

**April 6, 2014 - 1Corinthians 7:10-16,
“God Has Called Us to Peace.”**

Verses 10-11... Husbands and wives are “one” in marriage, before God, and in Christ; therefore, they are not to leave, separate from, or divorce one another; but must continue to reconcile with each other and with God, so that marriage is not dishonored.

Think about a Christian wedding that you may have attended; the wedding vows often include something like, “until death do us part.”

Verses 10-11 are directed to Christian couples, i.e., both husband and wife belonging to the Lord; where as, verses 12-16 are written to those in “mixed” marriages, not in anyway meaning people of different ethnic groups or cultures, but believers and unbelievers.

Verses 12-14... “To the rest,” is clearly speaking to those who find themselves married to unbelievers. Paul says, “I not the Lord,” meaning God had not previously given revelation concerning this; but Paul an apostle, commissioned by God, is now declaring it.

In Acts 2, the church grew from 120 in the morning, to over 3000 believers before nightfall. No doubt, there were some who were already married before coming to Christ, and perhaps one spouse came to Christ, but not both of them. If that be true, the believing spouse is not to initiate separation [divorce]; but, if the unbelieving spouse wants to leave [divorce], then the believing spouse is not obligated to contest the divorce, but is free to let the unbeliever leave [to divorce].

The priority here is on the witness and testimony of the believing spouse to seek peace; for only God knows if an unbelieving spouse will come to repentance and confess Christ as Lord; but, if the unbeliever wants to remain in the marriage, the believing spouse is not to divorce them.

God wants the unbeliever to be saved (verse 14) and perhaps this will happen through the witness of the believing spouse, who is sanctified by God.

A little clarification about the words sanctified, unholy, and unclean. Unclean is used here in the sense of being defiled, i.e., with at least one believer in the home, the children are protected from undue spiritual harm.

Paul says the children are considered “holy” [from the same root used for the word sanctified], i.e., to be set apart and protected by God the Father, because of the believing parent who belongs to God.

Verse 15... God wants reconciliation, but if the unbelieving spouse seeks divorce, the believing spouse is not bound to remain married to an unbeliever, for God wants us to live in peace - between us and God, and between us and our unbelieving spouse.

Peter also taught on this subject, please take a look (**1Peter 3:1-7**). Marriage is to be honored above all human relationships, for marriage was ordained and established by God at the very beginning of creation.

Genesis 2:24, “For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

The relationship between a husband and a wife is symbolic of the relationship each Christian has with Jesus Christ, the Savior and the Head of the Church, His Body.

The Bible teaches (*Ephesians 5:23-25*) that a husband is the head of his wife, as Christ is the head the church, which is His own body. Wives should always respect their husband’s leadership role, just as the church respects Christ and follows His leading; husbands are to love their wives, as Christ loved the church, i.e., He died for her.

The Bible declares (*Hebrews 13:4*) marriage is to be honored by and among all people; a husband and wife (*Mark 10:8-9*) “are no longer two, but one,” therefore, “What God joins together, no man can separate.”

Christian marriage is meant to be a beautiful example of the fellowship and unity that exists between the Father and the Son, the Son and His Church, and the Husband and his Wife (speaking of believing spouses).

But notice (**1Peter 3:1-2**), even when the husband is not a believer, the wife is to show him respect as the head of the home; this is not speaking of any act or attitude that would dishonor God, for the wife would never disobey God's Word; but Christian wives are to set a good example before their unbelieving husbands.

Peter doesn't tell the believing wife to leave her unbelieving husband, but instead (v. 1), to live as an example of Christ in that marriage; for (**1Peter 3:3-4**), it is the woman's inner beauty, her gentle and quiet spirit, and her willful respect of her husband's role; for this is a witness to her husband and it honors God.

Peter sights (**1Peter 3:5-6**) the God-honoring inner beauty of some OT women; specifically Sarah, who willfully submitted to her husband Abraham, serving as an example of a Godly woman and a honored wife.

In the same way, God's Word exhorts Christian wives to "do what is right," to respect their husband as leader of the home, even if he is an unbeliever, by exhibiting a gentle and quiet spirit, in order to bring him to Christ.

Peter (**1Peter 3:7**) now turns his attention to a Christian husband's responsibility to be understanding toward his wife's deepest physical and emotional needs; whether she is a believer or an unbeliever, the husband is actively and genuinely to be sensitive toward her.

A husband who loves his wife, "as Christ loved the church," will find that his wife has a much easier time respecting his leadership; just as a wife who respects her husband's leadership will find that her husband has an easier time loving her sacrificially.

A Christian husband is to be chivalrous toward his wife, Peter here calling her the physically weaker partner. Don't get riled up over that statement ladies; by design, men are usually bigger and stronger than their wives.

A Christian husband is to care for and respect his wife, whether she is a believer or an unbeliever; that's what this says, if he doesn't, he may find his prayers hindered.

God ordained marriage: He commands husbands to love their wives, and wives to respect their husbands, i.e., if your spouse is an unbeliever God holds you responsible to be a good witness for Christ.

Verse 16... What really matters to God is that the believing spouse live as a witness of Christ, so the unbeliever will come to repent and believe in Christ as Savior and Lord.

Some of you may be married to an unbeliever who isn't antagonistic toward Christianity, they just aren't interested in it themselves. Paul is basically saying here, if you have an unbelieving spouse who wants to remain married to you, you have a responsibility before God to show them Christ.

So, whether you are single, married, unmarried, or widowed, your priority is to be a witness for Christ to those around you, so that, if they are not believers, they will be exposed to God's love, mercy, and holiness in you, in order that they might realize their own depravity and hopeless state, confess and turn from their sins, trusting the Savior for forgiveness and eternal life.

That is why God sent His One and Only Son, our main purpose is to proclaim that message to all who will listen.

Colossians 1:15-23, He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, ...by Him all things were created: things in heaven, on earth, visible, invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead, that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things on earth, all things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation-- if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.