

1st Corinthians 7:1-9
(a practical application of 6:20)

Words to single Christians concerning marriage—7:1-7

- 1) Paul responds to a letter from the Corinthian congregation—7:1a ¹ *Now, concerning the things about which you^{pl} wrote to me:* (cf. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12)
- 2) To whom does this phrase belong?—7:1b *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*
 - a) The Corinthians or Paul?
- 3) Sexual relations within marriage are commanded—7:2 ² *But because of sexual immoralities,*
 - a) *each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband.*
 - b) Let God-created needs be satisfied by God-ordained means.
- 4) Sexual relations within marriage are to be reciprocal—7:3 (mutual prerogatives)
 - a) What?
 - i) ³ *the husband must fulfill his obligation to have goodwill toward his wife, and likewise also the wife (must fulfill her obligation) to her husband.*
 - ii) Some rabbis required couples to have sexual relations at least one time per week, generally on Friday night (the beginning of Sabbath)
 - b) Why?
 - i) ⁴ *The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband. In the same way the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife.*
- 5) Sexual relations within marriage are to be consistent—7:5
 - a) Negatively—⁵ *Do not (selfishly) deprive one another,*
 - i) The exception—*except by mutual agreement [sumphonos] for a specified time,*
 - (1) Some rabbis permitted marital sexual abstinence for no more than 1-2 weeks.
 - ii) The purpose—*so that you^{pl} may devote yourselves to fasting and prayer,*
 - ii) The purpose—*so that Satan may not tempt you^{pl} because of your^{pl} lack of self-control.*
 - b) Positively—*and be together again*
 - i) The purpose—*so that Satan may not tempt you^{pl} because of your^{pl} lack of self-control.*
- 6) What exactly is permissible but not required?—7:6 ⁶ *But I say this* (the preceding or the following?) *by way of concession, not by way of commandment.*
- 7) Paul's desire for celibacy—7:7
 - a) Desire—⁷ *For I desire that all people were even as I myself am.*
 - b) Concession—*But each one has his own gift [charisma] from God, one in this manner, and another in that.* (cf. Jeremiah 16; Ezekiel 24)

Words to unmarried/divorced and widowed Christians concerning marriage—7:8-9

- 1) The principle—7:8 *it is good for them if they remain (celibate) even as I am.*
 - a) Contrast with Roman law that encouraged widows to remarry within 2 years.
- 2) The command—7:9 *let them get married;*
 - a) When? ⁹ *But if they are not exercising self-control,*
 - b) Why? *for it is better to marry than to burn with desire.*
 - i) Getting married is not a sign of weakness; it is not second-best.