

Paying Debts and Accepting Responsibility

Introductory Matters

The specific matter

We will be talking about intimacy in marriage. We will keep it discreet. We will use the word intimacy throughout to describe the matters under discussion. There might be a few smirks from some silly young people, but we'll endure all that.

I actually thought of titling this: "The Gospel and the Bedroom" but thought better of it

This is needed.

All of God's good gifts are distorted and abused by sin and sinful people. Sleep is a good gift from God, but it can be abused. Food is a good gift from God, but it too can be abused. So is intimacy in any form.

God's people are woefully ignorant of what the Bible says.

There is bitterness and hurt among many believing spouses about this matter. Some believing spouses have decided on some unbiblical compromises to this matter.

Mankind in his depravity has distorted this and misused it, and many believers have as well.

The general introduction

Paul's letter is in response to two sources of information he received.

First, the report from Chloe's household, 1:11

Second, their letter to him, 7:1

The second source, their letter, poses interpretive challenges

We do not know all that it said.

Like listening in to someone else's phone conversation where you don't know what the other person is saying.

Chapter 7 is clearly a response to specific matters that were broached in their letter to him.

This material is not a general teaching matter,

It is a specific response to matters they raised which we don't totally understand.

Why did he say that? Because we don't know specifically what was asked.

Correcting matters of intimacy

It is clear that sexual immorality was a problem in the church of Corinth, 6:12-20, note especially 6:18a

The principle of 6:19-20 reaches backwards and presents a platform or foundation for further discussion, see v 2,5

The 1 Cor 7:1-5 discussion, 7:1

“It is good for a man not to touch a woman.”

I very much prefer the alternative reading of NIV.

This refers to physical intimacy on any level

This is not Paul’s teaching. It is their erroneous statement to him from their letter. Perhaps best put in quotation marks. What I just quoted from your letter is not right.

Some at Corinth thought that because of rampant sexual immorality (6:12-20), that the best way to deal with it was total abstinence in EVERY SITUATION.

A blanket rule is hardly ever best.

There are temptations on the internet, therefore, never use the internet.

Christianity tends to make rules rather than teach principles. 1 Tim 4:1-6

Physical intimacy has been abused over the centuries in one of two ways: sinful indulgence or complete abstinence.

Paul’s 6:19-20 based response to their erroneous statement.

The “what” part of the answer, 7:2

Because there is so much immorality each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

It is clear this portion refers to married couples.

Indecently, if he wanted to open the door for homosexual relationships, he could have done so here. He avoids that here.

“To have” is a figure of speech for intimacy. It is not about getting married, it is about intimacy in marriage.

Intimacy ought to be an ongoing part of every marriage because of 6:19-20

The “why” part of the answer, 7:3-4

The husband should fulfill his obligations to his wife, and likewise the wife to the husband, 7:3

Marriage brings this obligation, this debt, to both partners. Each is indebted to the other. Marriage is a “one flesh” matter. “One flesh” is broader than intimacy, but includes it.

Only in marriage is this debt incurred.

Outside of marriage, there is no sexual activity

This is not about getting! This is about giving! It is not about being fulfilled, it is about fulfilling the other.

It is about giving as Christ Gave

Sacrificially, firstly, fully, freely

It is not about self-gratification in any form.

Any kind of act that is done for self-gratification is 100% wrong!

Manipulation and debased acts are wrong. Giving in order to get is wrong.

One must seek to gratify and satisfy his/her spouse.

This is for both husbands and wives!

First, indebtedness

This is not some burdensome, onerous, ball and chain debt.

It should be about wanting to give, wanting to fulfill my obligations, not having to.

Your spouse has greater claim on your body than you do (when it comes to this matter), 7:4.

Second, responsibility

In salvation, we are bought with a price, our bodies belong to God.

In marriage, each has given themselves to their spouses.

This is a grace

2 Cor 8:8

Grace teaches me that my money is not mine. I have a responsibility with my money to give it to God honoring purposes.

It is God's, and I will find my deepest joys in using it for God's glory, not my own personal benefit.

So to with this “grace of intimacy.”

2 Cor 9:6-12

God loves a cheerful giver

Do not deprive each other, 7:5a

Do not renege on a debt

The language here states that for various reasons some were reneging on this debt. He says, “**STOP IT.**”

The Gospel reaches into the bedroom

If 6:19-20 is true of you, everything you do with your body must bring honor glory to God

1 Cor 10:31

Bitterness between spouses over this issue.

Husbands and wives in Bible-believing churches like ours are frustrated and lack marital harmony over this issue.

Some have learned solutions to this matter that are not biblical.

Spouses who are married to unbelieving spouses or to spouses who are not living for the Lord, more frequently than you'd believe, this matter is a contributing wedge in the equation.

Many will need to repent!

Is there ever an exception to this, 7:5b?

If you mutually agree

Imagine that outside of the bedroom, couples talk about intimacy.

If it is only a short time

If you will resume intimacy immediately after the agreed-upon time period is up.

If you do not, Satan may tempt you to do that which you ought not to do.

Intimacy is not something your spouse earns. It is not wages he/she earns for "good behavior."

It is something joyfully owed to your spouse in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Many responses

But we have problems

Do whatever it takes to fix them

Bitterness, resentment, coldness, fear, flab, fatigue

Stop with excuses common to both husband and wife

Much bitterness and hurt in Christian homes exists over this matter... it hurts relationships... it hurts the church

God calls on you to joyfully and willingly fulfill your duty to your spouse

But you don't know my spouse

God does, and his command is clear

God's command is his enablement

Do not focus on your spouses' failures. Focus upon your responsibilities to the glory of God.

Not: Help my spouse to get this

But help me to live out the reality of a transformed life that has been purchased by God for his glory.

So what?

Much more could be said

See *Biblical Principles of Sex* by Dr. Robert D. Smith.

Inexpensive, non-embarrassing, available from www.timelesstexts.com

This is about 1 Cor 6:19-20...it is about the **Gospel**

Almost all of us who are married have sinned in this matter at one time or another. God calls on you to change in this Gospel oriented matter.

God is good to give us instructions in this matter

For married people

For those contemplating marriage in the future.

Someone is saying, "This is crazy"

It is about the Lord Jesus Christ. He is lord of everything, Lord of my body and all of its desires.

If you struggle with this, perhaps it is because Christ is not your Lord.

You've considered yourself a church going person

You've considered yourself a religious person

But you've never in faith surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.