

correcting carnality

1 CORINTHIANS

Sermon Series Notes



"Marriage, Divorce, & Singleness" (I Corinthians 6:9-7:40)

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Intro: We will cover I Cor.6:1-8 next weekend

6:9-11 In essence Paul is saying, "Don't go back to your old way of life."

* One of the things that gives evidence to the genuineness of someone's salvation is when they go back to the old way of life, God takes them to the woodshed

* Another mark of a person who has truly been washed/sanctified/justified is found in I John 3:9-10. Even if they fall briefly into the old lifestyle, they will not remain there.

6:12-18 We dealt with the issue of sexual sin last week

6:19-20 We dealt with the subject of us being God's temple on Wednesday night

II. LESSONS (Chapter 7)

A. It's Good To Remain Single BUT (7:1-7)

1. Some people have a gift of singleness. I did not
2. If you don't have the gift of singleness, it's better to get married.
3. Marriage advice for maintaining sexual purity

* Don't deprive one another except by mutual consent, and then only "for a time."

B. Advice For Unmarried And Widows (7:8-9)

- * The unmarried here includes those who have been divorced
- * Paul's counsel to younger widows (I Tim.5:14)

C. A **Command** For Those Who Are Married (7:10-11)

* Note: In saying "not I but the Lord," Paul means that Jesus dealt with this, and we have the red letter record.

* See Matthew 19:3-12

* The whole question of divorce was a hot topic in Jesus' day. It all centered around Deut.24:1 If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent (KJV = uncleanness) about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house.

* Two overall schools of thought in interpreting Deut.24: Rabbi Hillel taught that a man could divorce his wife for walking about with her hair down, speaking to men on the street, speaking disrespectfully of her husband's parents in his presence, even spoiling his dinner! Rabbi Akiba, of the same school of thought, added it also included a husband finding another woman more beautiful!! The school of Shammai limited something indecent to actions which suggested the possibility of sexual misconduct.

* NOTE: Both schools of thought readily accepted adultery as grounds for divorce. Under the law, infidelity was punishable by death, but under the Roman legal system, the death sentence for such offenses were difficult to obtain.

* Jesus brings them back to the will of God regarding marriage. God's will is a monogamous, intimate, enduring marriage. Anything less is a departure from the divine model.

* Is adultery the only legal grounds for divorce?
- See I Tim.1:8-11

* Permission by God for a certificate of divorce does not = God's approval. Just because God allows does not mean God approves!

* Malachi 2: 16 "I hate divorce," says the LORD

* Divorce is NEVER God's will; Divorce is NEVER God's fault; Divorce is ALWAYS the result of the hardness of man's heart.

* NOTE: Even when there is allowance for divorce, it still is not commanded. It is permitted! Even infidelity in a marriage can be forgiven by God. And if it can be forgiven by God, it can be forgiven by God's love flowing through a believer!!!!

* See Hughes on Mark, pp.43, 45

* If the problems in marriage that may lead one toward the path of divorce are caused by man's hard heart, then the answer to problems in marriage is a soft heart. Soft hearts save marriages!

D. Advice For Believers Married To Unbelievers (7:12-16)

* We have no record of Jesus dealing with this, it is still divinely inspired advice through the apostle Paul.

* Does this mean that the marriage ends in divorce?

* Does this mean the believer is free to remarry?

E. Additional Free Advice (7:17-24)

* In whatever situation you find yourself in, devote yourself to Christ and the kingdom of God

F. Advice For Virgins (vv.25-26)

* What was the present crisis?

* Is there a crisis for you that would make it a bad time to get married?

G. A Summary Statement (7:27-28)

* Are you married to an unbeliever and they are willing to remain married? Then remain married. Are you single as a result of the death of a spouse, or because your unbelieving spouse left you? Don't seek to get married again. If you do decide to marry, you have not necessarily sinned...Are you a virgin and you fall in love and want to get married? Then go ahead, it is not a sin, as long as you marry in the will of God.

H. Additional Encouragement (7:29-35)

1. Time is short (vv.29-31)

* What time is short? The Lord's coming? This life in itself? More than likely Paul refers to both.

* All of our present relationships will one day be over. Don't set your affections on the temporal things of this life. Live your life in light of eternity!

* Matt.6: 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

2. I'm trying to help you! (vv.32-35)

* I have seen Christians before marriage who give themselves to the will of God, but who after marriage lose the priorities of the kingdom of God

* Luke 14: 20 "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.

* Matt.13: 22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.

* Gladys Aylward dedicated her life to God at a revival service in London in 1930. Soon afterward, with less than ten dollars in her handbag, she set out for China to help an aging missionary with her work. After a perilous journey by train, bus, ship, and mule, Gladys arrived in the city of Yangchen, and here she helped this missionary turn an old building into an inn. Whenever travelers came to the inn, these women gave them food and lodging, using this as an opportunity to tell them about Jesus Christ. Gladys learned Chinese, and soon after the missionary died, leaving Gladys to run the inn. She met and became friends with a Welsh missionary couple in a nearby town, and when she saw how happy they were as husband and wife, she realized she was lonely. She began to pray for a husband, specifically an Englishman. After two years of praying, Gladys confided to a friend, "I know God answers prayer, so I believe He has told my Englishman to come to China, but he must not have obeyed God's call." In 1938 Japan invaded China, and the city of Yangchen was bombed. Gladys Aylward gathered ninety-four orphans and led them on a harrowing twelve-day trek Over the mountains, and finally to safety. Her story was later made into a movie starring Ingrid Bergman - "The Inn of the Sixth Happiness." Gladys died a single woman in 1970 having never found her Englishman. Though single all her life, Gladys Aylward once remarked that was sometimes lonely but never alone.

* Henrietta Mears chose to remain single so that she might have time to study and teach God's Word. She spearheaded an effort to acquire a privately owned resort in the San Bernardino Mountains and transform it into a Christian retreat center, Forest Home. She founded the first Christian education publishing house, Gospel Light Publications. She founded the Hollywood Christian Group, a Bible study and fellowship group for people in the entertainment industry. Through this group she led many Hollywood entertainers to Christ. Perhaps one of her greatest achievements as a single woman completely dedicated to Christ was the mentoring of a young man who came to Forest Home with a soul full of doubts and struggles. Through Miss Mears prayers and encouragement, this young man made a decision to serve God for the rest of his life. I think you'll recognize that young man's name, Billy Graham. Billy Graham said this about Henrietta Mears, "I doubt if any other woman, besides my wife and my mother, ever had such a marked influence on my life."

* Robert Murray McShayne of Scotland chose not to marry so that he could devote himself fully to his study of the Word and his preaching ministry. In the nineteenth century he was used by God to see thousands of lives transformed throughout the British Isles.

* Canadian-born hymn writer Edith Margaret Clarkson struggled with her singleness in her early years. Like most girls, she had a glowing mental image of her wedding day from an early age. In time she realized that God had called her to a single life. Though reluctant at first, she ultimately embraced her singleness as a gift from God.

* Paul himself is a great example of accepting his singleness as a gift that allowed him to devote all his energies solely for Christ. Many believe that Paul was once married, and that his wife left him after his conversion.

* Note: Single Christians are not "better" Christians are more spiritual, but they do have the opportunity of a more single-minded devotion to Christ.

I. Final Words (7:36-40)

CONCLUSION

* If you can stay single, stay single. If you can't remain single, make sure you only marry in the will of God. And after marriage, don't lose your focus concerning Christ and His kingdom

* Are you a Christian couple? How are you doing in your devotion to Christ? Striving for the kingdom? Caught up in the things of the world?

* Are you single because of divorce, death of a spouse? Don't seek a new spouse, but rather take advantage of your singleness by being completely devoted to Christ

* Whatever situation you find yourself in, make sure you are completely devoted to Christ