"Spiritual Advice for Marriage"

I Corinthians 7:36-40

7-9-2023

INTRODUCTION:

***Observe some implicit principles that will get you ready for a blessed marriage!**

I. Be a <u>VIRGIN</u> Until Marriage (implied in verses 36-37)

II. Honor <u>PARENTAL AUTHORITY</u> Before Marriage (implied in verses 36-38)

Two clearly taught principles:

A. An unmarried woman is under the authority of her father

B. An unmarried couple should seek their parents' blessing on their marriage

III. Be <u>COMMITTED</u> to Your Marriage <u>FOR LIFE</u> (v. 39)

IV. Marry Only a <u>CHRISTIAN</u> who Loves the Lord (v. 39b)

V. Be <u>HAPPY</u> Being Single (v. 40)
(Remain content with singleness until God alters your marital status)

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This whole chapter answers the question: "Should I marry or not?"

Verses 25-38 deal specifically with virgins and whether or not they should remain unmarried, especially in light of the *"present distress"* (v. 26) they were facing.

V. 36

A general interpretation of verses 36-38:

Who is the ***"man"*** spoken about in verses 36-38?

Some say Paul is addressing the virgin's fiance, who is engaged (betrothed) to her (NIV interpretation).

A better view is that Paul is addressing the father of a virgin daughter (KJV, NASV).

Reasons:

1) The one referred to has authority (exousia – v.37) over the virgin (a fiance has none).

2) The third person plural passive imperative ***"Let them marry"*** indicates that Paul is speaking to someone outside of the couple.

3) ***"Giveth . . . in marriage"*** - (*gamizon)* - pres. act. participle. "Verbs with this ending are generally causative ('to give in marriage')." (Reinecker, p. 410).

4) The widow can marry *"whom she will"* (v. 39); this is an evident contrast to the will of her father (v. 37), who arranged her first marriage.

5) The custom of Paul's day was arranged marriages. The girl was under the authority of her dad until he gave her to the authority of another man in marriage. Even today we have a trace of this custom in America, as the preacher says at the wedding altar, "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?" "I do" or "Her mother and I" Most marriage sin foreign countries today are either arranged or have a heavy parental involvement.

> "In Jewish culture, parents, and particularly fathers, had long had a dominant role in deciding whom their children would marry. The same general custom prevailed in many ancient societies, including that of Rome. Some historians credit Rome's decline in part to the weakening of the family caused by loss of parental control in arranging marriages. In New Testament times the arranged marriage, especially for young people, was the norm." (MacArthur, p. 185).

"In light of the extant teaching about the advantages of singleness, some of the fathers of Corinth apparently had dedicated their young daughters to the Lord as permanent virgins" (MacArthur, p. 185) (EX: Jepthah's daughter)

If the father, for whatever reason, senses that he is not doing what is best in her self interest by keeping his daughter unmarried, he should give her away in holy matrimony.

"flower" – beyond the bloom or prime of life; 20 years old and up (Plato);
To pass the stage of full development (physical maturity; adulthood).
It is sad to see that in certain cultures and in certain parts of the world child brides forced into marriage. This is <u>not</u> Biblical.

V. 37

Paul basically says that a father who has decided (for whatever reasons) that he should keep his daughter unmarried *"<u>doeth well</u>."*

V. 38

Giving a daughter in marriage in not a difference of right or wrong, but a difference of "good" (*"well")* and "better." In some situations, it is *"better"* not to marry. In this context, the "present distress" spoken of in verse 26, is perhaps a valid reason to not give away a daughter in marriage at such a time of crisis. Such added external pressure (thlipsis – verse 28) upon the marriage would give an extra dose of stress on the relationship (this is why Paul said with confidence, "such shall have trouble in the flesh" v.28).

***Observe some implicit principles that will get you ready for a blessed marriage!**

I. Be a <u>VIRGIN</u> Until Marriage (implied in verses 36-37)

"Virgin" *(parthenon)* - In context, an unmarried woman who has not had sexual relations (EX: the Virgin Mary).

The benefits of being a virgin until marriage:

1. You have a clean conscience (free from guilt)
2. You avoid the trap of feeling obligated to marry the one you had sex with
3. You look forward with greater anticipation to the consummation of your marriage
4. You earn the respect of your future spouse (and others)
5. You avoid illegitimate pregnancy
6. You avoid sexually-transmitted diseases
7. You obey God and honor His plan for marriage

II. Honor PARENTAL AUTHORITY Before Marriage (implied in verses 36-38)

Two clearly taught principles:

A. An unmarried woman is under the authority of her father

Throughout the Bible, an unmarried woman was under the authority of her father until he gave her away in marriage.

EX: Rebekah to her father Bethuel (Gen. 24:24, 50-51)
Rachel to her father Laban (Gen. 29:21)

Another evidence of the authority of a father over his daughter is seen in Num. 30:3ff, in which a father could invalidate a vow she made as long as she lived in his house.

Our society today knows very little about he issue of parental authority.

More and more, it's not the parents who run the home, it's the kids.

Disobedience to parental authority is a mark of the "*last days."* (II Tim. 3:2)

It was always God's design that a woman be provided for and protected; she should not have to fend for herself. She was always to be under the care of either her dad or her husband.

All of life is structured around a "chain of responsibility" (cp. Mt. 8:10).

Three basic divinely established institutions to provide structure (order) and safety (protection) to society:

1) The Home (I Cor. 7:2ff; Eph. 5:22-6:4)
2) The Government(Rom. 13:1-f)
3) The Church (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; I Peter 5:1-5)

These institutions involve submission and authority.

An "AUTHORITY" is someone with a position of oversight.

The position of authority is ultimately given by God (Rom.13:1).

This position of authority is one of service (an "authority" is a servant-Rom.13:4))

This position of authority is to provide leadership, training, and/or protection for the well being of the one(s) served.

The one who holds such a position of authority is responsible to God and will answer to God (cp. Heb.13:17).

The one who is expected to submit to the authority will also be accountable to God for how he/she responded to the authority.

Respect for parents is so serious that God told Moses:

*"He who **strikes** **(physical disrespect)** his father or his mother shall surely be put to death";*
*and "He who **curses** **(verbal disrespect)** his father or his mother shall surely be put to death"* (Ex. 21:15, 17; cp. Lev. 20:9; Proverbs 30:11-f; See: Deut.21:18-21).

Proverbs 20:20 - *"Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness"* (ie. his life will be snuffed out)

If a girl will not submit to her father's authority, neither will she submit to her husband's.

Young people, if you are not submitted to your parent's authority, it is because you are not submitted to God! (Eph. 6:1-2)

B. An unmarried couple should seek their parents' blessing on their marriage

Arranged marriages last longer.

Today with our present form of dating, people are almost preconditioned for divorce before they are even married. Why?

He dates someone, finds he doesn't like her, so he dumps her.
He dates someone else, finds he doesn't like her, so he dumps her.
On and on it goes until he marries, then finds he doesn't like her, so he is tempted to continue the pattern he followed before marriage.

Children should seek their parent's blessing on their marriage. If either set of parents are opposed to it, you should consider their reasons why.

What procedure should Christian girls follow in a courtship relationship?

1) Remember you are under the authority of your father until you marry (I Cor. 7:36-38).

2) Before starting to date, meet with your father (whether or not he is a Christian) and share with him your goals for marriage: that yours will be the kind of marriage God wants, and thus be the happiest possible.

3) Agree that any boy who wants to date you must first ask your father for permission. This simply requires saying, "I am honored that you have asked, but before I can give you an answer, you will have to ask my father." This takes all the pressure off the girl and creates these benefits:

   a) It makes the boy appreciate you more because what is easily gotten is not usually appreciated.

   b) It decreases the temptation of the boy to mistreat you. If he thinks you are completely on your own, it increases the risk that he will try something.

   c) It proves to the boy that your father loves you.

   d) It gives your father a chance to discern the boy's intentions. A woman is more affected by actions than by motives, but a man discerns first the motive.

   e) It places the boy under your father's counsel, which is exactly where he should be if the relationship grows into marriage.

4) Agree that anytime a fellow starts talking to you about marriage you will say, "If you are thinking about marriage, you had better talk to my father." This is tremendously important because so often talk about marriage is just camouflaged lust.

Interracial marriage is a matter which should be entirely left up to the
<u>parents</u> (and the couple).

How can young people know who is the right one for marriage? What advice can we offer to our children/grandchildren etc.?

God's principles for courtship:

a. Be submitted and obedient to the advice and discretion of your parents (Eph. 6:1-2).

b. Determine that you will court only Christians (I Cor. 7:39; II Cor. 6:14-18).
God forbids the intermarriage of a believer with a non-believer (SEE: Gen. 24:3-4, 28:1-2; Ex. 34:12-16; Deut. 7:3-4; Ezra 9:10-12; Neb. 10:30).

c. Determine that you will strive to be the right one, rather than focusing on meeting the "right one" (Rom. 12:1-2).

d. Be busy doing the general will of God, and He will guide you in the specifics of His will (Phil. 2:12-13; Prov. 3:5-6).

e. Purpose in your heart that you will not defile yourself or defraud the one you court (I Cor. 7:1-2; I Th. 4:6).

f. Decide that the one you marry must enhance your ministry, not diminish or destroy it (Is she a "helpmeet" [Gen. 2:18] or a hindrance?).

g. Yield your plans to God's will in the vital area of courtship and marriage (desire His will above all else) (Mt. 6:33).

h. Wait for God's timing (Eccl. 3:1). Patience is a key virtue. It requires absolute trust in God and His timing.

i. Avoid the "steady" relationship until the time is right.
(Have several friends and let God bring the right one alone in His Time;
Song of Solomon 2:7 - I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please. The same statement is made in 3:5.

Hibernate in this area of your life until God is pleased to awaken your love for the one of His choosing.

j. Avoid situations and circumstances that might involve temptations and trouble (don't be alone in secluded places).

K. Avoid physical involvement (lust can't wait until marriage; but true love can).

III. Be <u>COMMITTED</u> to Your Marriage <u>FOR LIFE</u> (v. 39)

Marriage is not a:
- Temporary arrangement
- Trial and error test

Marriage is a contract for life!

***"Bound"* =** to permanently tie together; to bind as with chains.

See Romans 7:2

"Is bound" = has been bound and still is (perfect, passive).

Marriage is a <u>permanent</u> bond. That is why it is called "wed<u>lock</u>." The problem today is that many are "manufacturing keys" to unlock that which is to be kept locked and secured.

"Bound by the Law" = It is God's Law (established before the Mosaic Law) that binds two (male and female) into one (Gen. 2:24).

NOTE: God says: "We are bound to our spouse <u>by Law</u>; He does <u>not</u> say "by love." "Falling out of love" is not a justifiable reason for divorce.

"If the husband be dead" = if the husband should happen to be die (by means of a natural course of events, not by the wife killing him off!!!).

"Loosed" = annulled, nullified, or discharged; away from the obligation of God's Law of matrimony.

The only way out of marriage is death! It is "till death do we part" Marriage is for keeps!

In God's Word, the Bible, -

The permanence of marriage is evidenced by:

1.The Bonding of "WEDLOCK" (Gen. 2:24)
(Marriage is an inseparable union)

a.The Cleaving of Marriage (v. 24a)
b.The Oneness of Marriage (v. 24b)
c."Till death do we part" (Romans 7:2-3)

2.The Meaning of a "COVENANT" (Malachi 2:14)
(Marriage is a Covenant)

--Definition of a "Covenant"

--Examples of "Covenants" in the Bible
a).Gen. 15:6-18 - Abrahamic Covenant (cp. Jer. 34:18-19)
b).Matt. 26:28 - The New Covenant

a.The marriage covenant is an irrevocable Vow
Observe the nature of vows:
1).Numbers 30:2 - Your words are extremely important
2).Deuteronomy 23:21 - God holds you accountable
3).Example: Jephthah's vow - Judges 11:30-39

b.The marriage covenant is an unconditional Vow
"For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer"

3.Christ's Relationship to His BRIDE (Eph. 5:22-32)
(Jesus will never forsake His wife, the Church)

a. The Church is one with Christ (Eph. 5:30; I Cor. 6:17)
b. The Church is the "Bride of Christ" (Rev. 19:7-9)
c. The Church has the promise of eternal security
(Mt. 16:18; Jn. 10:28-29; Titus 1:2; Heb. 13:5)

4. God's Attitude about DIVORCE (Malachi 2:16)
(God hates divorce)

a. "He may not put her away all his days"
(Deut. 22:19, 29)

Suppose you were to pursue a divorce and you received a letter in the mail. It read: "I hate divorce. Signed, Jehovah God"

"At liberty" - free. The only specifically stated justifiable reason for remarriage given in Scripture is in the case of the death of the spouse (cp. Rom. 7:2).

IV. Marry Only a <u>CHRISTIAN</u> who Loves the Lord (v. 39b)

Determine that you will date only <u>Christians</u> (I Cor. 7:39; II Cor. 6:14-18).

God forbids the intermarriage of a believer with a non-believer (SEE: Gen. 24:3-4, 28:1-2; Ex. 34:12-16; Deut. 7:3-4; Ezra 9:10-12; Neb. 10:30).

Examples of disasters caused by unequal yokes in marriage:

1) The sons of God married good-looking but godless daughters of men (Gen. 6:2).
2) Esau married two Hittite wives (Gen. 26:34-35).
3) Samson became betrothed to a Philistine woman (Jud. 14).
4) Solomon married heathen women (Neh. 13:26).

V. Be <u>HAPPY</u> Being Single (v. 40)

(Remain content with singleness until God alters your marital status)

Paul gives <u>not</u> a <u>command</u>, but a <u>suggestion</u> (good advice).

"I think also that I have the Spirit of God" - "With a touch of sarcasm he was saying that he, too, had access to the leading of the Holy Spirit -- a claim apparently made both by the group that advocated celibacy only and by the group that advocated marriage only." (MacArthur, p. 186).

The bottom line: Let God lead in this very important part of your life. Be content in the situation you are in and don't independently pursue a change. Let the Lord direct your steps. Trust HIM in everything (Proverbs 3:5-6)