"Remaining Married through Thick & Thin"

I Corinthians 7:10-17

6-11-2023

Introduction:

*** Accept God's will for the life of your marriage!**

I. Observe what <u>Jesus</u> taught about <u>REMAINING MARRIED (IN GENERAL)</u> (v.10-11)

A. Do not <u>Depart</u> (v.10)

B. Do not <u>Divorce</u> (v.11)
[If you do separate, remain unmarried so reconciliation is possible - v.11]

II. Observe what <u>Paul</u> taught about <u>REMAINING MARRIED IN A MIXED MARRIAGE</u> (a believer & non-believer) (v.12-17)

A. If your unbelieving spouse <u>desires</u> you, REMAIN FAITHFULLY MARRIED (v.12-14)

Two reasons to stay married to an unbelieving spouse:

1. Do it for the <u>unbeliever's</u> sake (v.14a)

2. Do it for the <u>children's</u> sake (v.14b)

B. If your unbelieving spouse <u>deserts</u> you, ALLOW FREEDOM TO LEAVE (v.15-17)

Why "let him/her depart"?

1. You are not under <u>"bondage"</u> if he/she leaves you (v.15)

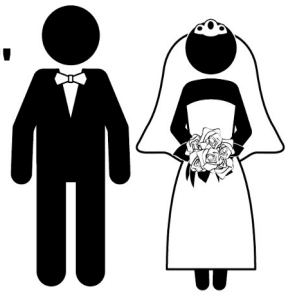
2. You are not sure if you can <u>save</u> your spouse (v.16)

3. You need to put the situation in <u>God's hands</u> and <u>trust</u> Him (v.17)

"Remaining Married through Thick & Thin"

I Corinthians 7:10-17

6-11-2023



Introduction:

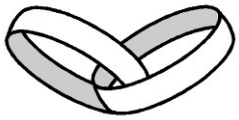
*** Accept God's will for the life of your marriage!**

I. Observe what _____ taught about <u>REMAINING MARRIED (IN GENERAL)</u> (v.10-11)

A. Do not _____(v.10)

B. Do not _____ (v.11)
[If you do separate, remain unmarried so reconciliation is possible - v.11]

II. Observe what _____ taught about <u>REMAINING MARRIED IN A_____MARRIAGE</u> (a believer & non-believer) (v.12-17)



A. If your unbelieving spouse _____ you,
_____ (v.12-14)

Two reasons to stay married to an unbelieving spouse:

1. Do it for the _____ sake (v.14a)

2. Do it for the _____ sake (v.14b)

B. If your unbelieving spouse _____ you,
_____ (v.15-17)

Why "let him/her depart"?

1. You are not under "_____" if he/she leaves you (v.15)

2. You are not sure if you can _____ your spouse (v.16)

3. You need to put the situation in _____ and _____ Him (v.17)

"Remaining Married through Thick & Thin"

I Corinthians 7:10-17

6-11-2023

Introduction:

In marriage:
"The two become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24)

God joins, and man is not to separate (Mt. 19:5-6)

Divorce occurs because of a person's *"hardness of heart"* (V. 7-8)

God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16)

Marriage is for "keeps"! It is to be "wedlock" - a wedding that is locked for life!

*** Accept God's will for the life of your marriage!**

I. Observe what <u>Jesus</u> taught about <u>REMAINING MARRIED (IN GENERAL)</u> (v.10-11)

V. 10

"Command" -Specific orders or instructions (not optional, but obligatory)

"Yet not I, but the Lord" = Paul, here, does not give new revelation, but rather repeats the Lord Jesus' teaching about the matter of divorce (Mt. 5:32, 19:9; Mk. 10:11, 12; Lk. 16:18).

Interestingly, Paul interpreted Christ as holding to a <u>no divorce</u> position without exceptions or justifiable excuses.

The law of marriage is for life (cp. v. 39).

A. Do not <u>Depart</u> (v.10)

"Let not the wife depart" - The wife is not to be separated from her husband. A married woman should not seek separation. She, by God's grace, should be content with her marital status.

--Work on problems, yes;
--pray about problems, yes;
--get Godly counsel, yes;
--run from problems - NO!

B. Do not Divorce (v.11)

[If you do separate, remain unmarried so reconciliation is possible - v.11]

"If she depart" - Separation, not divorce, due to circumstances where separation might have occurred (EX: instances of wife beating (physical abuse); or where the life of the wife or the children were in jeopardy).

"Remain unmarried" - Why? So that reconciliation remains possible (once a partner remarried, the Mosaic Law forbids that their first marriage be reconciled because a defilement occurred and reconciliation at this point is considered an abomination to God (Dt. 24:4).

The "remaining unmarried" implied a state of celibate living (whereby boyfriends and fornication are not options).

"Reconciled" - This word is a command (reconciliation is God's will; not optional but an obligation).

This word is a passive imperative (ultimately, God must bring about the reconciliation). Also implicit in the passive voice, is the husband's desire to be reconciled. Reconciliation must be desired by both husband and wife for it to be successful.

"Reconciled" - To be brought back into a restored relationship.

God has always been in the "restoring business."

The world's answer is "move on"; God's answer is "mend up." The world's answer is to abandon the problem; God's answer is to resolve the problem. This is true of any relationship where people have obligations to each other, whether in families, churches, friendships, etc.

"Put away" - A different word than *"depart."* This word means to "leave" or to "forsake." It refers to abandonment; can mean to send away or divorce. A husband must never abandon his wife (like so many irresponsible husbands do today).

II. Observe what Paul taught about REMAINING MARRIED IN A MIXED MARRIAGE (a believer & non-believer) (v.12-17)

V. 12

"To the rest" - To scenarios other than the ones Jesus directly addressed while He walked on the earth.

Paul, writing under inspiration, now addresses other marital questions believers at Corinth may have had.

Whereas v. 10-11 speak of marriage of two people in general, Paul now speaks to mixed marriages: believer and non-believer.

Unequal yokes should never occur to begin with (II Cor. 6:14).

But what happens if one did occur? Or what if two unsaved people marry and the husband becomes saved? Wouldn't he be better off ridding himself of his unbelieving wife so he could remarry a Christian woman and serve God more effectively? NO!

A Christian should never marry an unbeliever (SEE: 7:39; II Cor. 6:14).

A. If your unbelieving spouse desires you, REMAIN FAITHFULLY MARRIED (v.12-14)

V. 12

If the unsaved (non-Christian) wife consents (agrees) to live with him (and remain his spouse), he has no right to leave her. He is wrong to divorce her.

Even if she is not pleased to remain married to the believing man, he still must not pursue the divorce; but if that is her choice, let her do as she wishes (v. 15).

V. 13

Now Paul turns the tables and says that the same principle of v. 12 applies to the believing wife as well.

Usually (it has been my observation), there are more believing wives with unbelieving husbands than believing husbands with unbelieving wives. So this principle is vitally important for saved wives.

NOTE: I Peter 3:1-2 - *"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."*

V. 14

God is not necessarily speaking of *"sanctification"* in the sense of saving the unsaved spouse, but in the sense of an umbrella of protection and blessing being on that person because they are in the presence of some "property" of God!

(The wisest friends to pick are God's people who walk with God; the best employee is a Christian.)

It isn't the saved spouse who actively does the sanctifying; it is God who sanctifies by the presence of the believer in the home.

The Bible is filled with examples of God's blessing falling upon people due to the presence of His children. Example:

*God would not destroy Sodom because of the presence of Lot.

*God blessed Potiphar's house because of the presence of Joseph (Gen. 39:5)

*God blessed the house of Obed-Edom because of the presence of the Ark of God in his home (II Sam. 6:11-12).

*God blessed the home of the widow and son at Zarephath who took care of Elijah (I Kings 17:10ff).

*God spared the lives of those in the midst of a storm at sea because of Paul's presence (Acts 27:31).

Paul gives two practical reasons why it is beneficial for a saved spouse to remain married to an unsaved spouse.

1) Because God sanctifies the unsaved spouse because of the presence of the believer in the home

2) God sanctifies the children because of the presence of a saved spouse in the home

Two reasons to stay married to an unbelieving spouse:

1. Do it for the <u>unbeliever's</u> sake (v.14a)

   The word ***"holy"*** is the same word as *"sanctified"* and means to be set apart.

   How is the unbeliever sanctified? He/she is set apart by God for:

   1) <u>Conviction</u> (the Holy Spirit through the believer's life is a source of conviction)

   2) <u>Protection</u> (God often protects people because of their relationship to His children)

   3) <u>Provision</u> (God often provides blessings to unbelievers because they share in the "showers of blessings" which rain on His children)

2. Do it for the <u>children's</u> sake (v.14b)

   "Your children" - If a couple cannot think of any other reason why they should remain together, it should be for the <u>children's</u> sake.

   Children need a father and mother. The greatest victims of a divorce are children.

   "Unclean" - If a believing spouse abandons his/her family, the children, who were set apart by the presence of that believer, will face the social and emotional problems that result from a split-up.

   Divorce has been a primary contributor to:

   --child insecurities
   --child delinquency (anger, bitterness)
   --teen-age rebellion
   --re-enactment of the same behavior (when the children marry)

What are the tragic effects of divorce upon the COUPLE?

1. The divorce usually ends up causing unresolved bitterness, loneliness, and insecurities.

2. If the couple has any conscience at all, the divorce results in guilt, emotional torment, and sorrow.

3. The remarriages that occur after divorce usually adopt the "baggage," unresolved conflicts, and problems of the previous marriage(s).

4. Most who fail in their first marriage fail in their second (the divorce rate for second marriages is higher than first marriages).

What are the tragic effects of divorce upon the CHILDREN?

1. Children become the major victims of the emotional scars divorce brings.

   --Innocently caught in the cross-fire of family feuds, the children often blame themselves.

   --They are often forced to side with one of the parents (usually the one who has major custody).

   --They will never have an example (model) of God's ideal for the family ("Preliminary data indicate that children of divorce, particularly women, have a higher chance of getting divorced themselves than children of intact families) (Newsweek, Jan. 13, 1992, p. 49).

   --Family closeness is hurt (in-laws and grandparent relationships are affected).

2. Divorce teaches children that one's vows, promises, or covenants are not binding.

3. Divorce teaches children that running from a problem is the answer to solving it.

4. Divorce teaches children that Mommy or Daddy are more concerned about themselves (what they want; what makes them happy) than they are concerned for the children and the effect the divorce will have on them. [What a selfish society we live in!]

B. If your unbelieving spouse deserts you, ALLOW FREEDOM TO LEAVE (v.15-17)

V. 15

On your end, you are bound to your spouse as long as he/she lives (Rom. 7:2 - *"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband."*).

A Christian should never initiate a divorce. There are absolutely NO justifiable reasons to do so.

If the unbeliever departs, you can pray but there is nothing else you can do. You can't buy chains and lock the person to your home; you can't force a spouse against his/her will to remain.

You have no direct control over what your unsaved spouse will do. You can't control that. You just need to do your part, perform your role Biblically.

A believer is never justified to depart from his/her spouse. However, an unbeliever, who is not committed to God's plan for permanency in marriage, may depart.

What should the believer do in such a case? Should he fight it? Contest it? Take it to court? Manipulate to keep the spouse?

***"Let him depart"* =** Allow him to separate.

If the unbeliever relentlessly wants "out," let him/her leave.

Don't contest the divorce. Don't fight to keep him/her. Put the matter in God's hands and let Him do what He is going to allow.

Why "let him/her depart"?

1. You are not under "bondage" if he/she leaves you (v.15)

   "Bondage" - (*douloo)* not the same Greek word as "bound" (*deo)* in verse 27.

   "Douloo" = to enslave; to be a slave; to be in bondage as a servant.

   "Deo" (v. 27) - means to bind with chains, to be tied together (in the bonds of marriage).

   What is the believer released from?

   Is the believer released to remarry?
   OR
   *Is the believer released from all attempts to keep the marriage together?

A believer should not deny or abandon his faith in order to keep the marriage alive (many unsaved spouses will put the pressure on you to choose: God or me).

A believer is a slave to Christ, not to a spouse who wants to hit the road.

"God hath called us to peace" - Don't war with a spouse who wants to depart. God does not intend for His children to lose heart and blood, sweat, and tears over a partner whose heart is so hardened that they are quitting on God by quitting on His institution of life-long marriage.

Fighting, turmoil, bickering, frustration disrupt the harmony and peace God wants His children to have (MacArthur, p. 168).

Romans 12:18 - *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."*

[Note: Don't scheme to make life miserable so your unbelieving spouse will want to leave (What a wicked thought).]

2. You are not sure if you can save your spouse (v.16)

The ***"saving"*** in verse 16 is not soteriological (not the salvation of his/her soul; only God can do this). The saving in view is the salvation of your marriage with a spouse who is determined that he/she wants to terminate it.

Don't go to bizarre extremes to keep a person in your life. Reason: You don't know if you (by any behavior modifications) will be able to save your marriage.

3. You need to put the situation in God's hands and trust Him (v.17)

If God gave you a wife, stick with her; if God gave you a husband, stick with him.

If that spouse leaves you, don't leave God in order to save your marriage. Rather, entrust the person in God's hands and let Him deal with him/her as He sovereignly chooses.

Take what God gives you. If He so chooses, He alone can change the hardened heart of a spouse who wants to go his/her own selfish way. If He chooses not to soften their heart, you take whatever happens as God's will for you. It is refreshing to rest in the will of God.

Conclusion:

How to Avoid a Tragic Divorce

1. Don't rush into a marriage to begin with. Make sure before you marry that your spouse is saved and loves the Lord.

2. Be convicted that God says: *Marriage is for life.* (Rom. 7:1ff) [Even though you think you married the wrong person at the wrong time for the wrong reasons, you are married and it is right to remain true to your commitment. One wrong does not justify another wrong.]

3. Do not allow conflicts to go unresolved.
   --Practice forgiveness
   --Don't go to bed angry
   --Talk! Learn to communicate. *"Speak the truth in love."*
   --Seek Godly advice.
   --Learn to say the words: "I love you." "I was wrong." "Please forgive me"

4. Meet your mate's needs.
   --physically --emotionally --sexually (I Cor. 7:1ff)
   [Note: Beware of an over-demanding, time-consuming vocation. You need to spend time together.]

5. Guard yourself against anything you might read, hear, or see that causes discontentment (Beware of Satan's attempts to breed covetousness). Don't compare your wife or husband to any other wife or husband to make a point (Example: "Mary's husband faithfully mows the grass every Saturday. Why can't you?"). God didn't give you to _____; He gave you your husband or wife, so you should be grateful, and quit looking at the greener grass at someone else's home!

6. Be faithful to your spouse (Illicit sex [adulterous affairs] pulls down and destroys a couple's trust and respect for each other).

7. Fulfill your God-given roles in the marriage.

8. Cultivate a close walk with Christ as a couple. *"A family that prays together, stays together."* Sincere prayer is the surest way to release Satan's strangle-hold on your marriage.

9. Realize that love is not a "feeling" or a "romantic emotion" but it is action based on a commitment! In fact, "love" is a commitment (i.e. a decision to be loyal to your responsibility).

10. Consider the word "divorce" the dirtiest word in the English language. It should never be considered as even a remote possibility!

Remember: **Marriage is ultimately a picture of Christ's relationship with His bride; and He will never leave her!**