

I. **Review: Matthew 19: 7-12; 1Cor 7:7-14 – THE ONE-FLESH COVENANT: MARRIAGE**

A. Jesus's Teaching on Marriage

- i. No loophole for divorce
- ii. Marriage is not for everyone
- iii. Only those who accept God's definition of marriage should enter into that covenant
 1. Between a man and a suitable helper (*ezer neged*) – Gen 2:18
 2. There are distinct roles for men and women.
 3. It's mystery is the essence of Christ and the church's relationship

B. Paul addresses those who are single, married and mixed marriages

- i. Singles ought to remain single unless they cannot exercise restraint
- ii. Those who are married need to stay married
- iii. Those who are married to unbelievers have a special ministry in their marriage

II. **Continuation – *The One-Flesh Covenant: Marriage; Freedoms, Rights, Status***

A. 1 Corinthians 7:15-16 (ESV) *But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. (16) For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?*

i. God has called you to peace

1. You are instrumental to your spouse's salvation
2. 1 Peter 3:1-2 ESV *Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, (2) when they see your respectful and pure conduct.*
3. **Caveat:** Don't get married to convert your spouse – you ought to marry a Christian.

ii. God has called you to ministry

1. Survival of your marriage is left to the unbeliever, not the Christian
2. Leaving is not to be initiated by the believer but only by the unbeliever
3. The Christian ought not to abandon their ministry
4. The Christian spouse is free to serve their unbelieving spouse in love.
 - a. The Christian spouse is dead to any old sin or passion that used to motivate them.
 - b. Their second ministry is their unbelieving spouse now.

iii. Not enslaved...

1. If the unbeliever is not pleased and separates (departs; leaves) then the believer is freed from that bondage - "not enslaved (bound; under bondage)" - Perfect passive indicative of *douloō*. A strong word, indicating that Christianity has not made marriage a state of slavery to believers. Compare this to *dedetai, is bound*, a milder word. 1 Co 7:39 ESV *A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.*
2. The Christian is not obliged to remain in a marriage in which the unbeliever has abandoned
3. The Christian will not be held as a slave to the unbeliever's negative convictions about the marriage.

B. 1 Corinthians 7:17-19 ESV *Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. (18) Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was*

anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. (19) For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.

i. Lead the life the Lord assigned you...

1. Don't do stuff that would make you think you would be better off
 - a. Grass is greener on the other side syndrome
2. Don't think yourself a better planner than God
 - a. Be patient and wait on the Lord
3. Don't try to become better on your own thoughts
4. Keep your viewpoint on the Gospel!

ii. My rule in all the churches

1. Paul introduces this spiritual principle to substantiate his teaching on mixed marriages.
 - a. If God had called you to be with the spouse you are with, don't seek to change that unless the person is not happy to be with you or desires to leave you because of the kingdom of God.
2. The Gospel ought not to be a factor in excusing yourself from prior commitments and engagements, unless they are an impediment to the Gospel.
 - a. The Gospel should help you carry out these commitments even better, not that your viewpoint is the Gospel!

iii. Keeping the commandments of the Lord...

1. What has the Lord assigned for you? What are you doing? Are you discharging the duties of your ministry in the life you are currently leading? Don't seek to change it unless you see the Lord doing so for the sake of the kingdom of God.
2. Apart from God's commandments the logistics of life are worthless

C. 1 Corinthians 7:20-23 ESV *Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. (21) Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) (22) For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. (23) You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.*

i. Remain in the condition in which you were called

1. God has stuff for you to do, people to meet
2. Don't be concerned about your work, unless it is an impediment to the kingdom

ii. Avail yourself of opportunities

1. If you see an open door, trust the Lord is working on your behalf
2. If you don't remain patient
3. Galatians 6:10 ESV So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

iii. You are not your own...

1. I am mine no more
2. Seek the kingdom first!
3. Gal 5:24 ESV *And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*
4. We are slaves of Jesus, using the members of our body as instruments of righteousness - Rom 6:13 ESV *Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.*
5. "Let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: and the rich, in that he is made low" (James 1:9-10).

6. *You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.* - 1 Co 6:19b-20
 7. 1Pe 1:18-19 ESV *...knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, (19) but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*
- iv. Do not become slaves of men
1. Don't be fooled by your passions of that of others. There are many who have become slaves of men economically - even this whole nation of ours. Let only the debt of love be the one remaining outstanding!
 2. Some become slaves to other people's political or social agenda, to their own detriment. Don't let your boss at work or any one over you or with influence over you make you a slave to their own devices. Your heart belongs to Jesus!
- D. 1 Corinthians 7:24 ESV *So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.*
- i. Your responsibility to God's calling
 1. 1. Don't Change Your Situation Until Your responsibility is fulfilled
 2. 2. Seek the Kingdom First, not your own goals or plans!
 3. 3. Keep you loyalty undivided!
 - ii. Three times Paul has repeated the same principle: remain in the condition (life) in which you were called.
 1. You are not your own
 2. You were bought at a prince
 3. You have died to sin
 4. You are alive in Christ
 5. You belong to Christ!
 - iii. Neither laws, nor contracts, nor obligations nor citizenships nor status or birthrights have any impact on us anymore - we have died to such things. We now only live for Jesus!
 1. 1Timothy 6:6-9 (ESV) *“Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, (7) for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. (8) But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. (9) But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.”*
 2. Consider Moses: Hebrews 11:24-26 (ESV) *“By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, (25) choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. (26) He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.”*
 - iv. The whole idea behind this passage is to remain where the Lord called you to be. You do not know how you will be used so you cannot suppose that you will be better off somewhere else.
 1. How do you know if God will save many where you are now?
 2. How do you know if somewhere else (some other church) you will find the same encouragement and edification?
 3. How will you know if you will find the same opportunities God can make for you here?
 - v. This is the same principle the Spirit uses to encourage mixed marriages to remain together for you do not know whether you will save your spouse (verse 16).