

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**I CORINTHIANS 7*****I Corinthians 7***

The questions from the Corinthians continue to come to Paul, and he continues to give inspired answers to the people he led to follow Jesus and to be a vital part of the church. Paul addresses the extremes that existed in Corinth but also always exist in culture and in the church. When someone says they are a follower of Jesus, that can only be accomplished by the grace of God and through obedience to His word. If one fails to have the Bible, the Word of God, as their final authority in all of life, that one will surely go astray, and many times, that is exhibited through living life on the extremes. The Spirit of God gives balance and a sane mind. We are never more balanced than when we are filled and controlled by God's Holy Spirit. That Spirit will never ask us, command us or otherwise, to contradict and go against the teaching of the Bible.

In relation to men and women, we have to interpret Paul's words in the bright light of history. Paul lived in a day when to be a follower of Jesus and live life in harmony with the teachings of the Holy Scripture flew in the face of culture. As believers lived counter to their culture, there was a price to pay. That price was often imprisonment, torture, and, ultimately, death. We in our comfortable Western World do not yet face this end, yet! Let me give you an example of why Paul said

what he did concerning it being better for a man or woman to remain as he, celibate. It is one thing if you and I are called to deny Jesus. We can be imprisoned, tortured, and ultimately give our lives for Jesus. But what if you have a wife and children and you see them beaten, raped, tortured, and the swordsman with a sword lifted, ready to sever their head from their body? It will complicate and bring added suffering to the faithful. Paul, therefore, said it would be better not to have a spouse. He was not decrying marriage, rather, he was stating the obvious to those who were at Corinth.

Paul then gives guidance to those who are married. He instructs those who are married to understand that their life is to please the other and meet their needs, especially as it relates to sexual relations. He instructs not to deprive each other of a God-given desire for sexual needs to be met within the bonds of the marriage relationship, not outside of marriage and not before marriage. He also said if a person is burning up with sexual desire, that the way to fulfill that need is within the marriage bond. Therefore, a married couple should recognize that there are obligations for one partner to fulfill the needs of their spouse, lest the enemy of our souls create a foothold of sin within the marriage.

Prayer and Action Steps

Lord, help me to be controlled by Your Holy Spirit, who lives within my life. Enable me to have a desire to see to the needs of my spouse in every way, but especially as it relates to the sexual needs of my spouse. Amen