

1 Corinthians

Chapter 7

1

How this study handout is structured

**We will go
verse by verse
(as appropriate)**

→ **Matthew 1:1**

**Scripture references
are found at the end of
the slides in the
handout**

- The book of the generation. This is the proper title of the chapter. It is the same as to say, "The account of the ancestry or family, or the genealogical table of Jesus Christ." The phrase is common in Jewish writings. Compare [Ge 5:1](#), "This is the book of the generations of Adam," that is, the genealogical table of the family or descendants of Adam.

Barnes

**Different references will be used.
In this case Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible.
This is a clickable link if you have the
SwordSearcher Bible Software**

- **Matthew 1:1**
This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:

11

**Scripture is NIV
from the Quest
Study Bible
copyright 2011**

**The Bible software
used for references
and KJV scripture is
from SwordSearcher**

<https://www.swordsearcher.com/>

If you would like a pdf copy of this handout email james293504@gmail.com

2

Bible Study Meeting Information

9:00 am Wednesday, 6:45 pm Wednesday

In Person

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, 75 Pine Lakes Parkway, Palm Coast Florida 32164

or

Zoom

Click on the link below

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4497575748?pwd=iKMcs9qbngU-vcQo2zCt7lgy9QjRZW8X>

Or Go to <https://zoom.us/join> and enter

Meeting ID → 449 757 5748, Passcode 04092006

Or Dial in at 312-626-6799 or 929-205-6099

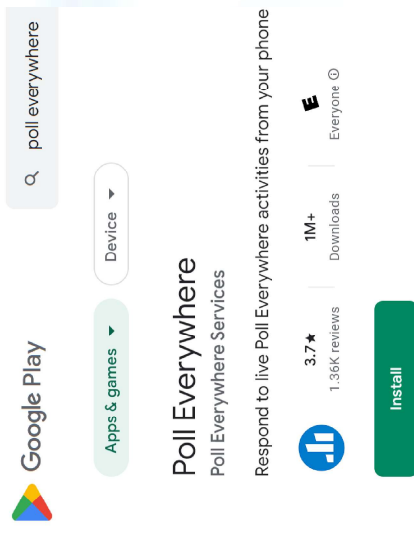
Enter meeting ID 449 757 5748#

Enter Password 04092006

3

Polling

- **By QR Code** (Pollev.com)
QR Code allows you vote and/or to download the app
- **By text** → Send **jamesbrown897** to **22333**
- **There is also an app** you can download
an open to avoid using the QR code every time
- If you want personalized help getting the polling app on your phone I (James Brown), Linda Murray, Deacon Robinson or Angela Simpson are willing to assist you in getting set up.



1 Corinthians - Outline

I. THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. SEPARATION AND TESTIMONY. CHAPTERS 1-10

1. What Grace Has Done and the Assurance which Grace Gives. Chapter 1:1-9.
2. Contrasts. Chapter 1:10-4.
3. Corinthian Failures. Chapters 5-6.
4. Concerning the Relationship of Man and Woman. Chapter 7.
5. Concerning Meats Offered to Idols. Liberty Governed by Love. Chapter 8.
6. Paul's Gracious Example. Chapter 9.
7. Concluding Warnings and Exhortations. Chapter 10.

5

1 Corinthians - Outline

II. THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST. CHAPTERS 11-14

1. The Headship of Christ and of Man. The Lords Supper. Chapter 11.
2. The Body and the Members of the Body. Chapter 12.
3. The Need and Superiority of Love. Chapter 13.
4. Prophecy and Speaking with Tongues. Chapter 14.

III. RESURRECTION AND THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH. CONCLUSIONS.

CHAPTERS 15-16

1. The Doctrine of Resurrection and the Hope of the Church. Chapter 15.
2. Instruction and Greetings. Chapter 16.

6

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

Concerning the Relationship of Man and Woman

1. The Single and the Married Life (verses 1-9)
2. Separation and Divorce (verses 10-16)
3. Abiding in Different Callings (verses 17-24)
4. The Unmarried and Married in Contrast (verses 25-40)

Gaebelein

7

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

- The Church at Corinth had been turned into a debating club. Questions of more or less interest had arisen as between the members of that community. They referred the matter to the Apostle Paul, and in chapters 7 through 9 he addresses himself to "the things whereof ye wrote unto me."
- It is evident from the first verse that the Corinthians had inquired of the Apostle about marriage and the relationship of man and woman. It was an important question in a city of the character of Corinth, so full of immorality. This chapter answers their question and gives instructions concerning the unmarried and those who are joined together in marriage.

Parker

Gaebelein

8

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

Here the principle, which is that which we are mainly concerned with, is a very simple one; the application of it, also, as the apostle gives it, so simple as to need little more. The principle is that the institution of God is to be maintained. Sin has not altered the rightness of that which God at the beginning ordained for man. The institution of God, therefore, has to be maintained, but on the one hand we are to consider the disturbance which sin has brought in, and how that affects the conduct of a believer with regard to such things, and we have also to consider that grace has brought in with it a power which is above nature and created new interests beyond those of the individual. Christians are free, but the apostle's idea of freedom is liberty to serve. He has no thought of anything freer than the service of Christ.

FWGrant

9

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

Definition of Sexual Immorality

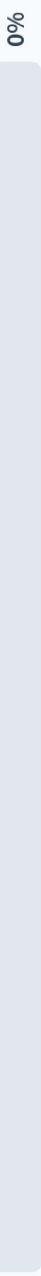
- Sexual immorality, from the Greek word "pornea" (the root of "pornography"), refers to any sexual act or thought that falls outside God's revealed purpose for humanity. Since God created sex, He possesses the authority to define its proper use. The biblical definition establishes clear boundaries: one man, one woman, united in one marriage for life. Anything that deviates from this God-ordained design constitutes sexual immorality. God's ownership of His creation gives Him the right to set these boundaries, not as arbitrary restrictions, but as guidelines for human flourishing within His intended purpose.



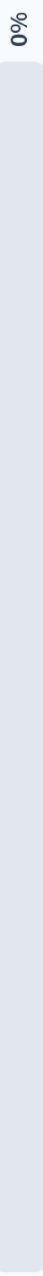
10

When you encounter biblical teaching on sexuality and marriage, which best describes your initial reaction?

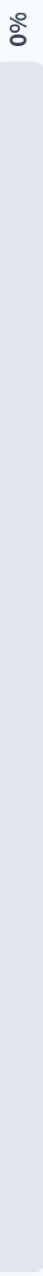
I'm eager to learn God's design for my benefit



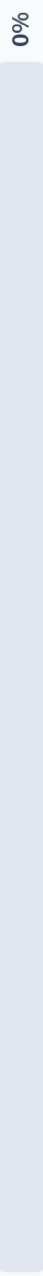
I'm somewhat resistant but open to hearing it



I struggle with how countercultural these teachings are



I trust God's wisdom even when I don't fully understand



Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at pallev.com/app

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

The Mathematical Reality of God's Warnings

- **Paul's Warnings in 1 Corinthians 7 Were Both Spiritual and Practical**
- Ancient Corinth: No treatments for STD's, visible permanent consequences including death
- Modern America (2025): risk reduction with protection available, curable bacterial infections, manageable viral infections
- God's design isn't arbitrary restriction—its protective wisdom backed by statistical reality

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

The Crisis only whispered About: STDs Among Seniors 65+

- The trend for seniors (2010-2023):
 - Chlamydia: +200% (more than TRIPLED)
 - Gonorrhea: +500% (SIXFOLD increase)
 - Syphilis: +900% (nearly TENFOLD increase)
 - Overall STD diagnoses: +23.8% (2020-2023 alone)
- Seniors now have the fastest growing STD rates of any age group in America

13

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

The Crisis Only Whispered About: STDs Among Seniors 65+

- 40% of adults 65-80 are sexually active
- 26% of those 60-69 have sex weekly
- Widowhood, divorce, retirement communities create new partnering
- Assumption: "I'm too old to worry about STDs"
- Reality: No pregnancy risk = no protection used

14

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

The Crisis only whispered About: STDs Among Seniors 65+

- Herpes (HSV-2) prevalence by age:
 - Ages 14-49: 12%
 - Ages 40-49: ~20%
 - Ages 50+: ~25%
 - **Unpartnered women 45-49: 55%** (Most don't know they have it, but can still transmit the disease) *Condoms reduce herpes transmission by approximately 30%, far less than for other STDs, because herpes spreads through skin-to-skin contact beyond areas a condom covers.*

15

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

The Crisis only Whispered About: STDs Among Seniors 65+

- "The two Shall become one flesh" - Genesis 2:24/Matthew 19:5-6
- **It's Not Just Metaphorical - It's Literal Biology:**
- Sexual intercourse creates **actual physical exchange**:
 - Bodily fluids
 - Cells
 - Microorganisms (including viruses and bacteria)
 - DNA exchange

16

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

The Crisis only whispered About: STDs Among Seniors 65+

- "The two Shall become one flesh" - Genesis 2:24/Matthew 19:5-6
- You Literally Become "One Flesh" with Your Partner's Sexual History:
 - When you have sex with someone, you're exposed to:
 - Every virus they carry
 - Every infection they've contracted
 - The biological legacy of every previous partner
 - "One flesh" means: their HSV-2 can become your HSV-2, Their chlamydia becomes your chlamydia, Their gonorrhea becomes your gonorrhea.

17

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

The Crisis only whispered About: STDs Among Seniors 65+

- "The two Shall become one flesh" - Genesis 2:24/Matthew 19:5-6
- Biblical Language Matches Medical Reality:
 - God said "one flesh" - not "one spirit" or "one soul"
 - Flesh is physical, biological unity
 - Ancient people didn't understand virology, but God did
 - The warning was both spiritual AND physical

18

Chapter 7 Background and Introduction

The Crisis only whispered About: STDs Among Seniors 65+

- Imagine a faithful wife married for 40 years who finds herself widowed at 65. She begins dating again—one relationship at 66, another at 69. In her entire life, she's only had three sexual partners. She naturally thinks, "I was married faithfully for four decades. At my age, I'm safe from these concerns." But here's the statistical reality in her age demographic, each new partner has approximately a 25% chance of already carrying HSV-2 from their lifetime, plus exposure to rising rates of other STDs among seniors.

19

Before today's study, how aware were you of the statistical reality behind God's warnings about sexual immorality?

I understood the spiritual AND practical consequences

0%

I focused mainly on spiritual consequences

0%

I hadn't really connected God's commands to real-world protection

0%

This is eye-opening new information to me

0%

Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 7:1-9

The Single and the Married Life

¹Now for the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” ²But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. ³The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. ⁵Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. →

21

Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 7:1-9

The Single and the Married Life

⁷I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. ⁸Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. ⁹But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

22

1 Corinthians 7:1

Context matters → Note the quotation marks in the scripture. He is likely responding to a question “*It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.*”

- Our apostle elsewhere, [Heb 13:4](#), asserts marriage to be holy and honorable; here he determines first in general, that such as have the gift to live chaste in a single state, do well; and in particular, that a single life at that time was most advisable, and most agreeable to the calamitous and afflicted state of the church; so that when the apostle says in this verse, *It is good for a man not to touch a woman*, his meaning is, it is more agreeable to the present necessity, more convenient in regard of the persecuted state of the church, as being a condition less disturbed with cares, and less troubled with distraction: →

Burkitt

- 1 Corinthians 7:1
Now for the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”

23

1 Corinthians 7:1

for marriage plunges men into an excess of worldly cares, it multiplies their business, and usually their wants, and those wants are harder supplied than in a single life, and more difficultly allowed; it is much easier to bear personal wants than family wants: with respect to all which, says the apostle, especially as the present state of the church stands, *it is good for a man not to touch a woman*: not that it is at any time simply unlawful, but at sometimes manifestly inexpedient.

- It may at first sight appear as if the Apostle thus put marriage upon very low and merely utilitarian ground: but we must remember that he is here writing with a definite and limited aim, and does not enter into a general discussion of the subject. St. Paul gives a reason why those who wrote to him should marry, and the force of the argument does not extend beyond the immediate object in view.

Burkitt

Ellicott

24

1 Corinthians 7:2

St. Paul practically refutes all the dangerous and unwarrantable inferences drawn by St. Jerome and others from the previous clause. St. Jerome argues: "If it is good for a man not to touch a woman, it must be bad to do so, and therefore celibacy is a holier state than marriage." ... Such reasoning shows:

1. The danger of pressing words to the full extent of the logical inferences which may be deduced from them. →

Pulpit

- 1 Corinthians 7:2
But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband.

25

1 Corinthians 7:2

2. The errors which always arise from arguing upon isolated texts separated from their context, and from all consideration of the circumstances under which they were written.
3. The necessity of following the guidance of the Holy Spirit when he shows, by history and experience, the need for altering precepts with reference to altered conditions. There is in celibacy a moral beauty—there are cases in which it becomes a duty. But in most cases marriage, being no less a duty, as St. Paul proceeds to show, is even fairer and more excellent. **Neither state, the wedded or the unwedded, is in itself more holy than the other.** Each has its own honor and loveliness and can only be judged of in connection with surrounding circumstances.

Pulpit

26

1 Corinthians 7:2

- Observe farther, How the apostle directs every man to have his own wife, and every woman her own husband: more than one is forbidden; and polygamy, or the sin of having either more wives or more husbands at a time than one, is here condemned. To bridle and restrain men's extravagant lusts, the wisdom of God has directed every man to enjoy his own wife, and every woman her own husband.

Burkitt

27

1 Corinthians 7:3

1 Corinthians 7:3 (KJV) Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

- Marriage is a state of mutual obligations. Each must yield to the other what those obligations require. PNTC
- **Due benevolence**; these words express the mutual duty of husband and wife towards each other, as explained in verses [1Co 7:4-5](#). Whatever increases temptations to evils which marriage was designed to prevent, or renders it ineffectual for the purposes for which it was instituted, should be carefully avoided. FBN

- **1 Corinthians 7:3**
The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.

28

1 Corinthians 7:3

- Some have rendered the words, not unaptly, the matrimonial debt, or conjugal duty - that which a wife owes to her husband, and the husband to his wife; and which they must take care mutually to render, else alienation of affection will be the infallible consequence, and this in numberless instances has led to adulterous connections. In such cases the wife has to blame herself for the infidelity of her husband, and the husband for that of his wife. What miserable work has been made in the peace of families by a wife or a husband pretending to be wiser than the apostle, and too holy and spiritual to keep the commandments of God!

Clarke

29

1 Corinthians 7:3

1 Corinthians 7:3 (KJV) Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

- That matrimonial conversation, or the husband's and wife's performing towards each other all the duties of marriage which they promised, is an act of justice, which they owe to one another: this is intimated in the word render, and consequently to deny the same is injustice and fraud: Defraud not one another. Marriage takes away from persons that power which they had over themselves and their own bodies and transfers it in some sort to the person they are married to.
- If you are obligated to "render" (give what is owed)... Then withholding it constitutes "fraud" (depriving someone of what's rightfully theirs)

Burkitt

30

1 Corinthians 7:4

- Each sex here is put on exactly the same footing. The body of each belongs to the other, and cannot be yielded to other parties. The spirit of the passage not only forbids adultery, but polygamy.

PNTC

- **1 Corinthians 7:4**
The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. **31**

1 Corinthians 7:5

1 Corinthians 7:5 (KJV) Defraud ye not one the other, except *it* be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

- **except it be with consent:** because they have a mutual power over each other's bodies, and therefore the abstinence must be voluntary on each side; otherwise injury is done to the person that does not consent, who is deprived against will of just right; but if there is agreement, then there is no defrauding, because each give up their right;

Gill

- **1 Corinthians 7:5** Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. **32**

In your understanding, which statement best reflects biblical teaching on marital intimacy?

It's primarily for procreation

0%

It's a mutual obligation and gift within marriage

0%

It's optional based on how each spouse feels

0%

I'm not sure what the Bible actually teaches

0%

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at pallev.com/app

1 Corinthians 7:2-5 Summary 😊

A clean up woman is a woman who
Gets all the love we girls leave behind
The reason I know so much about her
Is because she picked up a man of mine

-
-
-

Jumpin' slick was my ruin
'Cause, I found out all I was doin'

Was making it easy for the clean up woman

Do you know this song?
Do you know scripture?
A polling question will
test our knowledge

According to 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, the singer's mistake was...

Putting her man's love "on a shelf" instead of rendering due benevolence

0%

Being "out having fun" instead of not defrauding one another

0%

Thinking she "had him all to myself" when really marriage means giving up authority over your own body

0%

All of the above (and the Clean Up Woman said "Thank you very much!")

0%

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at pallev.com/app

1 Corinthians 7:2-5

Here's what Betty Wright and Paul BOTH understand:

- **Marriage creates obligations** ("render due benevolence")
- **Neglect creates opportunity** (for Satan, for temptation, for the Clean Up Woman)
- **You don't own your spouse—you belong to each other** (v. 4)
- **Mutuality matters** (Paul repeats v. 4 for BOTH spouses)
- **The Clean Up Woman is ALWAYS looking** (v. 5: "that Satan tempt you not")

1 Corinthians 7:6

- "Scripture makes it clear that there is nothing wrong—and everything right—about sex within marriage. **Satan employs a remarkably clever and effective strategy regarding sexuality, one you'll immediately recognize: he works tirelessly to encourage sexual activity outside of marriage while simultaneously doing everything possible to discourage it within marriage.** Both outcomes represent equal victories for him—whether he succeeds in promoting sex outside marriage or in suppressing it within marriage, he achieves his goal of distorting God's design."



- 1 Corinthians 7:6
I say this as a concession, not as a command.

1 Corinthians 7:7

- The apostle speaks not of his state and condition, as married or unmarried, for it is not certain which he was; some think he had a wife, others not: it looks, however, as if he had not at this time, as appears from [1Co 7:8](#) but be it which it will, it can hardly be thought he should wish all men to be in either state, either all married, or all unmarried; but he speaks of the ability to remain celibate, which he had, as the following words show; and this he desires for all men, that they might not be in any danger from Satan's temptations, and that they might be more fit for and intent upon the service of Christ.

- 1 Corinthians 7:7
I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

1 Corinthians 7:8

- **To the unmarried and widows.** If they have his self-control, it is well for them to remain unmarried, even as he. Not that the unmarried state is better, but on account of "the present distress" ([1Co 7:26](#)), the critical times. There are times when it is best to remain unmarried; for instance, in a time of war and invasion. The ground of his advice is not moral, but prudential.

PNTC

- **1 Corinthians 7:8**
Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do.

39

1 Corinthians 7:9

- ... This is God's remedy for lust. The fire may be quenched by the means he has appointed. And marriage, with all its inconveniences, is much better than to burn with impure and lustful desires. [MHWBC](#)
Marriage is honorable in all; but it is a duty in those who cannot contain nor conquer those inclinations.
- **They should marry:** There is no lust so hot and violent, but God's medicines rightly applied will cool and heal. Only remember that it is not the having, but the loving of a wife that keeps a man chaste and clean.

Trapp

- **1 Corinthians 7:9**
But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

40

1 Corinthians 7:9

- Paul affirms marriage as a legitimate refuge from sexual temptation. Desiring marriage to avoid burning with passion isn't immature or unspiritual—it's biblical.
- However, Paul isn't addressing normal, everyday sexual temptation that everyone experiences. As Calvin distinguished: "It's one thing to burn, another to feel heat." Paul's "burning" means being so inflamed with passion you cannot resist it—not merely feeling attraction.
- **A Critical Caution:** Don't assume marriage automatically solves lust problems. Many Christians discover their ungodly desires don't magically disappear at the altar. Marriage isn't a cure-all for sexual sin.
- **The real solution:** Deal with lust *now*. Bring it into submission to Jesus Christ *before* marriage. Otherwise, you'll simply carry your bondage into your marriage.



Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 Separation and Divorce

¹⁰To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. ¹¹But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. ¹²To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. ¹³And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. ¹⁴For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. →

Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 7:10-16

Separation and Divorce

¹⁵But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

¹⁶How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

- Paul addresses *believing* couples (both Christians)
- This is the Lord's command (Jesus in Matthew 19:3-9)
- God's design: Marriage is permanent
- "Must not separate" = do not divorce
- This is not Paul's opinion - it's Christ's teaching

• 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. [44](#)

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

1. *The marriage bond is indissoluble.* It is a union for life, which cannot be broken up without sin. It is not to be dissolved at the mere will of the parties, nor for any frivolous reason. This perpetuity arises from the relationship itself, as well as from the Divine appointment. Husband and wife are ideally one, and their separation is the disrupting of a bond which has no parallel in this world. An additional sacredness attaches to the marriage covenant in the case of Christians, who invoke the blessing of God upon their union.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

2. *Separation is not to be final.* The case supposed is that of a wife leaving her husband on the ground of harsh and cruel treatment or for some similar reason. The cause of separation may or may not be sufficient to justify it, but in either case it must not be regarded as severing the marriage tie. Only two alternatives are open. The wife thus separated must remain unmarried, since a new union would imply that the previous one was null and void; or she must be reconciled to her husband and return to live with him. This last is in every way the desirable course, and every means should be used to bring it about. Husband and wife cannot go apart without sin and scandal to the Christian name, and their religious profession requires them to reconsider their position and remove every barrier to reunion. →

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

The apostle is not here speaking of adultery, which is of itself a dissolution of the marriage bond and a sufficient ground for divorce, [[Mt 19:9](#)] but simply of the general rule that married persons are bound to each other for life. With what prayerful deliberation should such a union be contracted! A step that cannot be retraced should not be taken without thought.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

- Paul is realistic - if separation occurs
- Two options only:
 - Remain unmarried
 - Be reconciled to husband (Same command applies equally to husbands)
- No third option given by Paul
- **God still sees them as married regardless of legal divorce**
- Remarriage to someone else is not an option here
- **Why only two options?** Because in God's eyes, the covenant still exists. Legal divorce doesn't dissolve what God joined together.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

- What are NOT biblical grounds for divorce:
 - Incompatibility
 - Unhappiness/"falling out of love"
 - Financial problems
 - In-law conflicts
 - Different life goals
 - Personality differences
 - A finer/richer and/or younger woman/man

- Biblical grounds ARE limited to:
 - Sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9)
 - Desertion by unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15)

49

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

What about those already **REMARRIED** after an unbiblical divorce?

- The Issues to Address:
 - Jesus calls remarriage after unbiblical divorce "adultery" (Matthew 19:9)
 - Is this ongoing adultery or was adultery the act of remarrying?
 - Can this sin be forgiven?
 - Should they break their current marriage to return to first spouse?
 - What consequences remain even after forgiveness?
 - How does God work in these situations?

- **This is best assessed with a biblical framework**

50

- **Matthew 19:3-9 (KJV)** The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it* be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

51

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Biblical Pattern - God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will

- **A Pattern Throughout Scripture:**
- God reveals His *perfect* plan clearly
- People *choose* to depart from that plan
- God *permits* their choice (doesn't prevent it)
- *Consequences* remain (but God works redemptively)
- **This pattern helps us understand how God responds when people make choices outside His perfect will while still showing grace.**

52

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Biblical Pattern - God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will

Example 1 - Israel Demands a King (1 Samuel 8)

- **God's Perfect Plan:**
 - He would be their King
 - Direct theocracy under God's rule
 - No human intermediary needed
- **People's Choice:**
 - "Give us a king like all the other nations" ([1 Samuel 8:5](#))
 - Rejected God's kingship
 - Wanted to be like everyone else instead of trusting God's unique design

53

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Biblical Pattern - God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will

Example 1 - Israel Demands a King (1 Samuel 8) continued

- **God's Response:**
 - "Listened to them and give them a king" ([1 Samuel 8:22](#))
 - **But God tells Samuel: "They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me" ([1 Samuel 8:7](#))**
 - **Critical insight:** This wasn't about Samuel - it was about rejecting God's design and authority
 - Gave detailed warnings of consequences (1 Samuel 8:10-18)
 - Permitted their choice

54

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Biblical Pattern - God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will

- **Consequences That Came:**
 - The king took their sons for his chariots and armies; The king took their daughters as servants; The king took their fields, vineyards, and olive groves; People became slaves to the king; Centuries of mostly bad kings; Eventually led to exile.
- **God's Redemptive Work:**
 - Worked through David's line; Ultimately brought the Messiah; Used their choice for His purposes
 - **Key Point:** Consequences didn't disappear because God permitted the choice, but God didn't abandon them - He worked redemptively through the situation.

55

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Biblical Pattern - God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will

Example 1 - Israel Demands a King (1 Samuel 8) continued

- **The Deeper Issue:**
 - They didn't just want a different leader or better circumstances
 - **They rejected God's authority and design for how they should live**
 - They wanted to be "like other nations" instead of trusting God's plan
 - **The sin was ultimately against GOD, not just against their situation**

56

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Biblical Pattern - God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will

Example 1 - Israel Demands a King (1 Samuel 8) continued

- **Application to Divorce/Remarriage:**
 - Unbiblical divorce isn't just about the spouse or difficult circumstances
- **Deeper problem: Rejecting God's design and authority over marriage**
- "Everyone gets divorced when they're unhappy" is not God's standard
- Wanting what the world does instead of honoring God's covenant
- **Like all sin, it's ultimately against God** (Psalm 51:4 - "Against You, You only, have I sinned")

57

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Biblical Pattern - God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will

- **Example 2 - Moses Permits Divorce (Matthew 19:8)**
- **Jesus's Explanation:**
 - Matthew 19:8 - *"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.'"*
- **Key Points:**
 - God's original plan: Permanent marriage ([Genesis 2:24](#))
 - Moses PERMITTED divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)
 - Permission was due to "hardness of hearts"
 - "But from the beginning it was not so" - not God's ideal →

58

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Biblical Pattern - God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will

- God allowed something outside His perfect plan
- Permission does not equal approval
- Consequences remained
- **Pattern:** God permits what He doesn't prefer, while consequences of departing from His design remain.

59

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will Applied to Remarriage After Unbiblical Divorce

- **God's Perfect Plan:**
 - Marriage is a permanent covenant ([Genesis 2:24](#); [Matthew 19:6](#))
 - Reflects Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22-33)
 - Exceptions: Sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9), desertion by unbeliever (1 Cor 7:15)
 - One man, one woman, for life

→

60

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will Applied to Remarriage After Unbiblical Divorce continued

- **People's Departure:**
 - Divorce for reasons outside biblical grounds
 - Remarriage that God doesn't recognize as valid (Matthew 19:9)
 - Often done in ignorance of God's standards
 - Sometimes in willful disobedience
 - Always contrary to God's design
 - Life and ministry to continue in many contexts
 - Genuine forgiveness when repentance is sought (1 John 1:9) → 61

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will Applied to Remarriage After Unbiblical Divorce continued

- **God's Response - Permission with Consequences:**
 - **What God allows:**
 - Divorce to occur legally
 - Remarriage to happen in civil/legal sense →

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will Applied to Remarriage After Unbiblical Divorce continued

- **What God does not remove - Consequences:**
 - Weight of broken covenant (though forgiven)
 - Relational damage with first spouse
 - Impact on children from first marriage
 - Complex blended family dynamics
 - Potential limitations on church leadership (varies by tradition)
 - Financial complications
 - Testimonial challenges

63

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will Applied to Remarriage After Unbiblical Divorce continued

- **The Forgiveness Question; Can this sin be forgiven?**
- **YES - Absolutely and completely.**
- 1 John 1:9 - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- Christ's blood covers all sin when genuinely repented of
- This is not an unforgivable sin
- Forgiveness is real and complete

64

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

God's Permissive vs. Perfect Will Applied to Remarriage After Unbiblical Divorce continued

- But forgiveness doesn't mean consequences disappear:
- David was forgiven for adultery with Bathsheba
- Consequences still came (2 Samuel 12:10-14)
- Moses was forgiven for striking the rock
- Still didn't enter the Promised Land (Numbers 20:12)
- **Biblical Pattern:** Forgiveness restores relationship with God, but earthly consequences often remain.

65

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

- The "Should They Divorce Again?" Question → Should someone leave their current (second) marriage to return to their first spouse?
- **NO** - This creates **NEW** sin and consequences.
- **Reasons:**
 - Breaking current covenant violates God's design again
 - Creates additional damage to current spouse
 - Harms children in current marriage
 - May not even be possible (first spouse remarried)
 - Compounds problems rather than solving them

66

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

- **Biblical Principle:**
 - **Honor the covenant you're currently in**
 - 1 Corinthians 7:17 (coming up) - "remain in the situation you were in when God called you"
 - Applies to converts already in second marriages
- **The Right Response:**
 - Confess the sin of the unbiblical divorce/remarriage
 - Receive God's forgiveness
 - Honor and work on current marriage covenant
 - Learn from the experience
 - Help others avoid the same path

67

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 For Those Not Yet Divorced

- Don't do it unless you have biblical grounds
- Work on your marriage with every resource available
- Seek biblical counseling
- Pursue reconciliation aggressively
- Remember: incompatibility, unhappiness, "falling out of love" are *not* biblical grounds
- The difficulty of staying is less than the consequences of unbiblical divorce
- **Prevention is vastly better than dealing with aftermath.**

68

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 For Those Divorced but NOT Remarried

- Two Options (from verse 11):
- **Option 1: Pursue Reconciliation**
- If reconciliation is possible, pursue it
- Forgive past hurts
- Rebuild trust
- Honor the original covenant

69

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 For Those Divorced but NOT Remarried

- **Option 2: Remain Unmarried**
- If reconciliation isn't possible, remain single
- God can give grace for singleness (verse 7)
- Use the season for spiritual growth
- Serve God in ways marriage might hinder
- **Don't add remarriage to unbiblical divorce:**
- Compounds the sin
- Creates the consequences we've discussed
- Makes reconciliation impossible

70

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

The Balance - Truth and Grace; We must hold both!

- **TRUTH - God's Standards Are Serious:**
 - God takes marriage covenant extremely seriously
 - Departing from His plan has real consequences
 - Consequences remain even after forgiveness
 - This should NOT be entered lightly
 - Prevention is crucial

71

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

The Balance - Truth and Grace; We must hold both!

- **GRACE - God's Forgiveness Is Real:**
 - Christ's blood covers this sin when repented
 - Those remarried are NOT second-class Christians
 - God works redemptively in current situations
 - Breaking current marriage creates NEW problems
 - Focus forward, not stuck in past

72

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

The Balance - Truth and Grace; We must hold both!

- **How we respond matters:**
 - Speak truth clearly about God's design
 - Show grace abundantly to those who've failed it
 - Never condone sin
 - Never condemn sinners beyond restoration
 - Point everyone to Christ's sufficient grace

73

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Scenario One - Former Spouse's Adultery

- *Scenario: John divorces his wife Sarah for incompatibility (unbiblical grounds). Six months later, Sarah begins a sexual relationship with another man. Does John now have biblical grounds to remarry?*
- “Yes, John now has biblical grounds to remarry. If the former spouse commits adultery after an unbiblical divorce, this creates biblical grounds retroactively, as the adultery breaks the covenant bond God still recognized.”

74

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Scenario Two – Abuse or Safety Issues

- Scenario: A wife's husband becomes physically abusive or develops severe addiction problems that threaten the family's safety. She divorces him to protect herself and their children. Does she have biblical grounds to remarry?
- **What Scripture Makes Clear:**
- **God values life and safety** - Psalm 82:3-4 ("Defend the poor and fatherless"); Proverbs 22:3 ("A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself")
- **Immediate separation is necessary and right** - protecting yourself and children is biblical wisdom, not sin →

75

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Scenario Two – Abuse or Safety Issues

- **Legal divorce for protection may be necessary** - restraining orders, financial protection, custody arrangements
- **Safety comes first** - God does not require you to stay in dangerous situations
- **The Remarriage Question - What Does Scripture Say?**
- **The Challenge:** Abuse is not explicitly listed as biblical grounds in Matthew 19:9 or 1 Corinthians 7:15. Scripture gives two clear grounds: sexual immorality (porneia) and desertion by unbeliever.
- However, abuse may demonstrate the person's heart, (Matthew 7:16) and could potentially apply the unbeliever desertion principle in 1 Corinthians 7:15

76

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Scenario Three – Pre-Conversion Divorce

- Scenario: Before becoming a Christian, someone divorced their first spouse for unbiblical reasons and remarried. Years later, they come to faith in Christ. Are they living in adultery? Should they leave their current spouse?
- **Answer: No! - Do not leave your current spouse. Honor your current marriage covenant.**
- **Biblical Foundation:**
- **2 Corinthians 5:17** - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." →

77

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Scenario Three – Pre-Conversion Divorce

- **1 Corinthians 7:17** - "But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk... let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called."

1. All Past Sins Forgiven at Conversion

- God forgives ALL sins when you come to Christ - including unbiblical divorce/remarriage done before salvation; You are a NEW creation - old things passed away; Past is covered by Christ's blood!

2. Current Marriage Should Be Honored

- Breaking current marriage would create NEW sin; God calls you to honor the covenant you're currently in; "Remain in the situation you were in when God called you" (v.17) →

78

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Scenario Three – Pre-Conversion Divorce

3. No Need to "Undo" Past Relationships

- You cannot change decisions made before knowing Christ; Current spouse and any children deserve your faithfulness; Focus forward, not backward.

4. What About Guilt?

- Romans 8:1 - "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus"; If God has forgiven it, you can accept that forgiveness; Move forward in grace and faithful obedience now.

79

1 Corinthians 7:12-13

- Up to this point the writer has alluded only to Christians; he has spoken of the duties of unmarried persons, of widows, and of those already married. There remains one class of marriages concerning which differences of opinion existed—mixed marriages. In a church like Corinth there would have been, no doubt, many cases where one of the partners was not a believer and the other a Christian, arising from the subsequent conversion of only one of the married couple.

Ellicott

- **1 Corinthians 7:12-13**
To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him

1 Corinthians 7:12-13

- But why is it that Paul speaks of himself as the author of these regulations, while they appear to be somewhat at variance with what he had, a little before, brought forward, as from the Lord? He does not mean that they are from himself in such a way as not to be derived from the Spirit of God; but, as there was nowhere in the law or in the Prophets any definite or explicit statement on this subject, he anticipates in this way the false accusations of the wicked, in claiming as his own what he was about to state. There is, however, nothing inconsistent with what goes before; for as the obligation and sanctity of the marriage engagement depend upon God...

Calvin

81

1 Corinthians 7:14

- The words sanctified, holy, and unclean, are used here by the Apostle in the Jewish sense. The Jews called all that were Jews holy, and all others unclean.
- Any scruple which a Christian might have felt as to whether matrimonial union with an unbeliever would be defiling is here removed, and the purity of the former teaching justified. In contrast to that other union in which the connection is defiling ([1Co 6:16](#)), the purity of the believing partner in this union, being a lawful one, →

Coke

Ellicott

- 1 Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.[82](#)

1 Corinthians 7:14

- as it were, entirely overweighs the impurity of the unbeliever, it being not a moral, but a kind of ceremonial impurity. The children of such marriages were considered to be Christian children; and the fruit being holy, so must we regard as holy the tree from which it springs. It must be remembered that the "sanctification" and "holiness" here spoken of is not that inward sanctification which springs from the action of the Holy Spirit in the individual heart, but that consecration which arises from being in the body of Christ, which is the Christian Church ([Ro 9:16](#).)

1 Corinthians 7:14

- **In a mixed marriage, both the unbelieving spouse and the children are "sanctified/holy" in a relational and legal sense only:** The unbelieving spouse is sanctified means the marriage relationship is valid and consecrated by God's design for marriage. The children are holy means they are legitimate offspring of a valid marriage.
- **This does not mean:** They have the indwelling Holy Spirit; They are saved or regenerated; They are suitable candidates for baptism; They have any internal spiritual transformation.
- **This does mean:** The marriage bond is sacred and shouldn't be dissolved; The family unit operates under God's general blessing on the institution of marriage; The children are positioned to witness godly living and may be influenced toward faith; **But salvation/indwelling of the Spirit requires personal faith in Christ.** (Summarized from Barnes)

1 Corinthians 7:14

- Let us, however, bear in mind, that he speaks here not of contracting marriages, but of maintaining those that have been already contracted; for where the matter under consideration is, whether one should marry an unbelieving wife, or whether one should marry an unbelieving husband, then that exhortation is in point —
- Be not yoked with unbelievers, for there is no agreement between Christ and Belial. ([2Co 6:14](#).)
- But he that is already bound has no longer liberty of choice; hence the advice given is different.

1 Corinthians 7:15

- From this verse we see that you are to be true to God, in every case and regardless of consequences, even though your companion may abandon you forever.
- This permission is in no way contrary to our Lord's permission of divorce on only one ground, for the Apostle has carefully reminded his readers that our Lord's command does not apply to the case of a marriage between a believer and a unbeliever. In such cases we have no command from Him.

- 1 Corinthians 7:15
But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

1 Corinthians 7:16

- This verse has been very generally regarded as a kind of modification of the previous one, as if the Apostle suggested that it might be advisable not to let the unbelieving partner depart from the marriage union when he so desired, in any case where there was even a chance of the believing partner effecting his or her conversion. The true meaning of the passage is, however, precisely the opposite. The Apostle declares that the remote possibility of the unbeliever's conversion is too vague a matter for which to risk the peace which is so essential an element in the Christian life. ...

Ellicott

- 1 Corinthians 7:16
How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

87

If you're in (or were in) a marriage with an unbelieving spouse, what should be your PRIMARY focus?

Converting my spouse - that's my main responsibility

0%

Living faithfully and at peace - leaving results to God

0%

Preparing for likely separation

0%

Compromising my faith to keep peace

0%

Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 7:17-24

Abiding in Different Callings

¹⁷Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. ¹⁸Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. ¹⁹Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts. ²⁰Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them. ²¹Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. ²²For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ's slave. →

89

Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 7:17-24

Abiding in Different Callings

²³You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings. ²⁴Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

90

1 Corinthians 7:17

- **As God hath distributed to every man;** assigned him his place and lot in life. The apostle here begins an exhortation to contentment in present circumstances. **So let him walk;** let each one continue in the condition and business to which God in his providence calls him, and do all the good he can.



- **1 Corinthians 7:17**
Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.

91

How would you honestly assess your level of contentment in your current life situation?

Very content - trusting God's assignment for me

0%

Mostly content but struggling in some areas

0%

Discontented - frequently wishing for different circumstances

0%

Actively working to change my situation in biblical ways

0%

1 Corinthians 7:18

- Is anyone who was a native Jew, and so circumcised according to the Jewish law, converted (while he is in that state) to the faith of Christ? Let him not affect the state of him that, having been formerly a Gentile, was never circumcised. On the other side, is any, being a native Gentile, and so not circumcised, converted to Christianity? Let not him affect the state of one converted from Judaism, who was circumcised.

Poole

- **1 Corinthians 7:18**
Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised.
Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised.

93

1 Corinthians 7:19

- Circumcision was an ordinance of God, a sign of God's covenant, as necessary to salvation in its time, as the fulfilling of any precept of the law contained in ordinances: and uncircumcision also was something; for by the law relating to that ordinance, the uncircumcised male is determined to have broken God's covenant, and determined to a cutting off, [Ge 17:10-14](#). But in the present state of the church, circumcision was of no value or moment in the business of salvation: *In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love*, [Ga 5:6](#).

- **1 Corinthians 7:19**
Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing.
Keeping God's commands is what counts.

Poole

94

1 Corinthians 7:20

- This is an exhortation much needed in the present day. Men and women often think that if only their circumstances were different, they could serve God better. But the true service of God is not a question of environment.
- **I. Make sure you are in the right place.**—In all Christian service it is of the first importance to be sure that we are in the place that God has chosen for us, and that we are doing that which He would have us do. If we are assured of that, then let nothing induce us to change. →

Nisbet

- **1 Corinthians 7:20**
Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

95

1 Corinthians 7:20

- **II. In that place remain.**—If God is using you in the place where He has put you, there remain until He makes known to you that His will is otherwise. Much of the ineffectiveness of Christian work today is due to a feeling of unrest, almost of discontent. Men and women think they have large gifts, and they are anxious to obtain a wider sphere. But our whole purpose should be not to seek any other sphere than that which the Lord Himself shall choose for us. It may be a small sphere, and we may think our talents are wasted there, but depend upon it the sphere, however small it may be, is large enough when we remember that we shall have to give an account of our stewardship there. →

Nisbet

96

1 Corinthians 7:20

Young men with speaking gifts sometimes think that they can serve God best as preachers, and they disdain the more humble charge of a Sunday-school class. Yet how great is the responsibility for the souls of the children! and no one need desire a higher form of service.

- **III. Seek to do God's will, not your own.**—The true remedy for all unrest and discontent is to bend to the will of God. The man who can say from the heart 'Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee' will be ready to 'abide in the same calling wherein he was called,' knowing that there he can live and work to God's glory.

1 Corinthians 7:20

A profession perspective

- *In the same calling.* The same occupation, profession, rank of life. We use the word *calling* in the same sense to denote the occupation or profession of a man. Probably the original idea which led men to designate a profession as a *calling* was the belief that God called every man to the profession and rank which he occupies; that is, that it is by his *arrangement*, or *providence*, that he occupies that rank rather than another. In this way every man has a *call* to the profession in which he is engaged as really as ministers of the gospel; and every man should have as clear evidence that *God* has *called* him to the sphere of life in which he moves, as ministers of the gospel should have that God has called them to their appropriate profession. →

1 Corinthians 7:20

A profession perspective

- This declaration of Paul, that every one is to remain in the same occupation or rank in which he was when he was converted, is to be taken in a general and not in an unqualified sense. It does not design to teach that a man is in no situation to seek a *change* in his profession when he becomes spiritual. But it is intended to show that religion was the friend of order; that it did not disregard or disarrange the relations of social life; that it was fitted to produce *contentment* even in an humble walk, and to prevent complaints at the lot of those who were more favored or happy. That it did not design to prevent all change is apparent from the next verse, and from the nature of the case. →

1 Corinthians 7:20

A profession perspective

- Some of the circumstances in which a change of condition, or of calling, may be proper when a man is converted, are the following:
(1.) When a man is a *slave*, and he can obtain his freedom, [1Co 7:21](#).
(2.) When a man is pursuing a *wicked* calling or course of life when he was converted, even if it is lucrative, he should abandon it as speedily as possible. Thus if a man is engaged, as John Newton was, in the slave-trade, he should at once abandon it. If he is engaged in the manufacture or sale of alcoholic spirits, he should at once forsake the business, even at great personal sacrifice, and engage in a lawful and honorable employment. →

1 Corinthians 7:20

A profession perspective

No considerations can justify a continuance in a course of life like this after a man is converted. No consideration can make a business which is "evil, and only evil, and that continually," proper or right.

(3.) Where a man can increase his usefulness by choosing a new profession. Many have greatly promoted their usefulness by leaving agriculture, mechanics, law, or commerce to become ministers of the gospel. In such situations, religion not only permits a man to change his profession, but it demands it; nor will God smile upon him, or bless him, unless the change is made. An opportunity to become more useful imposes an obligation to change the course of life. And no man is permitted to waste his life and talents in a mere scheme of money-making, or in self-indulgence, when by changing his calling, he can do more for the salvation of the world.

Barnes

101

Slavery in Paul's World vs. Modern Racial Slavery

- The slavery Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians bears little resemblance to the race-based chattel slavery that plagued America and other nations. This distinction is crucial for properly understanding Scripture and exposing the moral bankruptcy of those who twisted biblical texts to justify racial oppression.
- **Slavery in the Greco-Roman World** - In Paul's first-century context, slavery was an economic and social institution fundamentally different from modern slavery:
- **Diverse pathways into slavery:** People became enslaved through war capture, debt payment, voluntary servitude for economic security, birth to enslaved parents, or even selling themselves to gain Roman citizenship or professional opportunities. →



102

Slavery in Paul's World vs. Modern Racial Slavery

Notably, slavery crossed all ethnic and racial lines—Greeks, Romans, Jews, and other peoples could all be enslaved regardless of skin color.

- **Pathways to freedom:** Manumission (formal release from slavery) was common. Enslaved people could purchase their freedom, be granted freedom by their owners, or receive freedom through various legal mechanisms. Some accumulated wealth and owned property even while enslaved.
- **Variable conditions:** While many enslaved people faced harsh treatment, others held positions of significant responsibility—managing households, conducting business, teaching, practicing medicine, or serving in administrative roles. →



103

Slavery in Paul's World vs. Modern Racial Slavery

Social status was complex and didn't automatically correlate with enslaved or free status.

- **Paul's Teaching in Context** - When Paul writes "if you can gain your freedom, do so" (1 Corinthians 7:21), he acknowledges slavery as a present reality while affirming freedom as preferable. He's not endorsing the institution but providing practical pastoral guidance to believers living within it. His revolutionary statement that in Christ "there is neither slave nor free" (Galatians 3:28) undermined slavery's moral foundation by asserting the fundamental equality and dignity of all people before God. →



104

Slavery in Paul's World vs. Modern Racial Slavery

- **The Distortion of Scripture**
- Those who used biblical passages to justify racial slavery committed a grievous error by: Ignoring the radical differences between ancient and modern slavery systems; Twisting descriptive passages (acknowledging slavery's existence) into prescriptive commands (endorsing slavery as good); Denying Scripture's clear teaching on human dignity, equality in Christ, and love of neighbor; Creating a permanent, hereditary, race-based system that contradicted everything about first-century slavery; Understanding this context exposes how thoroughly those who defended racial slavery misused Scripture to perpetuate profound injustice that Scripture itself would condemn.



105

1 Corinthians 7:21

- **Art thou called being a servant? Half the population of the Roman Empire at this time were slaves. Thousands of the early Christians were in this condition. If a servant was converted, let him not be troubled over his submissive state; but if he had the means of becoming free, let him rather choose freedom.**

- **1 Corinthians 7:21**
Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so.

PNTC

106

1 Corinthians 7:22

- The man who, being a slave, is converted to the Christian faith, is the Lord's freeman; his condition as a slave does not vitiate any of the privileges to which he is entitled as a Christian: on the other hand, all free men, who receive the grace of Christ, must consider themselves the slaves of the Lord, i.e. his real property, to be employed and disposed of according to his godly wisdom, who, notwithstanding their state of subjection, will find the service of their Master to be perfect freedom.

Clarke

- **1 Corinthians 7:22**
For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ's slave.

107

1 Corinthians 7:23

- As truly as your bodies have become the property of your masters, in consequence of his paying down a price for you; so sure you are now the Lord's property, in consequence of your being purchased by the blood of Christ.
- In these verses the apostle shows that the Christian religion does not abolish our civil connections; in reference to them, where it finds us, there it leaves us. In whatever relation we stood before our embracing Christianity, there we stand still; →

Clarke

- **1 Corinthians 7:23**
You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings.

108

1 Corinthians 7:23

our secular condition being no farther changed than as it may be affected by the improvement of our moral character. But slavery, and all buying and selling of the bodies and souls of men, no matter what color or complexion, is a high offense against the holy and just God, and a gross and unprincipled attack on the liberty and rights of our fellow creatures.

Clarke

109

1 Corinthians 7:24

- In whatsoever state or condition, whether he be married or unmarried, whether he be a master or a servant, whether he were before circumcised or uncircumcised, let him not think Christianity obliges him to alter it; he may abide in it, only he must *abide* in it *with God*, as one who remembers God's eye is upon him, and sees him, and that he is bound to approve himself in it unto God, and to keep a good conscience towards him, as one that is a member of the church of God, and under the laws of it.

Poolle

- 1 Corinthians 7:24

Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

110

Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 7:25-40

The Unmarried and Married in Contrast

²⁵Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. ²⁶Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. ²⁷Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife. ²⁸But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this. ²⁹What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; ³⁰those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; →

111

Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 7:25-40

The Unmarried and Married in Contrast

³¹those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away. ³²I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. ³³But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife— ³⁴and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. ³⁵I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord. →

112

Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 7:25-40

The Unmarried and Married in Contrast

and if ³⁶If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably toward the virgin he is engaged to, his passions are too strong and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. ³⁷But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. ³⁸So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does better. ³⁹A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. ⁴⁰In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

113

1 Corinthians 7:25

- **Now about virgins.** This is doubtless another reference to questions contained in the letter from Corinth. **I have no command from the Lord.** Christ had never directly dealt with this subject. **But I give a judgment.** As a steward of his Word, which is the first essential of true ministry.

- St. Paul by *virgins* evidently means those of both sexes who are in a state of celibacy. It is probable that he had formerly discouraged them from marriage, **in the present situation of the church.** It seems they were uneasy under this, ... In verses 25 to 37 he gives directions to the unmarried about their marrying or not marrying...

Pulpit

Coke

• 1 Corinthians 7:25

Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

114

1 Corinthians 7:26-27

- This must certainly refer to the prevalence of persecution at that time; for nothing (as we have before remarked) can be more absurd, than to imagine that an inspired Apostle would in the general discountenance marriage; considering that it was expressly agreeable to a divine institution, and of essential importance to the existence and happiness of all future generations.

Coke

- 1 Corinthians 7:26-27
Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife.

115

1 Corinthians 7:28

- I would not have you mistake me, as if I judged marriage sinful for persons in any state or condition, or of any sex; but those that are married in any time, will find troubles about the things of this life, and those that marry in such times as these are, and you are like further to see, will meet with more than ordinary troubles of this nature: I only would spare you, and have you keep yourselves as free as you can: or: *I spare you any further discourse of that nature, not willing to torment you before the time cometh.*

Poole

- 1 Corinthians 7:28
But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

1 Corinthians 7:29

- But this I say, brethren - With great confidence. The time of our abode here is short. It plainly follows, that even they who have wives be as serious, zealous, active, dead to the world, as devoted to God, as holy in all manner of conversation, as if they had none - ... the apostle shifts from everything else to the one thing needful; and, Wesley forgetting whatever is temporal, is swallowed up in eternity.
- But sadly! how many professing Christians live for their wives and children only, and not for God in these relations! How many suffer these earthly objects of attachment to alienate their minds from God, rather than make them the occasion of uniting them more tenderly to him and his cause! Barnes

- 1 Corinthians 7:29 What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; **117**

1 Corinthians 7:30

- Restraining and moderating their grief by the hope of the life to come. *The general idea in all these expressions is, that in whatever situation Christians are, they should be dead to the world, and not improperly affected by passing events.* It is impossible for human nature not to feel when persecuted, maligned, slandered, or when near earthly friends are taken away. But religion will calm the troubled spirit; pour oil on the agitated waves; light up a smile in the midst of tears; cause the beams of a calm and lovely morning to rise on the anxious heart; silence the commotions of the agitated soul and produce joy even in the midst of sorrow. Barnes

- 1 Corinthians 7:30 those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep;

1 Corinthians 7:31

- *And they that use this world, as not abusing it: while you have any thing of this world's goods you may use them, yea, you must use them, without them you cannot live in the world; but the consideration how little the time is you are like to have them to use, should govern you in the use of them, so as you ought to take heed you do not use them to any other purpose, or for any other end, than that for which God hath appointed and given them to you.*

Poole

- **1 Corinthians 7:31**
those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

119

1 Corinthians 7:32

- This is another reason, by which the apostle confirms the advice he gives to virgins to remain such, because the married state is full of cares, whereas the single life is no more free from them; and therefore he wishes them to continue in such a state, that they might be without anxious and distracting cares of temporal things, things relating to the good management and sustenance of a family, and so be more free and at leisure for the service of God;

Gill

- **1 Corinthians 7:32**
I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord.

120

1 Corinthians 7:33

- But he that is married hath other things which he must take care about; for besides that he is obliged to provide for his family, husbands and wives are under some obligations to please each other by entertainments (or pleasures), which, though not in themselves sinful, yet take up time, which those free from such relations may spend more religiously.

Poole

- 1 Corinthians 7:33
But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—

121

1 Corinthians 7:34

- There is the same difference between a married woman and a single woman, as there is between a married man and a single man. If a woman be unmarried, and be piously disposed, she hath leisure and opportunity enough to mind the things of God; but if she be married, she will then be obliged to attend secular affairs, to take care for her family, and to please her husband. It is the same thing that was before said of the man. The sense is, that a marital relation draws along with it many diversions, from which a single life is free.

Poole

- 1 Corinthians 7:34 and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband.¹²²

1 Corinthians 7:35

- This is the general rule, which every one's discretion must apply to his own particular case; and by it should he endeavor to determine, whether it be for marriage or against. That condition of life should be chosen by the Christian in which it is most likely he will have the best helps, and the fewest hindrances, in the service of God and the affairs of his own salvation.

MHWBC

- 1 Corinthians 7:35
I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

123

1 Corinthians 7:36

- Here is a case of a Christian father whose daughter has arrived at marriageable age, and has a good opportunity to marry a worthy Christian man; her father, feeling that she will be more efficient for the Lord in celibacy, like Paul, their spiritual father, has refused to give her in matrimony till the matter has assumed the attitude of rather a serious domestic controversy, the daughter and her Christian lover anxious to get married, and her father hitherto having withheld his consent. →

Godbey

- 1 Corinthians 7:36 If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if his passions are too strong and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married.

124

1 Corinthians 7:36

Now Paul says in that case let the man walk in the light which God gives, following the leading of the Spirit and Providence. "Let him do what he will," *i. e.*, give his daughter in matrimony or withhold her that she may be a more efficient soul-saver. In either case, he sins not.

If he decides in favor of matrimony, "let them marry," *i. e.*, this Christian man's daughter and her Christian lover. It is all right.



125

1 Corinthians 7:37

- This is a simple illustration on the other side. The presumption is that in this case the daughter doesn't want to marry, and probably has no good opportunity. Hence the case is decidedly favorable to celibacy.



- 1 Corinthians 7:37 But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing.

126

1 Corinthians 7:38

- This verse covers the ground of the two contrastive cases in the two preceding verses. The father in [1Co 7:36](#) gives his daughter in wedlock, while the father in [1Co 7:37](#) retains his in celibacy for the Lord's work. Paul decides that the former, marrying his daughter to a good man, "does well," but the latter not marrying his daughter to a man "will do better." Why? Because the single woman will be the more efficient preacher of the two, and win more souls for God.

Godbey

- **Does better; what will be more comfortable for her, that is, "for the present distress," as is to be understood throughout this chapter.**

FBN

127

- **1 Corinthians 7:38** So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does better.

1 Corinthians 7:39

- The apostle all along this chapter hath been speaking to several cases, which the church of Corinth had put to him concerning marriage; some that concerned persons already married, others that concerned such as were single, having been never married; he closes his discourse with advice which relates to such as had lost their husbands, with reference to second marriages. As to this he determines, that no woman might marry again while her first husband lived; that is, unless her husband, be legally divorced from her for adultery, →

Poole

- **1 Corinthians 7:39** A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.

128

1 Corinthians 7:39

or unless her husband, being an unbeliever, had voluntarily deserted her: but if her husband were dead, she might marry to whom she would; yet she was not at such liberty, as that she might marry an unbeliever. Unbelievers or Christians in name only, but such as are idolaters, or profane persons, or heretics, who hold such tenets as are inconsistent with any true faith in Jesus Christ. This phrase, *must belong to the Lord*, seems to oblige godly women, not only to avoid marrying with unbelievers, but with nominal Christians; that is, such who, although they have been baptized, and own Christ with their tongues, yet hold such damnable opinions, or live such profane lives, or worship God in such an idolatrous manner, as is inconsistent with any true faith in Christ.

Poolle

129

1 Corinthians 7:40

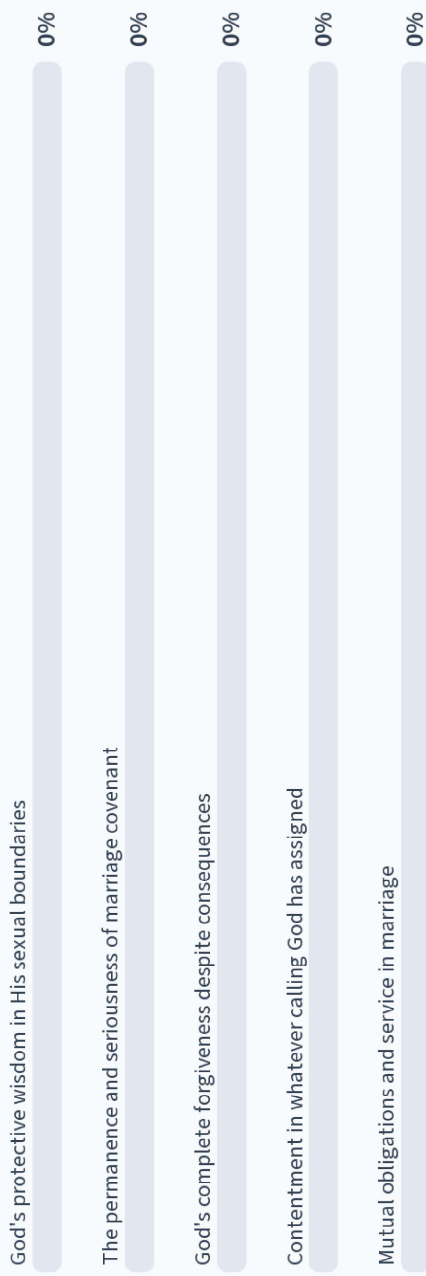
- After Paul has cleared up all the questions gathering about the matrimonial problem, and turning everybody loose to walk in the clear light of God's Word, Spirit and Providence, marrying as often as they wish, but only in the Lord, we see here that he winds up the subject with a decided leaning toward celibacy; doubtless deflecting in the line of his own personal preference... Hence Paul here simply testifies that he has the Spirit of God.

Godbey

- **1 Corinthians 7:40**
In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

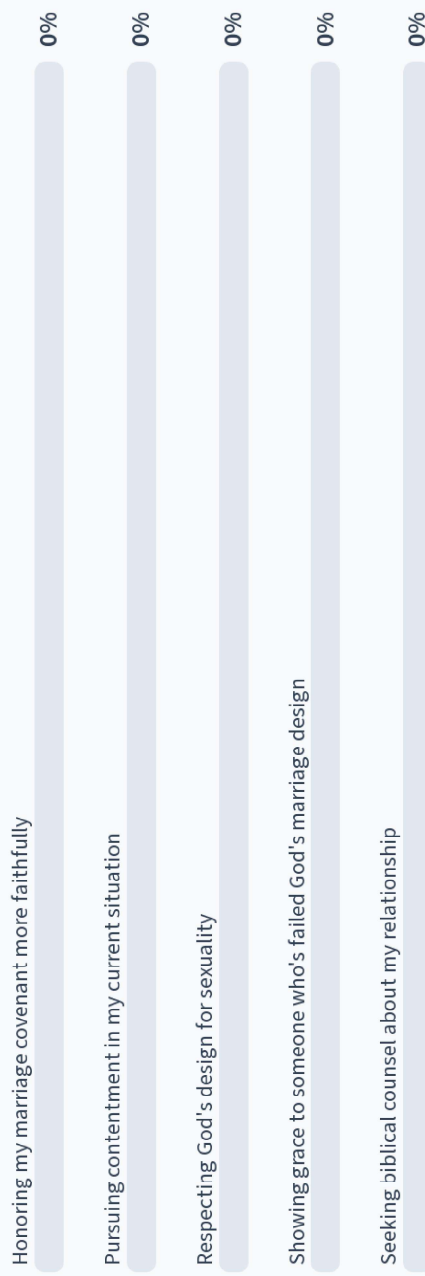
130

Which truth from 1 Corinthians 7 did you find most impactful?



Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at pollev.com/app

What is ONE specific area where you will apply from 1 Corinthians Chapter 7?



Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at pollev.com/app

Reference Scriptures

- **1 Corinthians 6:16 (KJV)** What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.
- **2 Corinthians 6:14 (KJV)** Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?
- **Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (KJV)** When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*. And *if* the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house, or if the latter husband die, which took her *to be* his wife; → ¹³³

Reference Scriptures

- Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that *is* abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.
- **Ephesians 5:22-33 (KJV)** Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. → ¹³⁴

Reference Scriptures

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence *her* husband.

- **Genesis 2:24 (KJV)** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.
- **Hebrews 13:4 (KJV)** Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

135

Reference Scriptures

- **1 John 1:9 (KJV)** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- **Matthew 7:16 (KJV)** Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
- **Matthew 19:6 (KJV)** Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
- **Numbers 20:12 (KJV)** And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.
- **Romans 9:16 (KJV)** So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

136

Reference Scriptures

- **1 Samuel 8:5 (KJV)** And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.
- **2 Samuel 12:10-14 (KJV)** Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *that is* born unto thee shall surely die.