

Series: 1 Corinthians

“Some Biblical Counsel Regarding Marriage and Divorce”

(Sunday Morning June 7th, 2026)

Passage: 1 Corinthians 7:8-16

O.S. Some Time Ago, a Man in Our Church Encouraged Me to Watch a Film Entitled “*The Blind*” Which I Did

- > **It is a Film That Describes How Phil Robertson, the Patriarch From the Reality Television Series “*Duck Dynasty*,” Came to Faith in Jesus Christ**
- > **Phil Robertson Grew Up in an Impoverished Home; His Mother Had Mental Problems and His Father Was Often Absent**
- > **He Found Solace Through Hunting and Fishing, and This Helped Him to Provide Food for His Mother and His Siblings When His Father Was Gone**
- > **He Was Also Good at Sports, and He Received a Football Scholarship to Attend Louisiana Tech University (AND BTW = He Beat Out Terry Bradshaw...)**
- > **Phil Began Dating His High School Sweetheart Kay Carroway in 1962, and Kay Had a Very Different Upbringing; She Was From a Very Wealthy Family**
- > **They Got Married in 1968, and Things Went Well for a While; But Then, Phil Began Partying and Drinking Heavily, and This Caused Domestic Problems**
- > **The Hero of the Story is Definitely Kay, Because She Took Her Marriage Vows Very Seriously, and She Stood by Phil Even Though She Did Feel the Need at One Point to Separate From Him**
- > **This is Also When Kay Came to Faith in Jesus Christ; and Eventually, Phil’s Sister Asked Her Preacher to go by and Visit With Phil Who Was Flat Broke by This Time and Was Living in a Shack Out in the Woods**
- > **Phil Eventually Got Saved, and He Became Very Passionate About His Faith**
- > **And Then, One Day He Realized That the Duck Call He Had Invented Just Might be Marketable, and in This Way, God Blessed His Family Financially**
- > **That True Story Reminds Us of the Fact That God Has His Ways of Blessing a Family Through Just One Who Comes to Faith in Him**

St = This Was Also True as It Relates to That Rough and Tough Roman Jailer Who Came to Faith in Jesus Christ in Acts 16

- > **He Asked Paul and Silas What He Must do to be Saved, and This is What They Said to Him, “They said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, (Listen to This) you and your household.” (Acts 16:31)**
- > **I Want You to Notice Paul and Silas Predicted That His Entire Family Would Eventually Come to Faith in Jesus Christ, and That is Exactly What Happened**
- > **In Fact, I Want You to Notice How All of This Went Down; the Next Verse Says “And they (Paul and Silas) spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house.”**
- > **Now, That’s Very Important, Because It Reminds Us That All of His Family Members Had to Hear the Gospel in Order to Get Saved**
- > **In Romans 10:17, the Bible Says “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”**
- > **And Now, I Will Move Forward to Acts 16:34 Which Says “And he brought them into his house and set food before them (That BTW is Evidence), and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God (Listen to This) with his whole household.”**
- > **I Want You to Notice That the Roman Jailer’s Family Members Did Not Automatically Come to Faith in Jesus Christ, But Each of Them Eventually Did Just as Paul and Silas Has Predicted That They Would**

Q.n = So, With This in Mind, I Want to Ask You a Question: How Many Christians do You Need in a Family to Have a Christian Family?

Ans = Only One

- > **And if You are a Christian Who is Hoping to See Others in Your Family Come to Faith in Jesus Christ, I Have Some Good News; God Can and Will Tip the Scales in Your Favor**
- > **This is Why the Apostle Paul Encouraged These Christians in Corinth to Keep Their Marriage Vows and to Keep Their Families in Tact if at All Possible**

T.S. That is What This Passage of Scripture is All About; and So, With This in Mind, I Want You to Notice That the Apostle Paul Offered Some Counsel to Three Different Categories of People

I. Some Counsel for Christians Who are Not Currently Married

Verse 8-9 (Read)

-> Now, I Want You to Notice That Paul Divided These Into Two Sub-Categories

1) Those Who Can Accept This

-> Now, as Some of You May Recall, Paul is Answering Some Questions That the Corinthians Sent to Him in a Letter

-> We do Not Have That Letter, But We Can Figure Out What Their Questions Were by the Answers That Paul Gave to Them

-> And We Know That There Were Some Jews Who Were Teaching That God Had Commanded Everyone to Get Married, Because God Had Said *“Be Fruitful and Multiply”* in Genesis; and So, the Jews Viewed This as a Command

-> There Were Some Greeks, on the Other Hand, Who Were Teaching That It Was More Godly and Virtuous for a Person to be Celibate

-> And Some Were Even Teaching That It Was More Godly and Virtuous for Married People to be Celibate

-> Of Course, That Idea is Dangerous for People Living in a Sex Crazy Culture Like the One the Corinthians Were in and Like the One That We are In

-> And So, Paul Set Them Straight on This Back in *Verse 3* When He Said, *“The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband”*

-> Paul Did Not Ascribe to the Idea That Celibacy is More Godly or Virtuous, But He Also Pointed Out That There are Some Advantages to Being Single

-> And I Want to Remind You That the Main Reason He Encouraged Some to Remain as He Was (And Paul Was Single) Had a Lot to do With Their Historical Context

-> In Vs 26, He Said, *“I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, ...”*

-> And That is Most Likely a Reference to the Neronian Persecution Which Was Taking Place at That Time Which Was Incredibly Brutal (Elaborate)

-> So, We Can See How This Kind of Counsel Would Apply at a Time Like That
III: During the Tribulation Time Which Will Come in the Future, the Bible Says That God Will Raise Up 144,000 Jewish Evangelists

- > **These Men are Going to be Extremely Productive During This Time, and They Will Also be Virgins, and They Will Remain Celibate**
 - > **And in Rev 14:4, They are Described This Way; It Says, “These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste...”**
 - > **Now Listen, the Bible Says That Every One of These 144,000 Jewish Men Will Survive the Tribulation, and They Will go Into the Millennium**
 - > **And as Far as We Know, They Will Not Have to Remain Virgins and Remain Chaste After Our Lord’s Millennial Reign Begins**
 - > **During This Time of Great Distress, It Will be Beneficial for Them to Remain Chaste; and as a Result, They Will be Able to be More Productive for the Lord**
 - > **But When That Time of Great Distress is Over, It Will No Longer be Necessary for Them to Remain in That State so Who Knows ... Maybe They Will Choose to Get Married After That**
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Q.n = One of the Takeaways From All of This, Therefore is This: Are You Listening?

- > **Those of Us Who are Married Should Not Look Down on Those Who are Unmarried or Just Assume That There is Something Wrong With Them**
 - > **It is Perfectly Fine for a Christian to Remain Single if That is Their Preference**
 - > **And So, We Need to Leave Them Alone, and We Need to Stop Trying to Play Cupid**
 - > **For Those Who Can Accept This, Paul Says That This is Perfectly Fine, and This is Even What He Personally Preferred**
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T.S. 1) Those Who Can Accept This

2) Those Who Cannot Accept This

- > **Paul Tells Us Here in Verse 9 That There are Some Who Have Great Difficulty With Sexual Self-Control, and They Burn With Passion**

-> And Therefore, It is Best for Singles Who are in This Category to Find a Mate

-> And BTW, This is Not Referring to a Tame Kind of Sentimentality That Says
“You Know Maybe Marriage is a Good Idea, and I Should Try It”

-> No, This is a Statement That Describes Someone Who Finds Themselves
Frequently Burning With Sexual Desire

-> If This Describes You, I Want to Offer You Two Words of Advice, Because This
is All We Have Time For (And Besides, This is Really a Review)

a. Guard Your Mind

-> In *Phil 4:8*, Paul Said, “*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable,
whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute,
if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*”

b. Set Your Limits

-> In *2 Cor 6:14*, Paul Said, “*Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what
partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light
with darkness?*”

-> And BTW, There is a Lot of Freedom in This With Only One Restriction – *Vs 39*

c. Meet Other Singles

-> When Abraham Sent His Servant Eliezer to Find a Bride for His Son Isaac;
This is What Eliezer Did; It is Recorded in *Genesis 24:11* Which Says,

“*He made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at evening
time, (Note This) the time when women go out to draw water.*”

**Pt = You Need to Put Yourself in the Right Environment, and You Need to be Willing
Take Some Risks Because No Risk Equals No Reward (Wall Flowers Don't Win)**

T.S. I. Some Counsel for Christians Who are Not Currently Married

II. Some Counsel for Christians Who are Married to Christians

Verse 10-11 (Read)

-> Now, We Need to Look at the Context of This, Because Some of These People
Had Probably Already Done What Paul Was Encouraging Them Not to Do

-> For You See, These People Had Not Grown Up in Christian Families, and They Were Being Told That It Was More Virtuous to be Single and Celibate

-> So, Some of Them Had Already Divorced Their Spouse, Because They Didn't Want to be Unequally Yoked, and They Wanted to be More Spiritual

-> Consequently, Paul Presents These Confused Christians With Two Options

1) Their First Option Was to Stay Married

-> And He Points Out That Our Lord Had Already Addressed This; This is Found in *Matt 5:32*, *Matt 19:9* and *Mark 10:11-12*

-> In *Matt 19:9*, for Example, Jesus Said This to the Pharisees; He Said, *"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."*

Pt = There are Only Two Legitimate Reasons Given in Scripture That Can be Used to Justify a Christian Getting a Divorce

-> The First is Adultery, and BTW That is Actually a Broad Word; It is the Word *"Porneia"*; So, It Literally Refers to Sexual Indecency

-> The Other Legitimate Reason for Getting a Divorce is Given to Us in This Passage, and That is Abandonment on the Part of an Unbelieving Spouse

-> BTW I Feel Compelled to Limit This to What I Find Specifically in the Scriptures, Because It is Very Common for People to Rationalize

-> And in *Mal 2:16*, God Spoke Through the Prophet and Said, *"I Hate Divorce"*, and Anyone Who Has Ever Been Thru a Divorce Should be Able to Tell You Why

-> This is Why Our Lord and the Apostle Paul Both Say That You Should Burn That Ship; Because Listen, Divorce is Not the First Option; It is the Last Resort

T.S. 1) The First Option Was to Stay Married

2) The Second Option Was to Stay Unmarried

Verse 11 (Read)

-> Now Again, I Want Us to Consider the Context Here, Because I Believe Some of These Christians in Corinth Had Already Taken Some Bad Advice

-> And So, Paul Was Encouraging Them to Become Reconciled; and for Those Who Were Burning With Passion, This Would Have Been a Great Motivator

- > **And I Think We Should Also Consider the Fact That There Were a Variety of Different Kinds of Marriages in Those Days**
- > **A Lot of Marriages, in That Day and Time, Were Arranged Marriages; and Their Were Slave Marriages Etcetera**
- > **And So, Some of These People May Have Just Wanted an Excuse so That They Could Escape From What They Saw as an Undesirable Situation, But Paul Did Not Give Them That Option**
- > **And in Light of This, I Want to Remind You of Something Else That Jesus Said to the Pharisees in *Matthew 19***
- > **First, They Said to Him "... 'why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?'" (Matt 19:7)**

Q.n = Is That Right, Did Moses COMMAND Them to Get a Divorce?

Ans = Of Course Not

- > **And Then, This Was Jesus' Reply "*He *said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted (Notice = Jesus Didn't Call It a Command) you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.*"**
- > **I Love This; Jesus Went All the Way Back to *Genesis 2*, and He Essentially Said, "*Wait a Minute, God Did Not Create Adam and Eve and Evelyn*"**
- > **Another Option Was Not Available to Either of Them in the Beginning, God Created One Man and One Woman, and He Intended for Them to Stay Married to Each Other**

T.S. I. Some Counsel for Christians Who are Not Currently Married

II. Some Counsel for Christians Who are Married to Christians

III. Some Counsel for Christians Who are Married to Non-Christians

- > **Paul Gives Us Two Sub-Categories Here as Well, and the First Sub-Category Involves Those Who are Willing to Stay in the Marriage Relationship**

1) Those Who are Willing to Stay

Verses 12-14 (Read)

- > **Now, Many an Hour of Bible Discussion Has Been Spent Haggling Over What Paul Meant by What He Said at the Beginning of *Verse 12***

**Q.n = Does This Mean That What Paul is Saying Here is Not as Authoritative?
Ans = No, Paul Was an Apostle, This Just Means That This is Something That Our Lord Had Not Previously Revealed**

-> And Again, I Will Remind You That These Corinthian Christians Had Not Grown Up in Christian Homes, These Were New Believers

-> And So, This Sort of Thing Was Happening All of the Time, and Paul Says This Definitely, *"If They Want to Stay, You are Not to Send Them Away"* (Divorce)

-> Paul Also Gives Us Some Great Encouragement Here by Pointing Out That the Unbelieving Spouse Will be Sanctified by the Believing Spouse as Well as Their Children

**Q.n = Does This Mean That They are All Going to Get Saved Just as All the Roman Jailer's Family Members Got Saved?
Ans = Not Necessarily**

-> What It Does Mean is That They are All Going to be Blessed, Because the Blessings That God Gives to the Believing Spouse Will Benefit Them as Well

-> This is Kind of Like Being Married to Someone Who Receives a Great Family Inheritance; It's Not Your Inheritance, But You Still Benefit From It (Witness?)

-> And Listen, I Also Believe This Means That the Lord Will Tip the Scales Spiritually in Your Favor as a Christian Regarding Your Children

Q.n = In Fact, do You Remember When I Said That It Only Takes One Person to Make a Christian Home?

Ans = I Read a Story This Week About a Grandmother Who Moved in With Her Family; and Eventually, Everyone in the House Came to Faith in Christ

Q.n = So, is There Anything That a Believing Spouse Can do to Help Encourage an Unbelieving Spouse to Come to the Lord?

Ans = Yes

-> As Far as Husbands are Concerned, the Bible Essentially Says That You Should Love Your Wife and Give Her Honor and Praise

-> And in Most Cases, When a Husband Comes to the Lord First, the Rest of His Family is More Likely Than Not to Follow His Lead

-> The Biblical Counsel Given to a Wife With an Unbelieving Husband is More Involved, and It is Found in *1 Peter 3:1-7*

- > For the Sake of Time, I'm Just Going to Elaborate on the First Two Verses
- > In 1 Peter 3:1-2, Peter Said, *"1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."*
- > It is Not Uncommon for a Wife Who Comes to the Lord to Begin to Feel Superior to Her Husband, Because She's Learning so Much About God
- > Be Careful About That, Because Peter Says That It is Very Important for You to Continue to Treat Your Husband With Respect
- > It is Also Not Uncommon for a Wife Who Comes to the Lord First to Become Overly Involved in the Church
- > You Have a Right to Worship the Lord, and You Should Even Insist Upon It, But You do Not Want to do so to the Point Where Your Husband Resents It
- > And Just for the Record, There is No Man I Know of Who Ever Got Nagged Into the Kingdom of God
- > You're Not Going to Reach Him by Constantly Pumping Christian Music Through the Family Stereo System or by Taping Bible Tracts to the Bottom of His Beer Cans
- > *"No," Peter Essentially Says, "On the Contrary, It Will be the Positive Changes He Sees in Your Life and in Your Relationship With Him; These are the Things That are Going to Influence Him the Most"*

2) Those Who are Wanting to Go

Verses 15-16 (Read)

- > Unfortunately, There are Occassions, as We All Should Know, When an Unbelieving Spouse Just Cannot Accept the Changes That He or She is Witnessing
- > They May Want Their Christian Spouse to go and do Things That They are No Longer Comfortable Doing or They May Resent Their Christian Spouse for Giving Them Biblical Advice Etcetera – Example - Stop Preaching to Me!
- > And of Course, This Might Lead to Some Heated Arguments and Constant Friction in the Home

- > **And So, Eventually, the Non-Christian Spouse May Take the Initiative, and They May Decide That They Want Out; and Then, They Will Ask for a Divorce**
- > **If They do This, and I Want You to Understand That the Unbelieving Spouse is the One Who Must Initiate This Process, Paul Says “*You Should Let Them Go*”**
- > **Why? Well, Because Paul Says That the Lord Wants Us to be Able to Enjoy a Life of Peace Not Constant Turmoil**
- > **If the Non-Christian Spouse Chooses to Leave, Paul Says That the Christian Spouse is Not to Resist This, and This Also Means That, After This Has Occurred, the Believer Will be Free to be Remarried.**
- > **And of Course, This Will be Limited to Marrying Someone Who is “*in the Lord*”**

Verse 39 (Read) – the Same Principle Applies Here

Q.n = And What is Verse 16 All About? Is Paul Saying That a Believer Should Try to Stay in the Marriage in Order to Evangelize Their Spouse?

Ans = That’s Possible, But I Think He is Actually Saying Just the Opposite of That

- > **Paul is Saying That the Purpose of Marriage is Not Evangelism, and It is Not Your Job to Bring Your Spouse to the Lord**
- > **Ultimately, It is the Word of the Lord and the Holy Spirit of God That Must Bring Him or Her Into the Kingdom**
- > **That’s Not Your Job; and So, You Don’t Need to Feel Guilty for Letting Them Go**

III: One of the Stories That Came to My Mind as I Was Preparing This Sermon Was the Story of Abigail Which is Found in *1 Samuel 25*

- > **Abigail’s Marriage to a Man Named “*Nabal*” Was a Mismatch if There Ever Was One**
- > **In *1 Sam 25:3*, the Bible Says “(now the man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. And the woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance, but the man was harsh and evil in his dealings, ...)”**
- > **We are Told Right There That Abigail Was Beautiful and Intelligent, and Her Husband Was a First Class Jerk**
- > **In Fact, His Name “*Nabal*” Literally Means “*Fool*”, and Abigail Essentially Said in Verse 25 in Hebrew That “*Nabal is His Name is Nabal His Game.*”**

Q.n = How This Beautiful and Intelligent and Godly Woman Got Linked Up With This Guy is Anybody's Best Guess?

- > **But Listen, Abigail Still Remained Faithful to Her Husband, and She Always Sought What Was Best for Him**
- > **And at One Point, He Did a Very Foolish Thing; He Refused to Give David and His Mighty Men the Equivalent of a Tip Even Though They Had Protected Him and His Servants and His Flocks (Elaborate...in That Day and Time...)**
- > **And So, David and His Mighty Men Mounted Up, and They Were on Their Way to Take Nabal Out When Abigail Intervened (Elaborate = Appeased His Wrath)**
- > **And When Their Visit Was Over, David Commended Her for Preventing Him From Doing Something That He Would Have Later Regretted**
- > **Then, Abigail Went Home, and When Her Drunk Husband Asked Her Where She Had Been; She Told Him What Had Happened**
- > **And the Bible Says That When "Nabal" Heard This His Heart Became Like a Stone; He Had a Massive Heart Attack, and He Died Right There**
- > **So, Now Abigail Was a Widow, a Beautiful and Intelligent Widow; and So, David Didn't Waste Any Time; He Asked Her Marry Him, and She Did**

Pt = This is One of the Great Love Stories of the Bible, and It Reminds Us of the Fact That God Can Always Find a Way to Bless One Who is Faithful to His Will Invitation:

- > **I Want to Close This Sermon by Reminding Everyone of the Fact That Jesus Was Always Very Realistic When He Called People to Follow Him**
- > **In Fact, Sometimes It Even Appeared as if Jesus Was Trying to Talk People Out of Following Him**
- > **In *Matthew 8:19-20*, for Example, We Read, "19 Then a scribe came and said to Him, 'Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.' 20 Jesus *said to him, 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.'"**
- > **Well Listen, I Want to be Like Jesus; So, I'm Not Going to Promise You That if You Will Come to Jesus You Will Never Have a Headache or a Hangnail**
- > **I'm Not Going to Tell You Tha You Will Never be Sick Again, and That You Can Have Anything You Want Just by Naming It and Claiming It**

- > **That's What Those Word of Faith Preachers Like Joel Osteen, and Joyce Meyers and Benny Hinn Do**
- > **I'm Not Going to Say That; I am Going to Tell You the Truth, and the Truth is That the Christian Life is Not Always an Easy Life; Sometimes the Christian Life is a Hard Life**
- > **It Was Hard for Kay Robertson Before Her Husband Phil Gave His Life Over to the Lord, and It Was Hard for Abigail Before God Intervened**
- > **But Listen, While the Christian Life is Not Always an Easy Life, It is Always a Rewarding Life**
- > **And Whether Those Rewards Come in This Life or the Next Life or a Little of Both, They Will Most Certainly Come**
- > **And So, I Can Promise You Based on the Word of God That God Will Reward You for Your Faith and for Trusting Him**
- > **And This is How That Whole Process of the Life of Faith Begins, It Begins When You Decide to Place Your Faith and Trust in Jesus Christ (ABC)**