

every man has his gift from the Lord. It is a grace-gift. One is for celibacy and there is an aptitude for this (one after this manner) and the other is for marriage and there is an aptitude for this ("and another after that"). One must decide for himself which gift he has.

b. Personal. vv. 8,9. The "unmarried" are men for this is masculine. The widows are singled out because their case is different than widowers. Both are urged to stay as Paul in a single or unmarried state. But there is a legal and acceptable option. It focuses on the word "contain." This actually carries three thoughts: 1) possess in oneself. 2) power over oneself. 3) control oneself (middle voice). Hence, if one does not have continency (cf. v. 5) and this is assumed to be absolutely true (first class condition), then let a man get married and have done with it (aorist verb suggesting a once for all solution of his problem). This is a better course than the painful exercise of soul which is the alternative (present tense middle points to habitual personal problems).

Conclusion This is a technological age. Men are like machines, but God looks right down to the last single individual. He is concerned. First for their salvation (1 Cor. 15:1-10). Then He beggers one's imagination to point to His infinite love for a life of fulfillment and glory to His Name. How is your life ordered? Amen.

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS "Christian Marriage"

1 Cor. 7:1-9

Introduction

1. In this whole de-divinized world system we still dare to talk about "Christian" marriage. Technology has not altered the fact of the Word of God!

2. Paul has argued for the limitations of liberty for a believer (6:12-20). Fornication is absolutely and unequivocally to be avoided. It is with this same sin that Paul continues his writing.

3. Corinthians had asked questions of Paul and to these he now turns (cf. 7:1; 8:1; 11:1; 16:1 for the same formula). The one of this text concerns marriage. The point made is simple: God has a plan for every life. That intent of God is to be uncovered and experienced. Marriage is one of these possibilities. He speaks of marriage in the following ways:

1. Its PRINCIPLE vv. 1, 2.

Marriage may be considered in two basic relations:

a. With Goodness. v. 1. Just as soon as someone refers this verse to celibacy, it is argued that it is now for those who are holier than others. So RC church. The word "good" does not carry this connotation. It is better considered as "right" or "honourable." There is nothing wrong with celibacy as some apparently thought at Corinth, but on the other hand, it is not a holier position than marriage. It is honourable to be a celibate and the verb "touch" does not, therefore, refer to conduct within the marriage bond. Here is ample argument against pre-marital relations.

b. With sinfulness. v. 2. Admitting that celibacy is right does not militate against marriage per se. Indeed, this verse establishes the fact that there is a general necessity for marriage. Since the society is filled with numerous and varied temptations (so the plural for fornication), it is reasonable to have marriage. It is the Christian action in place of heathen liber-

tinism and Jewish polygamy. But the present tense of "have" shows that a continued and prolonged arrangement is to be made between persons. The different pronouns used with woman and man connote that the husband is the head and principal. Let no one take the initial verse (v. 1) without subsequently reading this present text. It stands also as a warning that God cannot countenance sinful acts no matter what society dictates.

2. Its PRACTICE vv. 3-5.

Marriage brings about personal responsibility. This is not an order of things for those who look lightly at the conditions. It is a holy estate! Mark these areas of consideration:

a. Individually, v. 3. The idea conveyed by the phrase "due benevolence" is the conjugal right. Use of the definite article "the" throughout the verse shows that one man and one woman are in view. There is an obvious mutual obligation into which each partner comes with marriage. On the one hand, the rigorous ascetic is wrong and on the other the blatant sensualist is also.

b. Physically, v. 4. With marriage comes a change in respect to one's person. Each party now alienates a portion of his personal independence. This may be the reason for the use of "good" in respect to celibacy for this independence is not forfeited there. The word "power" is one which suggests "authority" and in marriage a person does not have the disposal of his own body. Both husband and wife have the same rights. The Bible speaks boldly against dissoluteness, hence this text must be taken in line with the remainder of God's revelation.

c. Intimately, v. 5. The verb "defraud" notes that injustices may arise within the marriage relationship. They should not be! Should there be a deprivation of one partner with the other, sound rules are laid down:

1) Consent must be gained. The word used here means to have an "agreement." Both

must make a sound of agreement else the deprivation becomes a robbery.

2) Time must be specified. The separation is limited to a fixed period of time. Nothing is said here of any prolonged season. Such is outlawed.

3) Aim must be detailed. Just any reason is not valid. The verb "give oneself to fasting and prayer" is aorist and means leisure. Hence, one is to be punctual and pray with a leisure spirit about him. The married life has demands above celibacy (cf. v. 33), hence a period of special prayer may be required (cf. 1 Pet. 3:7).

In view of these regulations within marriage, it is important to realize that they rest upon sound intentions:

1) That there is renewal. The goal from the very beginning is a return to normal relationships.

2) That there is temptation. Satan is always looking for the smallest occasion to make one fall. The present tense for the verb "tempt" points to his habitual activity.

3) That there is incontinency. This word "incontinency" means "without control." When one is not the master of himself, he falls. Hence the strict rules. This word is only used here and Matt. 23:25 in N.T.

3. Its PROBLEMS vv. 6-9.

These problems are very specific and are clearly indicated by the apostle. Mark them:

a. Spiritual, vv. 6, 7. Paul does not disclaim inspiration (v.6), but states that he does not say all must be married! The word "permission" comes from a word meaning "pardon, concession, or indulgence." Thus he speaks with allowance and with regard for circumstances and situations as ordered by an all-loving God. The question of marriage is left open. It is not clear whether he was married or not (cf. Acts 26:10), but he feels his position is good. On the other hand,