

# CHRISTIAN HOME IN AN UNCHRISTIAN WORLD

by

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## CHAPTER 5

### PAUL'S ADVICE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

#### "Good Advice for Dedicated Youth"

I Corinthians 7:10-40

We were looking last lesson at I Corinthians 7 and now we want to complete the chapter.

Before we resume looking at this passage, we need to be reminded again that Paul had previously spent two years at Corinth and during that time he had taught them much. He is not going over what he had previously taught them, but is enlarging his teaching in an area where problems had arisen and the church did not know the answers. They are asking Paul specific questions, and Paul is giving definite answers. We only have the answers recorded, however; and as such, Paul is dealing only with certain aspects of marriage and not treating the whole doctrine whatever in this chapter.

#### **A. Concerning Marriage, 7:1-40**

##### **1. Marriage and its Problems, 7:1-24**

###### **a. The relationships of a man and a woman, 7:1-9**

**(1) The pre-marriage relationship, 7:1**

**(2) The marriage relationship, 7:2-6**

**(3) The unmarried relationship, 7:7-9**

###### **b. The separation of partners, 7:10-16**

**(1) Among two believers, 8:10-11**

**:10 -- And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart**

**from her husband:**

"Depart" signifies an act of "departing or separating oneself." Here is the commandment of the Lord who taught on this subject.

Mark 10:11 -- the act of the man putting away his wife.

Mark 10:12 -- the act of the woman putting away her husband.

Under Roman law in the time of Herod, a woman could divorce her husband as well as the husband divorcing his wife.

This was what happened in the family of the Herods (Mark 6:18; Acts 24:25). The wife had left her husband for someone else.

**:11 -- But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife.**

The rule is no separation. If separation occurs, one of two things must be done:

(1) "**Remain unmarried.**" This is an imperative! It is to be the continuous state of the wife and also, by implication, the husband, or

(2) "**Be reconciled**" once and for all to her husband. There is not to be any of this on again off again business.

(2) Among a believer and an unbeliever: a mixed marriage, 7:12-16

Here is a new situation that had previously not existed, and the Lord never commented or gave instruction in this area.

These two individuals were both unbelievers when married, but now one has found the Lord while the other one has not. It is a new situation. The Lord never spoke on the subject of mixed marriages where one was a believer and the other was not. Yet what to do in a case like this demands equally an authoritative voice. Paul, therefore, is speaking with his authority as an Apostle to the Gentiles. This is the commandment of the Apostle, and it is equally authoritative.

**:12 -- But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.**

**:13 -- And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.**

The rule is again no separation. As long as the unbeliever of the marriage permits the marriage to continue, it must.

This problem could well have arisen from the fact that in the Old Testament the Jews had commanded, in cases of mixed marriages when they had married heathen wives and even had

children, to put them away (Ezra 9 and 10). While this was to be done then, it is not to be done now in the day of grace. In verse 14 Paul states the reason.

**:14 -- For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.**

This verse has been greatly misunderstood, but its teaching is really quite simple and clear. Because of the close relationship in marriage and the family, when one member is saved and another is not, GOD cannot do anything to the unsaved partner or children which would not directly affect the believer who is His child. Consequently, the unbelieving mate and the children are "set apart" -- which has nothing to do with any personal holiness whatever -- and are under a special protection and care not otherwise enjoy by unbelievers. In this state they are much more likely to come to a knowledge of the Lord than separated from the believer.

While the rule is no separation, it is only a rule and not a law.

**:15 -- But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God has called us to peace.**

If the unbeliever is not willing to abide with the believer, and he or she insists upon leaving, let him or her go. The brother or sister (i.e., the Christian partner of the marriage) is not under bondage to try to keep the marriage going when there would be no love but maltreatment to the wife or husband together with the children. GOD called the believer by His grace to a life of peace.

**:16 -- For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou O man, whether thou shalt save they wife?"**

The husband or wife who believes, by trying to keep the marriage going -- when the unbeliever does not want it any longer to continue -- does not have any assurances that its continuing will bring the unsaved member to the Lord.

Note very carefully that the believer is never to separate himself from the unbeliever. Separation is only permitted when the unbeliever does the separating.

The rule is no separation on the part of the believer. If separation is forced, however, upon the believer by the unbeliever, then the law of I Corinthians 7:39 immediately goes into effect. The believer, so separated, cannot remarry until the death of the unbeliever. If the unbeliever is saved later on and has not remarried, the original marriage may be continued.

### **c. The rule to follow, 7:17-24**

Paul states the rule three times in these verses and places two illustrations between them to illustrate that this principle or rule applies in all areas and any realm.

The rule is ABIDE WHERE CALLED UNLESS DIVINELY DIRECTED OTHERWISE!

**(1) The rule, 7:17**

**(a) the Illustration: Circumcision, uncircumcision, 7:18-19**

**(2) The rule, 7:20**

**(b) the Illustration: Servant, freeman, 7:21-23**

**(3) The rule, 7:24**

If you are a tent maker when saved, stay a tent maker. If you are an insurance salesman, stay an insurance salesman. If married, stay married; if single, stay single.

Stay as you are, where you are, unless the Lord Himself directs you otherwise. GOD needs believers in government, in radio, in Hollywood, etc. The reason GOD has called you, being in a particular place, is because He wants a witness in that sphere.

Before leaving this section, I want you to observe that there is no mention about divorce. It only speaks of separation in which there can be a once for all reconciliation.

The reason is that Paul had previously dealt with the entire subject of divorce in the two years at Corinth, and he taught them what the Lord said concerning it. They were familiar with this.

However, these were new problems; and they did not know the answer, so they asked Paul. Paul relates what the Lord said in reference to their problem if He spoke on it. However, Paul does not deal with all that he had taught them about marriage and divorce, nor what the Lord taught about separation and divorce.

A second area is now dealt with by Paul.

**2. Concerning Young People and Marriage, 7:25-40.**

This is "Paul's advice to Young People."

It is still relevant today. It is that age old problem: "Should I, or shouldn't I?"

**a. Stay as you are, 7:25-28.**

**(1) Because of the present distress.**

**(2) Because of the trouble involved in married life.**

**:25 -- Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.**

Paul does not have any commandment from CHRIST Himself on this subject to guide him like he had on mixed marriages above. Here he does not give a command, but he gives a deliberately formed decision based upon knowledge. He gives an inspired opinion -- advice.

Moreover, he is doing more here than just talking to young ladies. He is talking to young men equally as we see from verses 26-28.

**:26 -- I suppose, therefore, that this is noble for the present distress, I say, that it is not good for a man so to be.**

A present emergency situation governs what Paul says. Notice Jeremiah 16:1-2, "**The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place . . .**"

Before marriage, we must consider the children that will be born from the marriage union.

It was because of the distress of the times at the destruction of Jerusalem that CHRIST Himself said that those who did not have children were blessed: "**But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, shall shall be done in the dry?**" (Luke 23:28-31).

The same will be true in the tribulation period: "**And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!**" (Matthew 24:19).

The 144,000 evangelists in that day will not marry because of the stress of the times and because of the urgency of their work. GOD will give them a special "gift" to remain single.

The word "man" is a generic term for man and woman.

**:27 -- Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.**

"Bound" speaks of a past completed action with continuing results. You got hooked in the past, with the result you are hooked right now. "Do not be seeking release".

**:28 -- But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have troubled in the flesh: but I spare you.**

The city of Corinth was a very immoral city. Because of this immorality, some were going to the other extreme -- that of asceticism. It is the old law of the pendulum. They were reacting to a wrong thing and they were reacting too far. The youth leaders were evidently looking upon marriage as sinful and wrong. Paul says: "No!"

The word "trouble" is pressure or tribulation. If two people are married and they have no problems -- something is wrong. Perhaps one of them is merely a milquetoast -- and fearful of standing up to the other. Marriage is a continuous state of two people working together reducing pressures. When both stop reducing pressures, there will ultimately be an explosion.

Marriage is like a pressure cooker. When you are married, it is the pot and the lid uniting into one, and the heat is on. Both must work to reduce the pressure in the vessel with the heat of our old sin natures producing the pressure.

Paul says: "I am trying to spare you of this adjustment."

**b. Put the Lord's service first, 7:29-35.**

:29 -- **"But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none."**

This refers to the work of the Lord. Paul, here is not contradicting what he said in 7:2-6.

:30 -- **"And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not."**

"weep" -- because of earthly loss or disappointment.

"Rejoice" -- because of earthly gain or success.

"Buy" -- It is one thing to possess something; it is something different to have that thing possess you.

If this happens, a thing can take you completely away from the Lord.

Many today have a boat. It is something nice, and there is nothing wrong with it at all. But when you have an investment, you have to sue it to get your money's worth back. In the process of using it, the Christian only begins to miss the Sunday School and miss Sunday morning service. They try to soothe their conscience that what they were doing was all right, because they had invited these other folks to go with them, and they wanted to witness for the Lord to these unchurched people. Finally, we find these who possess a boat not attending services at all when the weather is nice. Sometimes they drop out altogether.

You can live for the Lord even though you have had loss or gain, disappointment or success, but it is harder. You can live for the Lord even though you possess much of this world's goods, but it is harder.

The same thing is true with marriage. You can live for the Lord, but it is harder because of the problems that exist through this new relationship. It is possible, but harder.

:31 -- **And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.**

The principle is use, not abuse. It is applicable to everything in this kosmos (world) system: boats, water skis, golf clubs, roller skates, rolling pins.

Paul says in Colossians 3:2 **"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."**

We must use things of this world with the awareness of their passing away, and that these things are not eternal things. We are to live with eternity's values in view.

:32-34. Paul's whole desire is the work of the Lord. Everything is judged in light of this.

"But I would have you without carefulness" is literally "without cares."

Notice that women may be engaged in the work of the Lord along with men.

- The unmarried Jewish woman was a reproach.
- The unmarried woman in ancient Greece was considered a "woman of the street."
- The unmarried woman in Christianity may be one totally dedicated to the Lord's service and be a useful servant for the Lord.

Think of the many Bible women today who are so serving in the Lord's work.

Yet many unmarried women are after the things of the world and living for the things of the world by leading a giddy life.

:35 -- **And this I speak for your own profit** (or advantage;) **"not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction."**

Paul reduced everything to whether it helped or hindered the work of CHRIST. An illustration is of Mary sitting before the Lord without distraction. Paul wants us to have a good position or a firm standing beside the Lord without distractions that would hinder service.

### **c. Marry, if you desire, after a period of time, 7:36-38.**

In these verses, Paul answers a question that apparently the Corinthians had asked him about the duty of a father toward his daughter who is old enough to marry.

:36 -- **But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.**

First, the daughter wishes to marry; and there is no serious objection to it. The father is advised to consent.

Remember in Roman and Greek culture, the fathers had the control of the marriage of their daughters. One of the ancient Greek books, Hermione in Euripides' *Andromache*, p. 987, said: "My marriage is my father's care; it is not for me to decide about that."

:37 -- **Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast in his heart; having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.**

In this case the virgin daughter does not wish to marry, and the father agrees with her. He will, therefore, be responsible for her keep all his life.

**:38 -- So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well: but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.**

In the final analysis, Paul leaves the whole problem of getting married an open question to be settled by each individual case. And it could not be otherwise.

**d. Remember the law of marriage, 7:39-40**

**:39 -- The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will: only in the Lord.**

At the death of the spouse, the other is free only to marry another believer. As a person is bound by marriage; as a Christian believer, even if she is freed from marriage by her husband's death, she is still bound by the law of CHRIST to only marry another believer.

Something that you should observe very closely and carefully is that a woman is bound to her husband until he dies. This also applies in reverse. The husband is bound to his wife until she dies. This law is operative for all believers at all times.

**:40 -- But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.**

Paul feels he is speaking by the HOLY SPIRIT's direction. Was he right or wrong? He was right, and the very fact that this book of I Corinthians was preserved and recognized as Scripture proves that his advice is both inspired and inerrant.

**Let us review Paul's advice:**

**a. Stay as you are, 7:25-28.**

- (1) Because of the present distress.**
- (2) Because of the troubles involved in married life.**

**b. Put the Lord's service first, 7:29-35**

**c. Marry, if you desire, after a period of time, 7:36-38**

**d. Remember the law of marriage, 7:39-40**

- (1) A woman is bound to her husband until he dies.**
- (2) If he dies, she is only free to marry someone who is a believer.**

In the mission magazine "East Asia Millions," published by Overseas Missionary Fellowship (formerly the China Inland Mission) in the June issue, 1961, there appeared an article entitled "Romance and Missions" by Elden C. Whipple, candidate secretary. Mr. Whipple states that there are two courses of action open to a young couple planning to marry and planning to go to

the field. The first course of action is to marry and then go. But this involves two adjustments to be made at once -- to missionary life and to married life.

It is rather the preferred course recommended by the mission after 100 years of missionary experience to defer marriage for two years after being on the field. Then he goes to list the practical reasons for this.

The China Inland Mission came, through experience, to prefer a particular practice which is identical to Paul's Advice to Young People.

**Stay as you are.**

**Put the Lord's service first.**

**Marry, if you desire, after a period of time.**

**Remember the law of marriage.**

Let me conclude with one final word:

**First a word to our young people.**

Get to know many.

Be courteous and friendly to all, and serious with none.

Be very careful of this thing of the world called "going steady."

This thing can be a trap of Satan to snare you. If you are not careful, you may find that you have allowed yourself to have a "boy friend" or "girl friend" just so you won't be different from all of your friends.

There is nothing wrong with having a special one, but Paul says: "**Abide as you were called; don't seek a wife or a husband.**"

If you have not sought one on your own, when the right one comes around, you will know it. Woe is the Christian who sought and found one by himself with the Lord's help.

**Now a word to you older folks.**

Be careful.

You that are parents, don't push your child, thinking that he or she might be left out if they don't get busy.

They may not be ready for marriage.

It is all right to introduce people, but then leave it with the Lord. He has a unique way of informing two people when they are in love.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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