official position or power illegally, to obtain property, funds, or patronage. People taking for themselves exorbitant or excessive charge for things or services rendered. “Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than what is appointed for you.’” (Luke 3: 12-13)

None of these people in this condition, as sinners, will be going to heaven, unless they repent of their sins and receive Christ as Savior!

(11) We were like this in some ways, but then we were saved. Sin was washed from our lives, and we were set apart from the world, given a standing before God as if we had never sinned, plus given the righteousness of Christ. This was all done by the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, as we received salvation through the name of the Lord Jesus. Does this mean we will never sin again? No, but we do not have the same desire to practice sin, as we did before we were saved. Often there are those who are unsaved who have seared their conscience and are no longer convicted of their sin. “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron...” (1 Timothy 4: 1-2)

(12) We are free to do many things as Christians, but there are some things that would cause us to fall into sin. There are some things that we get involved in that may not be sin themselves, but they could lead to sin.

Someone has said, “Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become actions. Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become your character. Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.”

(13) Paul uses some examples of what he is talking about. There is nothing wrong with eating food. God has made us in such a way that we need food for our bodies. Someday we will not have to eat food to live, but we can eat if we want to. Here, to eat or drink, is fulfilling a natural need. However, lest the Corinthians, or you and I think that having sex just to meet a natural urge, is ok for Christians, Paul sets the record straight. Sex outside of God’s ordained marriage is forbidden! In Corinth and in our day the world thinks this is normal and acceptable, however,

with God it is neither normal nor acceptable.

We are to use our bodies to obey and serve God, as He wants to use our bodies, to bring glory to God. Wouldn't it be wonderful to see more beautiful women, who are Christians, use their good looks, in a modest way, to witness for the Lord. So often, Satan entices women who are beautiful physically, to use their good looks for Satan's agenda. Then if you have Christ shining through you, being male or female, there is a beauty that the world cannot comprehend. Often people are drawn to Christ, just by how we glow with the love of Christ in our lives. Moses, Jesus, and Stephen had this glow about them, but we can have it too.

(14) Someday we will have a resurrected body just like Christ has. "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." (1 John 3: 2)

(15) Our bodies belong to Christ and to His body the church. So should we go and have intercourse with a prostitute? This should never happen! Body, soul and spirit, we belong to Christ. "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6: 5) "Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22: 37)

(16) A person who has intercourse with another is really marring that person, in one sense.

(17) But we are married to the Lord, and He indwells our body by His Holy Spirit.

(18) The best way to avoid sin is to run away from, it like Joseph did, Genesis 39: 7-12. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit." (2 Thessalonians 4: 3-8)

We are to be very careful not to partake of immorality. (Please read the article on pornography.) Immorality will cause a person's body to be destroyed, if not by disease (look at all the sexually transmitted diseases we have today), by lust or possibly by being murdered. There are scars on ones own conscience and body that are left for a life time when a person sins in this way, even if they get saved. Christ alone can solve this type of problem!

(19-20) Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we are not in charge any longer, God calls the "shots." He wants to rule and reign in our lives now, not sometime in the future. This is why there are so many carnal Christians, because they do not understand this principle of Christ dwelling inside of us. Think of it this way, would you do that thing, think that thought, or say that thing if Christ were physically in the room with you? Guess what, He is!! Christ wants to rule and reign in every part of our lives! "Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers

and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’” (Matthew 21: 12-13)

## Chapter 7

Introduction to this section: The church at Corinth had asked Paul some questions about marriage. Paul’s instructions may seem like he is against marriage, he is not, however, under the circumstances it would be better if some did not marry (I Corinthians 7: 26). Not too long after Paul wrote this letter there was a wide spread persecution of Christians which broke out and lasted for more than 200 years. There was also, some persecution of Christians going on at this time, just look at the book of Acts. Therefore these instructions were needed, and they have wise principles for those today who would find themselves in similar circumstances.

First, Paul is saying to these Christians, it would be better if they did not have to marry, because this would protect them from the heartache they would feel under persecution, for example, seeing a loved one suffer.

The second reason that it would be best if a person could be single is, because he or she could serve the Lord better. They would have more time to do service for the LORD.

Third, it is not wrong to marry even if there is persecution of Christians going on, it will be harder though.

Fourth, if you are married, stay that way, don’t try to get out of it, and have a godly marriage.

(1) Paul was addressing a special situation in the church at Corinth, in that they were going through persecution from both the Jews and the Romans at that time. So his advice under these circumstances, was to avoid marriage altogether. The reason for this would be obvious; if someone wanted to get at you they could torture your spouse. Paul had been a persecutor himself before his conversion on the Damascus Road, so he would know first hand about the tactics of persecutors. He says, “I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress—that it is good for a man to remain as he is:” (1 Corinthians 7: 26) “I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women...” (Acts 22:4) “And I punished (scourged) them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.” (Acts 26:11) As a former inquisitor he had good advice for them.

(2) Paul needed to let the Corinthians know what the proper way of living for a Christian was since they were saved out of such an immoral society. It is like what happened to me as a result of being in military service; I had to relearn what love was supposed to be like in a Christian marriage. I was not taught the right concepts of love and marriage by my military buddies. Marriage is God’s plan for most Christians, however, not for all Christians, as we will see later.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul knew and taught that it was not wrong to marry; in fact it was ordained of God that we might have godly children for the Lord, and to keep us from sexual immorality. Anyone who would make it a law not to marry is being used of the devil; this

has to be a voluntary decision. “Now the Spirit expressly (explicitly) says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry...” (1 Timothy 4: 1-3a) I just wonder if in the future, there will be a “cult” like this that will forbid people to marry. I have heard of little groups that forbid marriage, but not of any large ones as yet. I can hear it now, “Paul said you shouldn’t get married if you want to be spiritual.” We have to be on the look out for false prophets and false doctrines.

Actually today there are those who insist that if you want to be a minister in the church you have to be single. This is nowhere taught in Scripture, and to try and to support this teaching from 1 Corinthians and Paul’s instruction for the church at that time of persecution is just not correct. Paul also wrote the letters to Timothy and Titus which are meant especially for ministers, and there Paul says, “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach...” (1 Timothy 3:2) “Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. (1 Timothy 3:11) Paul told Titus when choosing leaders for the church. “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation (intemperance) or insubordination. For bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God... Then if this is not enough to make the point he also says, “Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?” (1 Corinthians 9:5). How many children have been sexually molested because pastors who did not have the gift of celibacy were living a lie? As we will see later, celibacy is only for a few who are gifted by God in this area.

(3-4) One could be married, though, and not fulfill the needs of the other, and then in effect it would be like they were not married, and result in lusting for others. This has been the downfall of countless marriages, Christian and unsaved alike! Paul is speaking here not only to the importance of love in marriage for the spouse, but also of the importance of sexual intercourse in marriage. The *NEW SPIRIT FILLED LIFE Bible*, has this comment on verses 3-4. Sexual intercourse is an intimate expression of affection between a husband and wife. The apostle underscores its importance in marriage by declaring that it is, in fact, a duty: a husband is to be available for his wife at her request, and a wife for her husband at his request.

The Bible calls sexual intimacy in marriage a privileged “MYSTERY” BY WHICH TWO PEOPLE, A MAN AND A WOMAN, BECOME ONE (Eph. 5:32; see Gen. 2:24). The privilege is abused when people who are not married to each other have intercourse (see 1 Cor. 5:1, 6:16); then the intended blessing becomes a cause of judgment (see Eph. 5:5,6).

Marriage is the only place that God has provided for sexual union. In that setting it becomes a powerful symbol of the love between Christ and the church, a pure sharing of joy and delight in one another that is a gift from the hand God. Outside those boundaries, it is destructive (1 Corinthians. 6:15, 16; Proverbs. 5:3-11, 15-18). (Song of Solomon 7:1-9/Ephesians 5:21-23) L.C.”

A husband and wife are to remember that they have agreed to submit themselves to each other in this marriage relationship. Without real “agape” love (this is God’s love in us) we cannot do

this. If we really love each other then sexual intercourse will be the climax of a wonderful time together. Some men think that the woman should just get in bed anytime he wants without him showing love to her. Paul is saying we will be showing loving affection for our spouse, and intern they will want to be intimate with us.

When a person is married he or she gives the keys to his or her body to their mate. This is the secret of successful sex in marriage. "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." (Hebrews 13:4) Some Christians think that Psalm 51:5 is saying just the opposite, where it says, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." But what this verse is talking about is that the "sin nature" is passed on to the child from the parents at the moment of conception. There is no contradiction here in Scripture, it does not say it is wrong in one place to have sex, and then in another it is ok. It does say sexual pleasure in marriage, between a man and a woman is honorable, and undefiled!

(5) Some Christians think that the only time a person should have sex in marriage is when they want children, Paul makes it perfectly clear this is not the case! You see "sex" is one of the strongest drives we have as humans. If this drive is not satisfied correctly we will try to satisfy it in wrong ways. I believe God gave men and women a strong desire for sex, so that they might be drawn to each other in a very strong way in marriage.

But Satan has used this desire to tempt men and women. That is why you see so much heartache when this urge is used wrongly, either outside marriage or in marriage. In marriage it is used wrongly by one or the other, or both looking at pornography to stimulate themselves. (Please read my article on Pornography, if you haven't already.)

The other point Paul is making that the sex life of the Christian, in marriage, is a very important part of their spiritual lives as well. If we are not fulfilling each others needs then Satan can use this to tempt us to sin, men and women I cannot emphasis too much the importance of this Scriptural principle. Many, many homes of the unsaved and Christians alike have been destroyed by Satan, because married couples's sex lives were not in order. This is really a travesty, because God intended just the opposite for us in marriage. Think of it, God created this wonderful pleasure for us down here on this earth and; we cannot even think about what wonderful things He has in store for us in heaven! (See the article, Will Heaven be One Eternal Church Service?) "You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Psalm 16:11) When I say this I am not advocating that we will have sex in heaven! I do not believe we will have sex in heaven, as some teach, but I am saying if God invented sex in marriage for our pleasure here on earth, what does He have planned for us in heaven? He has "spiritual" things beyond our wildest imaginations. "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven." (Matthew 22:30) Those that have been filled with the Spirit of God know a little bit of what this is about, Ephesians 5:18.

Paul does make a little exception to having sex all the time in marriage, and that would be for a short time, if they both agreed upon it, to spend more time in prayer and fasting. This was to be just a brief time, though, or else Satan could get a foot hold here. Then they are to come together again in sexual intercourse. Pastor Tim LaHaye has a wonderful book on this subject, it is called *The Act of Marriage*, I'm sure it could be found on the internet.

(6) Where Paul says, “But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment” some think that he is not speaking this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That is not it at all; just that nowhere else in Scripture does it say that you can be separated for awhile, but He is saying a person could make this “short” interruption to their sex life.

(7) “For I wish that all men were even as I myself.” The reason again, as he has pointed out earlier, is because of the “present distress,” he is suggesting that you might be better off not even thinking about marriage right now, with persecution and all. You might think he was meddling here, but a few years later Nero in Rome had Christians dipped in wax and put on poles, and burned to death as lanterns for his gardens (*FOX’S BOOK OF MARTYRS*). So Paul’s advice was warranted, and directed of the Holy Spirit! Today Christians are persecuted in many parts of the world, in these locations, and during these times, these verses would be good advice. We need to learn how to use the context (verses before, and verses after the verse in question) to determine how to apply Scripture to everyday life.

Paul enjoyed being single, not because he was opposed to marriage, but because he believed it to be a gift from God for him, and some others. He could use his whole life to serve the Lord. Married people need to tend to each other’s needs, and the needs of the family. Not everyone has this gift of celibacy. Some of the best missionaries I have seen have been single women. One comes to mind, especially, and that is Mother Teresa of India.

Jesus said, “But He said to them, ‘All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother’s womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it.’” (Matthew 19:12)

(8) To those who were never married, and to widows, it would be better not to marry (again under this present distress). I think, Paul, is also trying to help people see it is alright to be single and serve the Lord. Some of the godliest people I know are widows (women in this case) that have lost their spouses, but they are going on with the Lord. They serve Him night and day as Anna did, who helped dedicate Jesus when He was a baby. “Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” (Luke 2:36-38)

(9) It would be better if they marry, if they cannot contain their desires for sex. If these desires get out of hand, it would be like a fire that is out of control. That is why this group of unmarried and widows (male or female), need to examine their lives closely before they make this decision. Some of us, who are married now, may need to make this same decision someday. A lot of prayer should go into it, and counseling may be needed as well.

(10) In this verse, it is not something by way of permission, but it is a command. That is, there is only one reason for divorce and remarriage, and that is given by Jesus in Matthew 19: 3-9.

“The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?’ And He answered and said to them, ‘Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.’ They said to Him, ‘Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?’ He said to them, ‘Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” To all those who are married, Paul says, in so many words, don’t you go and leave your husband or wife, because you think it would be better.

(11) A woman is not to leave her husband under normal circumstances; however, there may be some conditions where she should leave (only she should not remarry as we have seen, unless there has been immorality on the part of the husband). There maybe cases where the husband is a drinker and or a drug user, and is so brutal or wicked or perverted that it would be impossible for her to live with him. I have seen this first hand, but I have also heard of many cases where the wife left the husband, but did not remarry, and he was saved, so that they were able to get back together. If he had gotten saved, though, and she had already remarried they could not reunite. A separation is in order, when the wife or her children are threatened.

For the same reason a husband is not to divorce his wife. What if he gets saved and she decides that she doesn’t want to be saved and he leaves her, but later she is saved. No, he should wait the rest of his life if need be (unless of course she is unfaithful) praying and hoping she will get saved and they can reunite. I know this sounds hard, but it is the will of God, and He will give the “grace” needed. He will also cause wonderful things to happen when Christians pray for unsaved spouses. You see it is God’s will that we go to heaven as families. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” (Acts 16:31). Do not get discouraged, it may take a long of time, and a lot of prayer, and patience, but it will be worth it in the long run! Live with hope that you may be one day reunited, but go on with your life and make the most of it, like Paul did.

Also some husband out there, Paul is thinking, might decide “O, I could serve the Lord better without my wife.” Or they might decide even though they are married, now that there is persecution I better leave her, wrong! So now Paul needs to explain in the following verses what we are suppose to do when we get saved.

(12) Some of these same instructions were given by the Lord Jesus when He was here. Some instructions were not given by the Lord Jesus when He was here, so some of this information is new and additional to what Christ said. It is very much inspired, and would apply to the circumstances they found themselves in. Now if a man gets saved but the wife does not, then this is still not grounds for divorce. There are some “churches” that teach that it is, they are wrong.

(13) The same thing is true if a woman gets saved, but her husband does not, she should not divorce him, if he wants to stay with her.

(14) This is something new in the church age as opposed to living under the law. Under the law if someone had a spouse that was not saved they were to divorce them, but now in the age of grace it is different. God has done something special in the church age and that is He has sanctified the children in the marriage, even if one of the spouses is not saved. You say, “What does he mean by sanctification?” It probably means that God is going to help you (set you apart from what normally happens in homes where both the husband and wife are unsaved) through every situation, and He knows what you are faced with.

Normally also, the children in the homes of the unsaved do not have a “covering” (God’s protection for believers), Romans 8:28. I also think this will apply when the Rapture of the Church takes place, the children before the age of accountability, (see the article Age of Accountability) will be taken to heaven with the believing spouse. This verse from the Old Testament may also apply here, showing that babies and children too young to understand are not going to be judged with those who knew better. “Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.” (Deuteronomy 1:39) I know this verse is speaking of the time the Israelites would not obey by going into the Promised Land, but I still think it may have an application for the Rapture as well, and what happens to children before the age accountability.

(15) If when a person becomes a Christian, and the spouse leaves, there is really nothing the Christian can do to stop them (other than praying). They will just have to let them go at this point. We are not to fight with them to get them to stay, nor should we divorce them. Now if they want a divorce, again there is nothing the Christian can do to stop it. However, the Christian should not remarry unless the unsaved spouse remarries or is into immorality.

(16) We do not know if we can lead a spouse to the Lord or not, only God knows that. Remember this is not the Christian leaving, but the unsaved leaving. You can still pray for them and some will be saved, and this is the reason it does not mention remarriage. As long as they have not remarried, or are not living in immorality, then there is still hope. Some Christians have remarried an unsaved spouse when they got saved even though they were into immorality, but had not remarried. God alone can give the “grace” and wisdom to a spouse in this position to know if they should remarry after being separated or divorced. It is not required of them to do this, but it has happened that God has given grace to do this very thing, look at the book of Hosea. This, of course, is the exception, and not the rule, because if a person has committed immorality the Christian has a right to divorce that one and remarry.

(17) For example, say a person had been married and divorced, and then they got saved, should they try to go back to the first wife who is now married? No, the damage has been done and you can’t undo it. When we are saved, we need to stay in the position we find ourselves in when we get saved. This is what Paul taught everywhere he went.

(18) If you were called (saved) as circumcised (a Jew), do not try to become uncircumcised (a Gentile). If you are a Gentile and get saved don’t try to become a Jew. Stay as you are when you get saved.

(19) Circumcision (being a Jew) is nothing really, and being uncircumcised (being a Gentile) is nothing really. Loving the Lord and keeping His commandments is what counts.

(20) The condition you are in when you get saved is the way you should stay, until God tells you otherwise.

(21) For example, if you are a slave (and there are still slaves in the world today) you shouldn't be too concerned about it; God can take care of you. However, if you have an opportunity to become free, this is good also.

(22) Really even if you are a slave, you are free in Christ. If you are free (not a physical slave) remember you are Christ's slave. So the ground is level at the cross, when someone gets saved, God changes things for them in His time, and in His way.

(23) You were bought with the blood of Christ, so don't go now and get mixed up in the world again. Some people sing or say the slave trade is gone, but in reality it is not over with. Satan still enslaves people today in many different ways. It may be through drugs, sex, alcohol, and so on, but he has many ways to put people into bondage. Now that you are saved you don't want to get into those things again.

(24) When you get saved you do not have to go back and try to undo everything wrong you have done before, however sometimes restitution is in order. The point is though, be content with your station in life as you find that you are in when you get saved. There could be many applications for this verse, and the Lord will guide you in your life to understand what this means for you when you get saved.

(25) Paul says Christ did not speak on this subject so this is not a command from Christ, but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit at this time, Paul is going to tell what God has laid on his heart to share. This does not mean it is not part of the Word of God, it is, and is very much inspired. It is just that this has not been discussed before though by Christ. Christ left much of the explanation for the "Church Age" to Paul to reveal. This does not mean it is not a command, but it was not a command given by Christ when He was here on this earth in the flesh.

(26) This "present distress" (and impending distress) is reason for a person to stay just as they are. This is not a good time to get married. When persecution is taking place it is better for people to be careful in making these kinds of decisions. One has to weigh the positives, and the negatives. Persecution for the Corinthians was just beginning, but it would get worse. For this reason it would be better to stay single if you are single. If you have read about, or know first hand what happens to Christians under persecution it is not pretty is it?! However, persecution is "normal" for Christians in most parts of the world (even today), but in some places, and at times, it becomes very intense. Often men's wives and children are used to cause people to recant Christ. They will say, "We will kill, torture, and or rape your wife if you don't renounce Christ" They may say, "We will kill your children in front of you," and don't think it doesn't happen. Satan has used this tactic many times around the world, and is using it now as we speak. Notice this is not a command, but a suggestion from a "former" persecutor himself. So a person is not sinning if they still get married even where there is persecution, just count the cost!

(27) Just stay like you are, for now, was Paul's advice. If you are married, don't try to get a divorce. If you are single stay single, (because of the present persecution).

(28) I am paraphrasing now but it is like Paul is saying, "Look, if you want to go ahead and get married in spite all that I have told you about, it is alright, you are not sinning in any way. I just wanted you to know the risks involved before you make this decision, because you will have trouble under these circumstances of persecution we are facing. I am just trying to spare you some heartache."

(29) The time we have in this world is comparatively short in comparison to eternity, and Christ's return is soon. So even if you are married you should live in the light of Christ's soon return.

(30) Those who are sad are not going to be sad much longer, etc. every thing is kind of in a suspended animation, so to speak, when persecution is going on. It is one day at a time, this is the way it should be anyway with a Christian who is on fire for the Lord and who wants to do His work as long as he or she can. This is how Paul lived his life everyday. This is how many missionaries for Christ live their lives everyday. This is how people who are being persecuted live their lives.

(31) We use the things of the world for the His sake, for example cars, computers, telephones, etc. these are only tools to be used for the Lord even though they are in this world that is passing away they can be used for evil or for good. Let's use the things of the world for God, because we know all these things will soon fade away!

"All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass wither, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever." (1 Peter 1: 24,25)

(32) Paul goes back to his theme of this chapter, marriage or being single. He wants to emphasis once again the importance of making the right choice during this time of persecution. He wants to remind them that if you are single you can serve the Lord fulltime, so this is a nice byproduct of staying single during persecution.

(33) If you are married and not single, remember you will need to spend time with your wife to meet her needs, and to love her. Not that you cannot do both, serve the Lord, and live with and love a wife, it is just that you can expect to spend a lot of time taking care of the family if you are married. Paul wanted the Corinthians to compare their options.

(34) Ladies, here are your options: you can remain single and be a holy vessel for the Lord, dedicated to the Lord, body and spirit; or you can decide to get married, but remember you will have to spend a lot of time taking care of your earthly husband.

(35) I do not want to force you to see it my way, Paul says, in so many words, but I want you to think about how you would be without distractions keeping you from serving the Lord. These are important considerations for any Christian considering marriage. Again, for most of us we are suppose to get married, but there are exceptions. These Christians are no less important than those who are married, and should be treated such in the church.

(36) In those days and in that culture, as it is today in many cultures, the father has a big say over who the daughter marries. These are called arranged marriages. A man might think, Paul, look my daughter needs to get married she is getting older and there is no time to waste. She may not be able to get married if she waits too long. Paul, says to this, “Look, I understand you are not sinning if you want her to get married, the choice is yours and hers.”

(37) On the other hand, if a man thinks it is best for his daughter not to get married, and he is not being coerced by anyone, then so be it, let him make that decision.

(38) Paul’s advice, again, during this time of “distress,” was that fathers not recommend marriage for their daughter.

(39) Now if a wife’s husband dies, she is no longer under obligation not to remarry, as she would be if the unsaved husband left her but was still alive and not living in immorality or adultery. The only obligation as a Christian is that she has to marry a Christian. We are not to be unequally yoked together with the unsaved. “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14)

(40) I think she would be happier if she just stayed single and severed the Lord, Paul advises. By the way, I think I have a right to say this, since I am giving you what God’s Holy Spirit wants me to say to you.

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