

# 1 Corinthians 7:1-16

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[ 0 : 00 ] Take your Bibles, go into the book of 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter 7, 1 Corinthians chapter 7. You know, if you want to get into hard discussions, you want to get into hard topics, and you want to preach on things that you normally wouldn't preach on, the book of 1 Corinthians is a great book to go to.

So that's why we're there. It's in the Word, it's right there for us, right? When we make the commitment to go through the books of Scripture, we are forced to deal with the issues that come up therein. The church at Corinth, if you remember, Paul is writing this letter to the church at Corinth.

Probably one of the most corrupt churches in all of the New Testament. It is a church that I remembered, guys, as I was talking. Okay, I didn't have my mic on. Thank you so much. I knew I hadn't ventured away. I stepped back a minute ago, and I heard it go down.

I was like, I don't have my mic on. Thank you so much. The church at Corinth dealt with a number of issues. Paul has been addressing those issues up to this point in the 6th chapter, and now we're coming to where they had written to Paul and asked him a number of questions.

And he will begin answering those questions for us in the 7th chapter. So he has been correcting issues which he saw looking into the church, and now he's going to address questions and concerns they have from within the church.

[ 1 : 05 ] And so this is how the letter is there. Paul still refers to them as the saints which are at Corinth. So for all their fallacy, for all their shortcomings, for all their problems, they are still believers, right?

So this is a letter written to the believers at Corinth so that we would understand the truth of what God is teaching us. Rightfully so, some of these passages are difficult.

They make us scratch our head. They make us think a little bit. But that's okay because we're ready for that. We want to do that, right? We don't want to just feast on the milk of the Word. We want to get into the meat of the Word. So with that in mind, if you're physically able, desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together?

We read the Word of God found in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, starting in verse 1, and we're going to go down to verse 16. We're going to go verses 1 to 16 of the 7th chapter of 1 Corinthians.

The Word of God says, Now concerning the things about which you wrote, It is good for a man not to touch a woman, but because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.

[ 2 : 05 ] The husband must fulfill the duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does, and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again, so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

But this I say by way of concession, not of command. Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

But I say to the unmarried and to the widows, that it is good for them to remain even as I. But if they do not have self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband. But if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband, and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

[ 3 : 04 ] But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if the brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away.

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband. For otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave. The brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband?

Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife? Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the opportunity we have of coming together, and lifting up our voice in song.

We thank you for the opportunity we have of fellowship. But Lord, what a great privilege it is to stand and to read the word of God together. Lord, we pray that now as we have read it and heard it, Lord, that you would speak to us.

[ 4 : 02 ] Lord, you would speak to our hearts and minds, and that you would help us to understand the truth of the passage, and Lord, the application that it has to us on a daily basis. We ask that you be glorified and honored through it all, and we ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. Paul has been addressing a number of issues in the church at Corinth. The sixth chapter we looked at several weeks ago, if you remember.

It was not last week or the week prior, because I was out of the pulpit a week prior to last week. But it's been a couple of weeks since we've looked at it, so we kind of give a refresher. In the sixth chapter, Paul is addressing immoralities, the sexual immoralities that ran rampant in the church, simply because of the existence of where that church was at.

The city of Corinth, if you remember, was a hub of trade, of international trade. Actually, they would take ships across the isthmus of Corinth, and they would drag them across there, because it was safer to take the ship out of the water and drag it across a man-made canal than it would be to sail around the edge there.

So there was a hub of trade. There were temples to all kinds of false gods, lowercase g there. There were temple prostitutes, both male and female. There was wickedness that was rampant in the city.

[ 5 : 21 ] And unfortunately, as we learned very early on in the book of 1 Corinthians, that what was going on in the city was also going on in the church, that the church wasn't affecting the city, the city was affecting the church.

And what was norm out there had become norm in here, so much so that one even took his own father's wife as a bride. And there was such things there that made Paul scratch his head and understand.

And if you remember in the sixth chapter, they spoke of freedoms. Well, the stomach is made for food, so while we eat, and that was kind of an allegorical way of saying, well, since I am made with these desires, and I have the right to fulfill these desires, however I want to.

Paul ended the sixth chapter with this truth. You are not your own, for you have been bought with a price. You've been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, you don't have the right to dictate what it is that you do, and you do not do.

And then we shift to the seventh chapter, where Paul begins to address questions which had come to him. But I believe he's addressing these questions. There will be a number of them in the remainder of the book.

[ 6 : 26 ] Really, really the one that you are more familiar with, it really has application to the song we just sang, is what about the resurrection of the dead? We'll get to that in 1 Corinthians 15.

But one of the first questions, and I don't think accidentally, I think rather intentionally being led by the Spirit, that Paul addresses is the question concerning marriage. And we'll see why, because it has direct ties to what he has just said in the sixth chapter.

And if you remember, when the Bible was written, it was written as a letter, it was not written in chapter and verse. So the things that they just read will be fresh on their mind as they read the answer that he gives them to the question they pose.

The seventh chapter, I believe, can be divided into two sections. We'll take the first one this morning. And we will see the divine position on marriage. The divine position on marriage.

The second half of the seventh chapter, I believe we will see the position of the divine in the individual. So first we'll see kind of God's position or his stance or his standing on the institution of marriage.

[ 7 : 37 ] Paul will wrap this up with an understanding of what position God has in the individual's life. And we'll get to that in the latter half, starting in verse 17 and going to the end of the chapter in the seventh chapter.

But we need to understand this idea of marriage. Because as Paul clearly states, now concerning the things about which you wrote, and then there's kind of this break, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

So evidently the question that had been posed to Paul, and many Bible scholars agree to this, if not most Bible scholars will agree to this, was Paul in view of what is going on in our time.

The corrupt society that they live in, the persecution that many of them were beginning to face. And if you also look historically at what was taking place in Corinth at the writing of this letter, near or somewhere close to when Paul wrote this letter, the city of Corinth had experienced at least two major famines.

There had been great shortages of food. And there had also been a catastrophic earthquake. There had been great upheavals in the world around them.

[ 8 : 53 ] And as Paul is writing, and one thing that we glean from the writings of Paul, and this is why we should live in this way, Paul believed in the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

That is, Christ could come back at any moment. I too believe in the imminent return of Jesus Christ. You say, well, it's been over 2,000 years. Right, but if Paul thought he could come any moment, about 30 years removed, how much more should we think that he could come any moment, 2,000 years removed?

And Paul lived his life as such. Now, he had a special calling. We'll get to that in just a moment. But in view of the persecution that was arising under maybe the emperors of the Roman Empire, and in view of the upheavals of the world around them, geographically and even economically, and in view of the wickedness of the city, many people thought that it's best just not to marry.

It's best just to live a celibate life, to completely separate and isolate oneself, and to be holy and dedicated to the Lord. And their teaching in the church, and what they were writing to Paul is, should we even be concerned about marriage?

By the way, this isn't something that is new to the church at Corinth. Devout believers throughout the ages have done such things. If you remember, many of you may have been here, some of you may not.

[ 10 : 18 ] We went through the book of Matthew, and we begin with this introduction. Actually, we see it played out more so in the gospel of, well, we see it more in Matthew than we do any other, where John the Baptist goes out into the wilderness and lives this kind of weird life, right?

John the Baptist, clothed in camel hair, had a leather belt and ate wild locusts. I know it's been some time since we went through the gospel of Matthew, and we looked at the reality that he probably lived with a community called the Essenes. The Essenes were a religious community of that day, and there were really three major ones.

There were the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes. The Sadducees kind of said, well, whatever, there's no afterlife, live however you want to. Some have said that's why they were sad, you see. The Pharisees, they were very legalistic.

They lived according to the law, kept all these laws and regulations, all these rules. The Essenes said, you know what, let's just separate ourselves from society and go live out in the wilderness. And there was a group of men who went and lived out in the wilderness.

And when we looked at that, only one still exists today, that is the Pharisees. The Sadducees died out because the Roman Empire failed. And we should not be surprised that the Essenes died out because it was a group of men living in the wilderness.

[ 11 : 25 ] Therefore, they cannot reproduce. There cannot be any growth. Right? So they had isolated themselves and left and stayed out there. Now, they did some good things. That's fine. I'm not saying that they were wrong, but they died out. So history has shown us that people say, well, in light and view of everything that we see, let's just give ourselves completely and wholly to whatever we believe.

Let's commit to this before the Reformation. Martin Luther, you know, he was completely committed. The reason the Reformation kind of found a fire in Luther is he came to the realization that sometimes his interpretation of things was wrong.

I don't know if this is a long introduction, but stay with me. The question is, how important is marriage? That's the question. Should we even be concerned about it?

And so Paul here gives the divine position on marriage. Now, when we read the text, we see where it says a couple times, we'll go ahead and get this out here, right? He says, I, not the Lord, or I, not I, but rather the Lord.

So we have to be careful here that Paul is not just giving his opinion. Okay? He's not sharing his personal opinion. What he is doing when he says, not I, but the Lord says, he is speaking a direct quote of what Jesus taught on.

[ 12 : 31 ] When he says, I, not the Lord, what he is saying is, Jesus didn't clearly teach on this, but I, who am being led by the Spirit, have an understanding. We say that in the rest of the chapter.

Being Spirit-led and moved by the Spirit of God, this is my thoughts on this. Okay? It's not an opinion. It's a Spirit-led teaching, which is a big difference.

Because we have to give Scripture its authority. It has authoritative position. Paul has the authority, being moved by the Spirit, to give us direct teaching.

So here we see the divine position on marriage. The first great truth we see as it applies to marriage is the provisions of marriage. The provisions of marriage.

Paul says, now concerning the things about which you wrote. And he says, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. So what he's saying is, if for those who desire to live a celibate lifestyle, later on we will read that God calls some to live a life of celibacy or singleness.

[ 13 : 34 ] All right? This isn't singleness as we define it in our society. Single and free to do whatever you want to. This is singleness and free to be celibate or pure and undefiled by the world.

Paul later on says that this is a calling. And he uses the same word that is used for spiritual giftedness. That is, God has gifted some people to be celibate and single.

And Paul declares here that this is good. You say, well, then I shouldn't worry about marriage. Well, wait a minute, because the text also declares to us that marriage is good. And it declares very clearly, whatever God has called you to is good.

So it means that nobody has the right or the authority to stand up and declare, well, you're wrong for being single or you're wrong for being married. Look at what's going on around here.

He says to each one, as we'll see in the 17th chapter or the 17th chapter of the 17th verse, whatever position God calls an individual to is good. So he does affirm those who say, should I just remain single?

[ 14 : 36 ] Should I remain celibate? Should I remain pure and not be so concerned about marriage? Should I just cast that off in view of what's going on? Paul says, that's good. But then he declares to us why marriage even exists.

Keep in mind, the reason I introduced it this way, the sixth chapter speaks of immoralities and fornications and temptations and desires. Well, God made me this way.

Well, you're right. God did make you this way. And since God made men and women with desires, God also provided a mean to meet those desires. And Paul answers it here because he says, but because of immoralities.

Now, that word there has direct application to sexual immoralities. But because of immoralities, each man, underline this, okay? Pay attention to this.

This is something that we should have, we've instructed Miss Sarah when she went to wear shoes at and others in Utah understand this. Each man is to have his own wife, singular, and each woman is to have her own husband, singular.

[ 15 : 42 ] Now, I know, okay, some of you reading through the Old Testament right now. I'm reading through the Old Testament as well, old and new. You read through the Old Testament, you got the same questions I do. How come these men have all these wives and God displaces them and lets them have all these wives?

Well, again, the exceptions as a result of sin should not be the expectation because of the truth. Here, Paul reaffirms the truth, and we'll see it being reaffirmed throughout it, that the truth of the matter is, is each man is to have his own wife.

It doesn't say his own wives. It says his own wife, singular. And each woman is to have her own, singular, husband. Why? Because of immorality. It's because God made us this way, right?

God created us and fashioned us and formed us. Celibacy is a gift. It is a calling. Marriage is a gift. It is an equipping. It is a provision for how God made us. He says the husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

That is, God has given us this glorious thing called marriage. Listen, I love marriage, right? I have spent more of my life as a married individual than I ever did as an unmarried individual.

[ 16 : 49 ] I was married at a very young age. I understand that, but I love marriage. And the more I read scripture, the more I read, and the more I understand God's view on it, the more I love marriage. And I think it's a wonderful gift. I love doing pre-marriage counseling.

I don't necessarily love marriage counseling as much, but I love it when we can go to scripture and see what scripture says about marriage, and we can do marriage counseling that way. I love the fact that God has given us marriage.

And I also love that the Bible has dedicated a whole book to marriage, Song of Songs or Song of Solomon. And, you know, that book that I said we get to on Wednesday night or Sunday night when we're preaching through scripture, we're going to have to ask all the kids to leave the room because it's a very intimate book, right?

I love the reality that God gave us this, and he says, I created you this way, and therefore I'm going to provide you a means to live this out. Why? Because that which God has fashioned in us, he also provides for a way to display it.

And he gives us a right way and a true way and an accurate way. And then we get to this wonderful picture, right, where the two become one flesh in verse 4, and the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does.

[ 17 : 52 ] And likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. This is wonderful union where the two become one. So we have to be careful here, okay?

And we have to be careful because it's not that the husband said, well, you know, that's my wife. I can do whatever I want to with her. Well, then you're hers as well, and she can do whatever she wants to with you, right? So there's this balance here of there's this blending of the two.

No longer am I just my own individual. When I perform a wedding ceremony and I speak of this reality, there's something amazing that happens when a couple stands up and makes a covenant, right, and they make an agreement.

They came in as two individuals. They leave as one, and they're no longer the same. They're now one. He no longer, he came in with authority over his own body. She came in. Actually, it had been this way and this way. He came with authority over his own body.

She came with authority over her own body. But when they leave, that role has swapped. They have given themselves to one another. And I speak of this in pre-marriage counseling, and I also speak of it also.

[ 18 : 52 ] Your wife, husbands, listen, your wife needs to be jealous over you, and husbands, you need to be jealous over your wife. I'm not saying jealousy with a sin. The Bible says our God is a jealous God.

That is, he wants us to worship him and adore him and to love him alone. He doesn't want us chasing things that are not good for us. He doesn't want us chasing things that are harmful for us. He does not want us doing things that are bad for us.

He wants us to pursue him with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our mind, with all of our strength. Our God is a jealous God, and that's a good jealousy. And in the covenant of marriage, husbands and wives need to have that type of jealousy for one another.

Because as you do in your body, you're doing it to one another. And it's this provision that God has given us. And it's this fulfillment of the Genesis 2 passage.

Genesis 2.4, 2.24 tells us that the man and the woman, the two shall become one flesh. And here we begin to see this, right? It says, stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer and come together again, so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

[ 19 : 56 ] Listen, Satan longs to destroy marriages because it is within marriage that God has provided a place of freedom from shame to do what we were created to do.

I know we don't talk about it a lot because it makes us uncomfortable, but that's the reality. The Bible talks about it quite often. There's no shame in marriage. There's no guilt there. There is freedom.

And it is there alone that God has given us that. And Satan wants to destroy that. And we understand that he is working very hard. He goes on.

He says, but this I say by way of concession, not of command. That is, he says, it's okay if you want to be single, but I also understand that God has given something to be married. Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself. However, each man has his own gift from God.

One in this manner and another in that. But he says, but I say to the unmarried and to the widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. But if they do not have self-control, that is, if what God has put in them cannot be contained, you're not free to do however and whatever you want to whenever you have.

[ 21 : 07 ] Okay? The stomach is made for food, but you're not free to put anything you want to in there and not suffer the consequences from it. My stomach was made to consume food.

There's a lot of food that I like that is not good for me, and therefore I bear the consequences when I consume it. You say, well, it goes into my stomach and it's eliminated. Right, but it also does things to my body because just because it was made to catch the food that I put in my mouth does not mean that I have the freedom, or I do have the freedom, but I shouldn't do it.

I shouldn't use that freedom as an excuse to just continue to force everything I want to down my mouth and then say I should be free from any consequences that come from whatever I ate. That's insanity.

Just because God made us with desires doesn't mean we have the freedom to live them out however we want to when he has provided a means to do so. It says very clearly right here that if they lack self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

God has provided a wonderful, wonderful gift in marriage. You guys just said, well, why don't we talk about this? Because the Word of God talks about it.

[ 22 : 20 ] Some people believe they are holy because in history, I'm not saying in here, okay, and some people in the church at Corinth thought, well, I'm holier because I'm single. Some of us are holier because we're married.

Because without the provision of marriage, we would be living a very unholy life. God has provided a means. We will read later on in the chapter that sure, marriage does distract you.

It can, but it encourages you. It can build you up. We're balancing this here, and that's why I broke it apart because the latter part emphasizes not should we be married or should we not be married, but what position God has in the marriage or in the singleness.

But here we see the gift and the provisions of marriage. The second thing we see is the permanence of marriage. The permanence of marriage. So Paul has spoken with spiritual authority.

Now he's going to quote Christ. He says in verse 10, but to the married I give instruction, not I, but the Lord. That is, Jesus actually talked about this, right? To the married, he talked about this.

[ 23 : 20 ] Now, he didn't address the question of should I get married or should I remain single, but Paul being led by the Spirit can address that question. But here, Jesus spoke about this. It's in the Old Testament. It's in the New Testament.

It's repeated over and over again. It says, but to the married I give instruction, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband in the Gentile society, in the Roman society, which is where the church at Corinth is. It's Gentile and Roman, not Jewish.

The woman was free to divorce just as much as the man was free to divorce in the Jewish society. The males actually took that leadership. So he's writing to them. He says that the wife should not leave her husband, but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband, and the husband should not divorce his wife.

And he begins to speak here of the permanence of marriage. Now, again, Jesus was asked the question, can a man divorce his wife for any reason at all?

Jesus answered that question very pointedly. They said, well, there's a word of God said. They said, well, Moses allowed us to give a certificate of divorce. And Jesus said it was because of sin that you were allowed to give a certificate of divorce.

[ 24 : 22 ] Now, we're speaking the scripture here, right? He said, because of your sin, Moses allowed you to give a certificate of divorce. In Jewish society, I don't mean this disrespectful, ladies. I'm just talking about society, that by the time Christ came along, if she burnt your toast, you could divorce her.

That was grounds for a certificate of divorce, okay? If she wasn't pleasing to you in any way, you could just give her a certificate of divorce. And Jesus says it is because of sin that this was permitted.

Now, permitted does not mean commanded, right? He says, but from the very beginning, God created them male and female and said the two shall become one and nothing should ever separate them, right?

And Jesus said that the only holy ground for divorce was unfaithfulness, immorality. And this is what Paul is referencing here, that she shouldn't leave her husband and he shouldn't leave his wife, they should not be divorced because marriage was originated as a permanent institution.

Now, we know there's a day. Death is what closes the door on marriage. You're free. But until death, that's what we say, until death do us part.

[ 25 : 32 ] Now, I understand many people are affected by divorce. We're not here to cast judgment on that. We're not here to say, oh, well, sin is sin, right?

My sin of gluttony is just as much as any other sin that you can ever come up with. But the effects of sin, I'm not saying you sin and that's why you got a divorce. I'm not saying that, so just stay with me. Divorce is a result of the fall of man.

Every problem we have, we trace back to one grand event, the fall of man. We can. The fall of man, Genesis 3, when man decided to take matters into his own hand and live however he wanted to.

Sometimes divorce is an option that is really the only viable option. It's the only option, it's the safest option. Sometimes it's the best option. I understand that. There are times where as a pastor, I've sat down and I've counseled people and as much as you don't want to see it happen, you know it's going to happen.

And sometimes it's a thing that has to happen. But the results and the effects of the fall should not dictate the standard of the command. Because marriage was originated before the fall.

[ 26 : 37 ] And the command was, the expectation is that it's a permanent matter. And I say that because we've begun to be so familiar in our society with the thought and the concept of divorce that it's almost an expectation.

There needs to be, at least among the people of God, an expectation of permanence. An expectation of permanence.

And an acceptance, an acceptance of shortcoming. That doesn't mean that we're wrong or we're to blame in that. We're not casting blame here.

We're just saying God expected it to be permanent. And in our fallacy, and I say our, mankind's fallacy, what God expected to be permanent too often is not.

But, again, do not let society's standard dictate God's declaration. Marriage is a great gift. Marriage is expected to be a place of permanence.

[ 27 : 51 ] We ought to be praying for that and longing for that and expecting that among our people. I can't believe that we had a couple stand up this morning and say, oh, we've been married three years. I officiated their marriage and I can't believe it's already been three years.

And, you know, these things, these days go by so fast. And, you know, I've seen so many people and I stand up and I say, you know, before you know it, you'll look up and you'll be 25, 30 years into it. I've talked to enough people and I understand that.

I get to it, but these things, they go so quick, right? But the expectation on our side should be this was a permanent matter. Anybody that's ever sat down in pre-marriage counseling with me will know that the very first thing that I declare to them is I expect a couple of things.

Number one, that what we do is going to last and if you're not doing it to last then we're done. And number two, that if a problem arises you come back to me and we work through it.

because I'm making a commitment to them and I want them to make a commitment to me because that's God's expectation. Now, as Jesus says, because of sin we don't always see that.

[ 28 : 59 ] But how many things do we see in Scripture that because of sin we don't see it? God expects us to be holy but yet we are not holy. Be holy as I am holy is the clear teaching of all of Scripture. But He meets us where we're at and that's where we have grace and mercy and forgiveness and compassion and what a great God we serve, right?

How amazing that He'll meet us even in our failures and our shortcomings. How amazing that He meets us not with a judgmental wagging finger but with a loving embrace and says there's reconciliation, there's forgiveness, there's mercy, and there's restoration.

But the effects of that fall are going to be felt. So we see the permanence of marriage. The last thing that we see in this passage before us is the promise that's in marriage.

And this addresses another question that came before Paul. It's this promise that's in marriage. And the question reads like this. There were two unbelieving people in the city of Corinth.

The church was doing its job and began to witness and to reach out into the community. One of those individuals, either the husband or the wife, accepted Christ and have surrendered their life to Jesus Christ. Now all of a sudden, this individual finds themselves in an unequally yoked marriage.

[ 30 : 13 ] Because we will read later on in the writing of Paul that for the believing individual, it is sin to enter into an unequally yoked marriage. It is sin. But for the believer that has come to Christ, they were both unbelievers and now they have come to Christ.

One of the two have come to Christ. The question is, what should I do? Should I stay with my unbelieving spouse or should I separate from them since now I'm unequally yoked? When we were married, we were equally yoked because we were both unbelievers.

Now one of us has become a believer. What now? That's the question. And Paul addresses it here and he answers it. He goes on. He says in verse 12, but to the rest I say, not the Lord.

So again, Jesus didn't teach on this directly, but he's teaching through Paul. But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, how does he refer to him? Any brother, right?

If any brother, that is a believer, has a wife who is an unbeliever and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has an unbelieving husband and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away.

[ 31 : 15 ] So Paul says, just because one of you came to Christ doesn't mean you need to end the marriage. It's still possible to be happily married. It's still possible if they consent to live with you because we were called to peace or shalom.

We'll see that later. He says from verse 14, for the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband for otherwise your children are unclean but now they are holy.

You say, what does this mean? Well, this shows us the promise that's in marriage. Now, to be sanctified does not mean saved. It does not mean he's saved. It doesn't mean that the unbelieving husband is saved because of the believing wife and it does not mean that the unbelieving wife is saved because of the believing husband.

It means they're sanctified. The word sanctified means what? Set apart. They're set apart. To be set apart for holy purposes is what sanctified means. And it doesn't imply here that just because one parent is saved and the kids are saved because it says they're holy.

They're because now one of the parents that does not mean. It does not mean they're saved. It means that they have a holy covering around them. So here's the application. Here's the promise that's in marriage for the believer who is unequally yoked after being married for a while.

[ 32 : 21 ] Here is the promise that the presence of the believer in the marital relationship changes the home. that the unbelieving husband or the unbelieving wife now has been set apart by God and has a greater chance of being influenced to coming to Christ because in the home there is a believer presence.

That the presence of a single believer in the family unit changes everything. That their presence sets aside that home and gives God the opportunity to work.

And God now has the opportunity to reach the children because at least one parent knows who Jesus Christ is. There is an opportunity.

There's a foothold before Satan ruled the home. Now that one has given their life to Jesus Christ the Lord has now entered the home and the strong man has come in and bound the strong man, right?

Jesus told the parable how can one go into the house and bind one unless he is stronger than the one who's already in the house. As soon as Jesus gets the life of the individual the husband or the wife he is stronger than the one who used to rule the home and now he binds Satan and God is free to operate in that home because it has been sanctified.

[ 33 : 34 ] It is set apart because of the influence of one individual. And this one individual's influence now provides the opportunity for the Lord to draw the unbelieving husband or the unbelieving wife or the unbelieving children to himself.

So what Paul is saying is stay on your mission field. If you've come to Christ and your unbelieving husband will live with you or if you've come to Christ and your unbelieving wife will live with you stay on your mission field because God has put you in that home to provide an influence of spiritual things in the home.

Now he goes on later to say but if they leave let them leave. You're not bound. So essentially what he's saying is just as if your spouse has died. So he doesn't want them to carry any unnecessary guilt.

If your unbelieving husband or your unbelieving wife leaves as a result of your faith in Christ that's the key. As a result of your faith in Christ then let them go.

You're free. Don't carry any unnecessary guilt. But Paul says if you can stay, stay. Live with them because you're giving God the opportunity to minister.

[ 34 : 46 ] And we see here this impact that people around the world understand, missionaries around the world understand. You reach either the husband or the wife and you reach the home.

Depending on what society they go into some societies are very matriarchal societies that is the ladies run societies. There are some matriarchal societies so the missionaries that are there they're reaching for the matriarch.

Right? We want to reach the mother because when we reach the mother then the mother influences the home. And if you can win the mother then you win the husband and you win the children because God has an opportunity.

He gets in the door of the home. Some societies are very patriarchal. That is the father is the head of the home and he's the head of society. So there you reach the father and when you reach the father then you reach the home.

We see it played out in the book of Acts when the Philippian jailer is there. Remember when Paul and Silas are in prison about the midnight hour they were singing and praising God because of the chains. And as they were praising God when they were awaiting their execution God showed up and shook the prison walls and the walls fell down.

[ 35 : 50 ] The Philippian jailer runs out and is going to take his life because everybody's escaped. Paul says don't hurt yourself. This is the most amazing this is the most miraculous thing. The miracle wasn't that the walls fell down. The miracle is what happened when the walls fell down.

Paul says don't hurt yourself for we are all here. That is everybody that was in prison stayed there. That doesn't make any sense to me. But God did it. He kept them there so that the Philippian jailer could say I need to know about this Jesus you preach.

And when they talked to him about Jesus the Bible tells us he came to Christ he was baptized and then we read and his whole household. The reason his whole household was baptized is because the Philippian jailer came to Christ and God had an opportunity to reach the home because the influence of the man in the home began to reach down to his wife and to his children and to everybody else.

And that's what Paul is declaring here. You have the opportunity the promise in marriage is live out your faith and it gives God the opportunity to rule in the home.

Because the divine position on marriage is that when God has called us to it we are to stay through it. There's the provisions that marriage gives us to fulfill our desires and needs.

[ 37 : 00 ] There's the permanence that God expects marriage to hold. And then there's the promise that in marriage the faith of one individual changes the whole circumstances.

Paul says it's good for a man not to touch a woman but it's good to be married as well to each as God has called them because God has provided a great calling and gifting in marriage.

Let's pray. Lord we thank you for this day. We thank you for your faithfulness to us. We thank you for your word and the promises it contains.

Lord we pray that as we respond to it that you would give us hearts and minds of obedience that we would desire to live it out for your glory. May our homes look different because of our faith in Jesus Christ.

Lord may you walk with us in all of our mountaintops and walk close to us in our valleys.  
We ask it all in Jesus name. Amen.

[ 38 : 03 ] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.