

Message #24

I Corinthians 7:1-5

You and I are living in a society that is sex-crazed. Sex is a subject that in some way interests everyone and in some people, it totally dominates their thinking lives.

- 1) Some have a view of sex that stems from their parents –often prudish and puritanical.
- 2) Some have a view of sex that stems from their own experience –often limited and bizarre.
- 3) Some have a view of sex that stems from movies or magazines –often wild and weird, sometimes unnatural and unemotional.
- 4) Some have a view of sex that stems from talk shows or psychologists –often academic and strange, often ludicrous and godless.

However, VERY FEW have a view of sex that stems from the Bible. The Bible IS NOT prudish when it comes to the subject of sex. The Bible does not lack counsel on the subject of sexual activity.

Corinth was a sex-crazed society. It featured the temple of Aphrodite, which was known world-wide for its immoral activity. Prostitutes were plentiful and, at the temple, live sex shows were the typical norm.

Apparently from **verse 1**, we can assume that the Corinthians had written Paul a series of questions they wanted him to answer. We may also assume that some of the questions had to do with sexuality. Instead of writing Ann Landers, Dr. Ruth or Dear Abby, the Corinthians wrote Paul.

SEXUAL INTIMACY IS A VALID REASON FOR A COUPLE TO GET MARRIED AND IT IS AN IMPORTANT ACTIVITY AFTER THE COUPLE IS MARRIED.

To deny the value and the importance of sex is to deny the Bible.

QUESTION #1 – The question of sex as it relates to being single. **7:1-2**

Point #1 - It IS NOT wrong to be single. **7:1**

When Paul says it is “good for a man not to touch a woman,” he uses a particular word for “good” (kalos), which denotes something that is ethically honorable and right. The word “touch” is a sexual word, which means to touch in such a way as to stir up or kindle a flame.

In other words, even though it IS NOT good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18), there is nothing wrong with being single. There is nothing wrong, in God’s estimation, with a man remaining single and refraining one’s self from any form of sexual arousal with a woman. It is okay to never marry.

Point #2 - It IS wrong to be single and sexually active. **7:2**

There is nothing wrong with being single as long as you can remain pure; however, if you discover that you have the normal sexual urges toward a member of the opposite sex, then that single person should marry.

It is perfectly acceptable and honorable to remain single and refrain from sexual activity; it is not acceptable or honorable to remain single and indulge in sexual activity. One of the legitimate, God-honoring, biblical motivations for getting married is sex. According to this text, sex is a valid, legitimate, biblical, God-honoring motivation for marriage. However, sexual activity before marriage is sexual immorality and it is not biblical, not legitimate and not God-honoring. In fact, in the church, sexual temptation may be a valid reason for marriage; but sexual immorality is a valid reason for excommunication (5:11).

One of the key matters presently being promoted in the school system among single students is the matter of “safe sex.” If the schools wanted to promote something that would line up with the Bible, they should promote “no sex” or “married sex.”

QUESTION #2 – The question of sex as it relates to being married. **7:3-5**

In my ministry as a pastor, there are certain things that I have seen which cause great problems in marriage: 1) Money; 2) Roles; 3) Relatives; 4) Sex.

Thought #1 - Sexual activity is a duty owed by each spouse. **7:3**

That word “duty” is a Greek word that refers to a debt which is owed. Sexual fulfillment is a debt the husband owes the wife and it is a debt the wife owes the husband.

People have lost cars, stereos and even houses because they refused to pay what was owed. Marriage is one of the most sacred institutions in the sight of God and there are people who have lost their spouse and their marriage because they refused to pay the sexual debt they owed.

Thought #2 - Sexual activity is not to be controlled by either spouse. **7:4**

The word “authority” speaks of a legal jurisdiction or authority. In other words, neither spouse has ANY biblical right to refuse sexual activity to the other mate.

Now how far should we take this? What if a spouse is sick or exhausted? I think the answer is found in the verb tense “does not have authority.” The Greek tense is present, meaning Paul has in mind a continual, habitual pattern of action. What Paul is saying is that neither spouse has the authority to continually and habitually deny or refuse the other spouse sexual activity. If a mate does, he/she is carnal, not spiritual and is not pleasing to God.

Thought #3 - Sexual activity is not to be deprived by either spouse.

If you have been depriving your mate, Paul's counsel is "stop" it. In fact, the imperative mood is used which means Paul commands believers to stop depriving their mates of sexual intimacy. Sexual activity is not an option for people who are married; it is obligatory and it has been commanded by Almighty God. The ONLY valid reason for refraining from sexual activity is because of intense prayer.

(Stipulation #1) - Sexual abstinence in marriage is to be by mutual consent. **7:5a**

(Stipulation #2) - Sexual abstinence in marriage is to be for spiritual purposes. **7:5b**

(Stipulation #3) - Sexual abstinence in marriage is to be for a limited time. **7:5c**

Abstinence is NEVER to be permanent.

Now why is sexual activity so important among married people? Why should there be a continual fulfillment in the context of marriage? Why should there not be long lapses of time between moments of sexual intimacy?

We get our answer at the end of **verse 5**, because of Satan. Satan knows that if there are long lapses between sexual activity he can "tempt" the mate into sexual infidelity. When Satan realizes there have been long lapses of time between intimate moments, he realizes the self-control level is low. You can be certain Satan is masterful in the arena of sex.

If you are married and you are withholding sexual activity from your mate, you are playing a dangerous sexual game of Russian roulette with your marriage and with Satan. If you refuse your mate, Satan and his forces will go after your mate. Satan is very skilled at luring and destroying people through sex.

Sex is a real powerful, wonderful, enjoyable aspect of life. It is about time that believers get a healthy, biblical perspective of sex and start living lives which please God, even in sexual matters.

How is your sex life? The way you answer that question really is a key to answering another question: how is your satanic life?