

**JESUS IN ALL OF LIFE**  
Part 3 | 1 Corinthians Study Guide

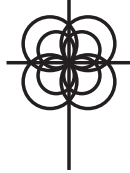


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## **Tolerance of Sexual Immorality**

### **1 Corinthians 5:1-5**

The freedom of the gospel had turned to arrogance in the hearts of some in the Corinthian church, leading them to treat sin in their body lightly. Paul identifies in these verses that the nature of the sin in the church here was even beyond what secular culture found acceptable! The grace of Christ in forgiving sin must lead us to deal more, not less, aggressively with sin. The seriousness of sin leads Paul to beckon for a sobering response—to hand this person over to their sinful desires so that they might hit rock bottom, recognize their need, and turn back to Christ in repentance.

**Big Idea:** The beauty of the gospel and the destructiveness of sin demands immediate repentance from sexual sin.

#### **Opening Questions:**

- What are some ways that the gospel can be misunderstood and seem to allow for sinning with impunity? What is wrong with this? Why does the gospel make a bigger claim on our lives?
- How should the love we have been shown in Christ shape our loving obedience to him?
- What are some expressions of this, some culturally acceptable sins, that exist within the Church today?
- What are we to make of Paul's emphasis on the Church community responding to this together?

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## Going Deeper

Here we see the true impetus for church discipline—to underscore the severity of sin and demonstrate that such behavior is inconsistent with a heart changed by the gospel. The goal of this is restoration, to see someone turn from their sin, back to faithfulness to Christ. The unnamed man in this story, misappropriating the grace of God as a license for his sin, is in an ongoing relationship with his father's wife. We are not given the specifics of this relationship, only that it is ongoing and sinful. The community around this couple continued to welcome them, apparently without calling them to repent and turn from their sin. Paul condemns the overt wickedness seen here and the complicit community that capitulated to this wickedness.

Since the entire church excused their sin, the entire church must now address their sin. The instruction is to place this man outside of the community, recognizing that he is acting as an unbeliever. As Matthew 18:17 identifies, when someone refuses to repent, they are revealing the potential that their profession of faith is a sham. Turning someone over to their sinful desires, and thus to Satan, gives them what they want more than Jesus: Their sin. But this is done in hope, with the confident expectation that sin destroys and can't satisfy. The eager hope is for someone, like the prodigal son, to wake up one day, see the folly of their sin, and to turn back to Christ.

## So What?

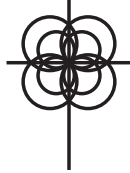
- What does this tell us about how seriously we should treat sin in our lives? What encouragement does this give us to lovingly move towards others and call them to repentance?
- How do we cling to a balanced perspective on the gospel—that rightly celebrates the freedom from guilt we are afforded in Christ while also committing to fight against our sin?
- Paul's words about destruction here remind us how sin corrodes, how does this understanding help us fight our sin?

## Prayer Focus

- Father, help me rightly cherish and cling to your gospel, resting in the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice and driven to show his greatness in my obedience.
- Father, guard our church family from the destruction of sin. Lead us, in love and humility, to call each other faithfully to repentance.







# **Salvation and Transformation of the Sexually Immoral**

## **1 Corinthians 6:9–11**

Paul concludes that in practicing such act of wickedness toward others they must realize that the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God. They are in a dangerous frame of mind –they need to clear their heads and realize that if they act wickedly in this way, they are no better than the wicked idolaters and others who will not inherit heaven.

**Big Idea:** There is life transforming hope found in redemption from sin through the work of the gospel...even sexual sin.

### **Opening Questions**

- Why does sexual sin seem different than other sins?
- What are some of the self-justifying reasons someone would engage in sexual immorality?
- How does someone's story that involves sexual immorality shape how they could view themselves?

### **Going Deeper**

#### **The Deceitfulness of Sin (6:9)**

The sinfulness of sin is not in the promises of pleasure, but in the promises to satisfy. God has created sexuality and human flourishing that is to be experienced

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inside his design and decrees. The deceitfulness of sexual immorality twists the truth inherent in God's good design and presents an alternative way to express sexuality with the false promises of self-fulfillment that never truly satisfy (1 Cor. 6:18–20). The deceitful temptation of sexual sin is diminished through the greater joy found in loving obedience to Jesus Christ as revealed through his Word (Roms. 12:1–3). This journey is not in isolation, but within the relational life of the body of Christ in the local church (Heb. 3:12; 12:1–2; 2 Tim. 2:22

### **Sexual Immorality Is Sin (6:9–10)**

The list of sinful behaviors is not exhaustive (cf. 1 Cor. 5:10) but it does illustrate of the kind of expressions in the unbeliever's life. In this passage, sexual immorality in both nature and scope is recognized as sin alongside other visible expressions of sinful acts. There are attempts to make justifications towards reframing sexual expressions into an amoral biological category that expresses personal identity. The revelation of God's word is clear that sexual expressions in thought and deed outside of God's commands are sin (Gal. 5:19–24; 1 Thes. 4:3–7; Eph. 5:3–6). Praise to the Lord Jesus Christ that there is a pathway to be redeemed from the entanglement of sin and new life and freedom in the gospel (Roms. 5:12–21, 6:1–14)!

### **Transforming Hope for the Sinner (6:11)**

The hope for wholeness for the sexually broken does not come through any other means but through the power of the gospel. In other words, there is no other means by which sin can be forgiven and the sinner redeemed (including the sexually immoral) than through the person and work of Jesus Christ. The beauty of salvation that is by God's grace and through faith and not by works (Eph. 2:1–10) is that there is no sin that is too great that would restrain God's transforming work (Roms. 8:1–3). This gives hope to those who have been impacted by sexual immorality knowing that the redemptive work of salvation includes life transforming sanctification (Col. 3:1–17).

### **So What?**

There is a hopelessness that can settle into the hearts of those impacted by sexual sin. Their story of redemption seems to have a footnote that doesn't measure up to others. This passage recognizes the consequences of sin and the eternal significance of redemption from sin through the gospel. The story of redemption reframes every sinner who is saved by grace through faith alone with no exception or exclusion. This gives Christ-followers hope and transformational

## Salvation and Transformation of the Sexually Immoral

joy — not only to live out their story of redemption, but to share it with others.

1. What are some visible expressions of a life that has been transformed by the gospel?
2. How does the gospel address the self-justification to engage in sexual immorality?
3. What is the hope for the Christ-follower that has fallen into sexual immorality?
4. In what ways could a Christ-follower's story of redemption minister to others in the local church and community?

### Prayer Focus

- Praise God for the work of redemption and specific expressions of gospel transformation in your life.
- Ask God to protect your heart from despair when considering past sins and help remind your heart of the totality of the sanctifying work of God that he will be faithful to complete in you.
- Consider the beauty of the gospel and ask God to open up opportunities to both display and communicate the truth of redemption in your neighborhoods and greater community.

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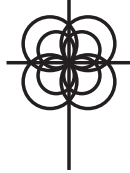
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# **Sexual Intimacy in Marriage**

## **1 Corinthians 7:1–5**

In this section, Paul responds to matters raised by the Corinthians letter about not touching a woman. Paul requires those who are married to fulfill their conjugal obligations lest partners be tempted to satisfy their sexual longings by illicit means.

**Big Idea:** God created sex and it is good and beautiful and ought to be enjoyed. It is important to remember that sexual intimacy is only within the confines of marriage, but marriage is not solely for sexual intimacy. Therefore, the goal in marriage is not sexual intimacy, but marital intimacy. One must remember that his/her body belongs to his/her spouse and vice versa. This is applied not only in physical body, but one's whole being; including one's drive, urge, appetite, and desires for sex.

### **Opening Questions**

- What was my first exposure to sex and how has this shaped my understanding of sex today?
- What has been the main source that has help develop my understanding of sex?
- How has my understanding, exposure, and experiences contribute to sexual intimacy in my marriage?
- How sanctified and God exalting are my sexual proclivities?
- How much of my sexual intimacy is based on my desires being met?

# Jesus in All of Life

## Going Deeper

*“It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”*

We have clear instruction from the apostle Paul that sexual relations should be confined in the context of marriage.

*“But because of temptation to sexual immorality...”*

Every sexual relation of any kind outside of marriage falls under the context of “sexual immorality” and is sin against God.

*“each man should... and each woman...”*

Marriage becomes a saving measure or deliverance from such temptation. However, the issue here is much more than marriage itself providing the solution to temptation, but how one understands and views marriage and sex.

*“The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.”*

The conjugal rights (what is owed to the other person) is not for the person to claim, but to give. What is taught here is not for a person to demand his/her conjugal rights, instead to yield and give to the spouse’s conjugal right of him/her. This is further described in the following statement “the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband... likewise the husband...”

Here is the principal that must be embraced to have intimacy in marriage that exalts our triune God: Not considering my life and my desires to be something that I must claim, but to be met by my spouse. This necessitates vulnerability and complete trust that my spouse will not take advantage of me, but demonstrate generosity and deference in loving me as I show unconditional generosity and love and deference to my spouse.

My sexual drive is not for me, but for my spouse and for the glory of God. Therefore, I must render my conjugal rights and strive to fulfill my spouses’ conjugal rights of me. This is the foundation for intimacy that exalts Christ.

## So What?

I need to learn to wait, yield, and communicate. I need not be driven by my urges, rather demonstrate self-control out of love and deference toward my spouse.

## Sexual Intimacy in Marriage

I must be mindful of the needs of my spouse and be willing to surrender my desires and lack thereof for the sake of love. We both must demonstrate complete trust and vulnerability to communicate, without judgment, our desires and our willingness to fulfill the conjugal rights of our spouse.

I must move away from transactional view of sex and even consider it as a reward of sort, but joyful opportunity to serve my spouse. I must recognize I need to have greater sanctified view of sex, not of the world and what I have been exposed to. My proclivity must be tempered and controlled by meeting the needs of my spouse and not my own. Sexual intimacy in my marriage starts with my eager willingness to fulfill the rights that my spouse has of my body, not my own. Mutuality in this endeavor celebrates the gospel and magnifies the glory of our triune God.

### Prayer Focus

- Father, thank you for the amazing gift of my spouse through whom you are teaching me what it means to be one. Help me to yield and surrender to serve instead of claiming my own. Cause me to seek after the well-being of my spouse.
- Jesus, forgive me for my self-centeredness in the way I viewed sex. Transform my heart to embrace generosity, deference, and patience. Grant me a renewed desire and willing heart to fulfill the conjugal rights of my spouse.
- Holy Spirit, renew my mind to recognize that my body, my sexual appetite, and related inklings are for my spouse. Grant me a willing spirit to submit all my desires to you.

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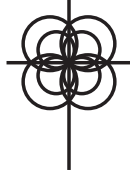
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## **Singleness to the Glory of God**

### **1 Corinthians 7:8, 9, 25–38**

In this section Paul begins to answer questions raised by the Corinthians in a letter they had previously written him. The Corinthians had written, asking at least two questions concerning this subject that is the topic of the entire chapter. The first was whether a Christian should get married at all (7:1) and the second was whether virgins should get married (7:25). Evidently there were those in Corinth who, as Jewish believers relying on Genesis 2:24, were advocating marriage. Others were arguing for remaining unmarried.

**Big Idea:** How you view singleness — your own or others — reveals much about your understanding of devotion to Christ.

### **Opening Questions**

Christ-followers can sometimes fall victim to a kind of spiritual dyslexia. It isn't that we fail to see reality, but we can misinterpret it and put the wrong things first in our minds. This is so often the case when we think of singleness in the Church. We know God has given marriage as a beautiful gift to some, but we can make it primary in our minds, so that singleness can be seen as incompleteness or failure for a believer. Paul shows us a better way to understand singleness. Whether you are married or single, what he teaches is about devotion to Christ and the value of all believers is crucial to grasp.

# Jesus in All of Life

Read 1 Corinthians 7:8, 9, 25–38 before discussing the following questions.

1. What is the overall impression Paul leaves of singleness in this text? How does that compare with the way churches seem to see singleness in our day?
2. Single adults in the church often report feeling they have a hard time connecting with the married members of the church or feeling they fit in with the body. Why do you think that is? How often do you socialize with or include singles in the church in your friend groups/ministry? If you are single, what has been your experience?
3. Keeping our passage in 1 Corinthians 7 in mind, what are the ramifications for the Church when singles are vital, valued members of the congregation? What are the likely consequences if they are not?

## Going Deeper

- Reread verses 8–9 and 32–36. What seems to be the underlying principle with respect to decisions to marry or remain single?
- Read verses 29–31. In these verses, Paul is pointing the Corinthians to the ultimate future for God’s people, and he suggests attitudes about things tied to this Earth in light of eternity. How do these verses put both marriage and singleness into proper perspective, and what do they indicate as to how we should see all our life circumstances?
- Read Deut. 6:4–5. How do these verses serve as a backdrop to Paul’s teaching in 1 Cor. 7:32-35? What is Paul urging the Corinthians to consider with respect to marrying or remaining single?
- Read Matt. 19:10–11 (noting the context) and 1 Cor. 7:7. The truth that God gives the gift of singleness to some indicates his sovereignty over this area of life (as all others). What impact should that have on our attitudes about singles in the Church or your attitude about your own situation, if you are single?
- Read Gen. 2:18 and 1 Cor. 6:18–20. Singleness can be very difficult. What are the issues that make it so, according to these passages, and what is the Church’s responsibility toward single members in this regard?
- Read 1 Cor. 7:38. At the risk of repetition, why does Paul say that the one “who refrains from marriage will do better” than the one who marries and “does well”?

## Singleness to the Glory of God

### So What?

1. How does a proper perspective on God's sovereignty, love, provision, and trustworthiness bring contentment to those who are single? How should that perspective impact the way we all think about and treat single adults in the church?
2. How might having an eternal mindset alter your expectations and attachments in this life?
3. Think about the character of your ABF, Grace Group, or another group, and how social events are structured. How can you ensure that everyone in your group knows they are a vital part?

As Christ-followers, we are made for eternity, and that fact should inform every aspect of our lives. But until we are in Heaven, we must navigate a world that is often difficult and disappointing. Thankfully, we don't walk this life alone! We have the Church. So whether you are single or married, invest in others. Love them. Pray for them. Let them see Christ in you and glorify God in the life He has graciously given you.

### Prayer Focus

- Ask God to help you develop an eternal mindset and a deeper devotion to him, so that you can evaluate the circumstances of your life correctly.
- Ask God to help you trust him to provide all that you need and to form in you desires that reflect his desires for you.
- Thank the Lord for his care for you through the church. Ask Him to help you actively love and care for all the people in the body, regardless of their life situation.

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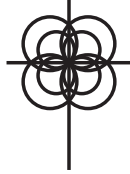
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# **Divorce and Remarriage**

## **1 Corinthians 7:10–16**

In this section, Paul is not intending on developing a theology of divorce and does not deal with legal particulars —what constitutes legitimate grounds for divorce, when and if a divorced person can remarry, and so on. Given the command of the Lord, Paul permits divorce only when it is forced upon the Christian by the unbelieving spouse.

**Big Idea:** Paul repeats Jesus’ prohibition of divorce but applies spiritual discernment and flexibility to the Corinthians unique situation.

### **Opening Questions**

#### **Read 1 Corinthians 7:10–16**

1. Remember 1 Corinthians is a unique letter because it is addressing questions the Corinthians asked Paul in a previous letter. How does this fact affect the way we seek to understand this passage?
2. In verses 10–11, Paul reminds them of Jesus instruction on the issue of believers marrying other believers. No doubt Paul has in mind passages like Matthew 5:31–32 and Matthew 19:4–12. How does the context of Jesus words to the Pharisees differ from the context of Paul’s words to the Corinthians?
3. Regardless of one’s position on divorce and remarriage, there are some very clear issues that emerge from this passage that help us identify ways to change and grow. What observations can be made to that end?

# Jesus in All of Life

## Going Deeper

It's important to notice that Paul is talking to three different groups in his audience. (1) God's word to believers married to believers, (2) God's word to believers married to unbelievers who want to remain married, (3) God's word to believers married to unbelievers who want to divorce.

### 1. God's word to believers married to believers

Paul reminds the Corinthians that the issue of believers married to believers was directly addressed by Jesus (not I, but the Lord). In Matthew 19:4–6, Jesus said, *“Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’”* Paul was quoting Jesus and Jesus was quoting Genesis 2:24.

It is clear from the text that God's plan is for one man to be married to one woman for life. God the Father said it, God the Son said it, so Paul repeats it. To the Christian wife (verse 10) don't depart, to the Christian husband (verse 11) don't put her away.

### 2. God's word to believers married to unbelievers who want to remain married

Paul preached in Corinth for well over a year, and during his ministry many came to faith, but this produced mixed marriages as a result, and so the question arose: What of believers married to unbelievers? Note: This is different from Paul's instruction in 2 Corinthians 6:14 on being unequally yoked. The instruction here is only in the event a spouse, since becoming married, came to salvation while the other spouse remained unbelieving. Paul's instruction (I, not the Lord) is that the believing husband (verse 12) should not divorce his unbelieving wife, and that the believing wife (verse 13) should not divorce her unbelieving husband.

The institution of marriage, though a mixed marriage, is still a sacred institution created by God. The blessing of such a marriage still results in a family, in love and intimacy, and hopefully the winning over of the unbelieving soul to salvation in Christ.

### 3. God's word to believers who are married to unbelievers who want to divorce

Jesus was clear about the cost of discipleship. Obeying the gospel and following

## Divorce and Remarriage

Jesus sadly results in a division between us and those closest to us. Jesus said in John 15:18, *“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me first.”* Our allegiance to Christ causes us to be divided from the world, and many times that will include an unbelieving spouse.

In Luke 14:26, Jesus lays out the cost of discipleship more explicitly in our personal relationships, *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”* Obviously, Jesus is not commanding we hate anyone, but using an exaggerated comparison of love, our love for him must be so great that compared to all other relationships it bears harsh distinction, including division.

Paul’s instruction is that in the event an unbelieving spouse abandons a believing spouse, the believing spouse is not enslaved, but is called by God to peace. Finally, Paul offers a small reminder: *“How do you know, whether you will save your spouse?”*

### So What?

So, what is God’s design and purpose in marriage? According to Ephesians 5:22–33, what is the best way to view and understand marriage? Why is it a good thing that marriage is not necessary to experience the fullness of Christ in relationship? How are unmarried brothers and sisters benefited by healthy marriages in our church, and vice versa?

### Prayer Focus

- Ask God to heal and enrich the marriages of Grace Baptist Church, and if married, start by asking for God’s grace in your own marriage.
- Ask God to strengthen and encourage the hearts of those who are unmarried and yet desire marriage.
- Ask God to continue to unite the hearts of those who are married and unmarried in gospel hope, reminding us that Jesus is the one, true and faithful spouse.











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