

Marriage 101: Lessons on Great Sex from the Bible

1 Corinthians 7:1-7

Pastor Guy Gray

The Corinthians Missed the Point on Sex in Marriage

We have learned in Corinthians that our faith in Christ is to impact every area of our lives. It is to transform our thinking, choices and behavior. This is faith applied to life. It's the renewal of our hearts, minds and relationships through the power of the Cross and the Spirit of the risen Christ. The Corinthians were a case study in missing the point! So Paul gets practical with them and talks freely about real life issues, like sex and marriage.

As in so many other areas, it seems that the Corinthians missed the point on sex in marriage as well. We learn this from verse 1. It is really important to see that verse 1 is the key to interpreting the whole passage. This verse reveals that Paul is addressing a matter the Corinthians themselves had written to him about. The translation of the second phrase in verse 1 is really important. Literally, it says "it is good for a man not to have sex with his wife." (the NIV obscures the literal meaning). The key thing is that this phrase should be in quotation marks, because it is not Paul's statement. It is not what Paul is teaching them. Instead, this is actually what the Corinthians themselves were saying. Once you understand that, the rest of the paragraph starts to make a lot more sense! Evidently some Christians in Corinth were teaching that married couples should abstain from sexual relations. There are couple of different reasons why they thought this was the right thing to do, but they got it wrong. They were totally missing the point on sex in marriage.

The Biblical View of Sex in Marriage: Passionate, Satisfying and Frequent

In the Bible you will find the finest guidance on marriage ever written! That guidance covers every dimension of marriage, including sexual intimacy. From the sexual overtones of Genesis 2:22-25, to the Song of Solomon and right here in 1 Corinthians 7, the Bible presents a positive and powerful view of marital sex. The Biblical view of marital sex is that it is to be passionate, satisfying and frequent. Paul gets right to the point. In 7:2 he says "each man should 'have' his own wife and each wife should 'have' her own husband." The word "have" here means to "have sexually." As you read the passage it becomes clear that this sexual union is about desire, passion, pleasure, fulfillment and it is to occur frequently. In scripture, there is no downplaying of sex in marriage.

The Power and Beauty of Mutual Submission—Mutual Pleasure—Mutual Fulfillment

One of the most amazing things about this passage is the sense of "mutuality" it conveys. This was a foreign concept in the ancient world in regards to men and women and marriage. The idea that the wife belonged to her husband was standard. The idea that the husband belonged to his wife was unheard of! What a powerful picture we have here of mutual submission, each one, husband and wife, submitting to and serving the needs and desires of the other. In verse 5 it speaks of "mutual consent" and the word used is the Greek word "symphony." What a beautiful idea! The relationship between a husband and wife is to be a symphony of mutual submission—mutual pleasure—mutual fulfillment. This teaches a huge lesson about what it takes to build a marriage of passionate, satisfying and frequent sex! Each one, both husband and wife must make a determined effort to learn how to please their spouse in life and specifically in terms of their sexual needs and desires. This is the way to build a sexually fulfilling marriage. If you are married you NEED to do this! You must remember that sin has twisted God's good design (Genesis 3) and that means that sexual fulfillment in marriage is actually an ongoing challenge of Christian maturity. It is going to take your attention, your effort, your patience, your kindness and your humble submission to one another in your marriage (see 1 Corinthians 13) to find a lifetime of success in this area.

Next Step...You Need to Talk About Sex in Your Marriage

Communication is key! You need to talk about sex in your marriage. Talk about it and pray about it (yes, talk to God about it too). Make a commitment to have a great marriage. Great sex isn't the only dimension of a great marriage, for sure...but it is one vital component that needs to be consistently pursued and experienced. For some this will be a challenge. If there have been hurts and disappointments and emotional distance, it will take some work to develop the kind of passionate and satisfying relationship God intends for your marriage. For others, the strains and busyness of life may have taken over and diminished the experience of sexual intimacy in your marriage. Don't settle for this. God cares about each and every area of your marriage

relationship, including your sexual intimacy. May the Lord bless your marriage in every way as you learn to follow Christ in every area of your life, making your marriage an avenue for growing deeper in faith and love in Christ!

Questions for Discussion and Reflection:

This week, spend some time reflecting on 1 Corinthians 7:1-7. How is the Lord speaking to you through this passage?

If you are single or divorced, what principles from this text can be applied to your life today?

Mutuality in Marriage

To what degree is there "mutual submission—mutual pleasure—mutual fulfillment" in your marriage?

Does your marriage relationship require some special attention in any of these areas? What do you need to do about that? Pray and ask the Lord for wisdom and guidance.

Events:

TODAY

SUNDAY 12/2

INTRODUCING RIVER WEST

7:00 @ RWLG. Want to know more about River West? Come have dinner & hear the story, the values & the vision of River West. Childcare is available for infant through 3rd grade with pre-registration only. For more information contact Pastor Adam at 699.222 or adam@riverwest.org

HANDS & FEET MINISTRY

The opportunity is here to get involved with our Hands & Feet ministry. Sign up today!

WOMAN'S RETREAT

Sign up today in the Fellowship Hall

SUNDAY 12/9

EL SALVADOR MISSION TRIP PRESENTATION

7:15 @ RWLG. Come and hear what is happening in this meaningful ministry. A team of volunteers have just returned from El Salvador and would love to share their experiences, photos & ways for you to get involved. For more information contact Julie Messenger at 699-2226 or Julie@riverwest.org.

COMING UP:

'Forgiven & Set Free'

Bible study to start soon. Have you had an abortion? Are you living with shame and guilt? Has it been difficult to accept the promises and the grace and the unconditional love of God in your life? Please call Sheri Harkavy 503 887-7080 or Raffa Scanlon 503 449-1316 to get more information about this completely confidential study.

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Genesis 2:24
From the beginning of creation God had a design and a plan for marriage. He—more than anyone—wants us to be fulfilled in and through our marriage—living out what He intended it to be from the start.