

## 1 Corinthians Study 9

Read CHAPTER 7:1-16

### KEY VERSE—

“For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.” (7:7)

### SUMMARY—

The remainder of this book finds Paul answering various questions posed to him by the Corinthian church (7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1). Chapter 7 deals with questions about marriage and celibacy, and what is most advantageous for the Christian—what is best for one may not be best for another. He begins by addressing the marriage relationship—specifically the sexual relationship in marriage (7:1-7). After dealing with ungodly sexual relationships (6:9-20), he turns to godly, approved sexual relationships (7:2-5). He also extols the virtues of celibacy (7:7). Next, he addresses the unmarried (7:8-9). Then he turns to instruct Christians who are married (7:10-11), and finally deals with Christians who are married to non-Christians (7:11-16).

### QUESTIONS—

- 1) Is Paul’s assessment of the relationship between men and women (7:1) inconsistent with God’s assessment (Genesis 2:18)? Is it inconsistent with other things Paul himself has said about marriage (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 5:14; Ephesians 5:22-33)?
- 2) Is Paul giving us a complete teaching about marriage, or addressing some special situations in marriage (cf. 7:26)? Is he saying the relationship between men and women is bad or that it is better for single Corinthians to remain unmarried (7:1)?
- 3) As much as this chapter speaks of marriage in God’s plan, it advocates something else very strongly throughout—what is it (7:1,7-8,25-40)?

4) What are the advantages of celibacy in trying to serve God (7:7-8,32,35,37,40)? What are the disadvantages (7:2,5,9)?

5) What are the advantages of marriage in trying to serve God (7:2,9,14)? What are the disadvantages (7:26,28-29,33-35)?

6) Does Paul have a low view of marriage, as some imply, that it is nothing more than an outlet for sexual release? Or with the great sexual temptations at Corinth (cf. 5:1; 6:9-11,15-18), does he remind them that marriage is an honorable outlet for sexual desires (7:2-3)?

7) What is an advantage to marriage (7:2)? What is the point of choosing marriage to avoid fornication—if the partner's sexual needs are not being met (7:3-4)?

8) Why do husbands and wives need such a thing as “affection” (7:3)?

9) Is it true that husbands and wives “owe” each other sexual satisfaction? What does he mean when he says that the husband controls his wife's body and the wife her husband's (7:4)? Why does each one have authority over the other's body (cf. Ephesians 5:28-29; Genesis 2:24)?

10) Under what four conditions does Paul concede a temporary deprivation of each other's sexual needs (7:5-6)? What does Paul mean when he says this is a matter of concession (7:6)?

11) What is the gift Paul mentions (7:7; cf. Matthew 19:11-12)? Does Paul bind either marriage or celibacy on anyone?

12) Who are the instructions in each of the following verses given to:

⇒ 7:8-9—

⇒ 7:10-11—

⇒ 7:12-24—

13) Which was the better state for unmarried people or widows (7:8)? In contrast, which would be the better state for some (7:9)? 14) Is Paul saying that his words in 7:10-11 were given to him by the Lord and his words in 7:12-16 were his own opinion (cf. 7:10,12)? Is there a contrast here between the degree of inspiration, or between what Jesus personally said (Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18) and what Paul said through inspiration (cf. John 16:12-13)?

15) Is it a sin for Christians to divorce (7:10)? Why does he tell them what to do if they do separate then (7:11)? Does that imply that such separation is allowable or does it give men their options after they have sinned (cf. 1 John 2:1-2)? Did their separation or divorce really dissolve their union (7:11)?

16) Why should those Christians married to non-Christians not seek to dissolve their marriages (7:12-14)?

17) In what way is the unbeliever “sanctified” by the believing mate (7:14)? If the marriage was considered unholy then what would be the condition of their children (7:14b)?

18) Does the phrase “not under bondage” mean that the marriage bond has been broken (7:15)? What else does Paul say in connection with this marriage bond (cf. 7:39)?

19) Does the fact that they are not under bondage anymore also imply the freedom to remarry? What options did Paul already give the Christian if divorce occurs (cf. 7:11)?

20) Marriage can sanctify an unbeliever (7:14), but what can they not be sure it will do (7:16)? Maybe they cannot save their spouse, so they must let go (7:15), but maybe they can, so what must they do (cf. 7:11)?