

Is paul's teaching on
marriage easily
applied to today's
church?



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The marriage is the sacred bond between the man and woman, which was the order of the creation of God from the beginning. As the salvation to human is by way of atonement of the Jesus Christ at the cross so, as the two souls whose lives are made one by way of marriage thereby we could always see the marriage as the greatest concept of the creation. It is not only two loving souls being one, but it is the love that is shared to bring forth furthermore love in the society. In the Greco-Roman or Jews families in the time of Paul and further it was very important for the society then contemporary household. Marriage is between two people, it wasn't just to live together but what came after (family) was more important in the society; where marriage became byway of constructing and building the society and economy. Every family shared there work as the famers, craftsmen and the children where taught in the vocation of the family which made the family name and the mark for the future generation.

Paul a Jew who comes from the cultured and learned background who makes to see the foundation of his faith to explain what marriage is to him personally and the creator at the same time. However vaguely debated topic about the life of Paul being married or unmarried by scholars, it makes only practical and insightful for Paul to advice in terms of marriage through the light of God if he was married and later being widower as per (1 Corinthian 7: 8). As *Longseneker and Still* explain " If Paul were at one time married, this would coincide with Jewish traditions that praised and even stipulated marriage".

Paul is concerned about marriage because, this topic was raised, which became the subject of concern to him for the church of Corinth. Paul as the

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church planter, the father figure for the new believers had to teach, admonish, command and help steer the church in the right direction. Before jumping right into the problem Paul prepares the ground by explaining what we are? What is our body is for? Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthian 6: 19), thereby it is well for a man not to touch a woman (1Corinthian 7: 1). Paul's concern for believer at time to be holy, maintain purity and keep oneself from other woman was because of the sexual sin, which was prevalent at time. As *Westfall* points out " Paul's discussion of sexual immoral behaviour focuses on all sexual acts that are committed outside of the bond of marriage" (1Corinthians 6: 16), *Ziesler* further explains, " because of the gnostic tendencies some probably believed that it did not matter what the body did so long as the inner and divine essential person was untouched"(1Cor. 6: 12-20), and it was incest sin as well (man living with his father's wife 1Corin. 5: 1).

1.

Paul being the Jew, the Pharisee and the student of the Gamaliel makes him who has the knowledge of the Old Testament (Genesis 1: 27, 28), thereby Paul develops his teaching in marriage in the foundation of Old Testament. The concept of marriage is between man and a woman for life and it is inviolable, as the marrying couple vows each other sayings till the death do us apart. Paul being a Jew sees through the Matthew's gospel in 19: 6 " what God has joined together let no one separate", precept as per Aquinas it parallel to natural law. Roman 7: 1-3, where Paul describes marriage as the law where two people are bound for lifetime.

Every person believes you live for once, marry once and die; and that is the end of life however it is very important that how we utilise those moments of life.

In the context of the present culture and society it is very difficult to pinpoint the Paul's concept of marriage would be shibboleth, it would be a very wrong thing to assume the culture we have now wasn't there at time, rather it was because in the Romans chapter one, life of the people in Rome was not that far different then the present culture, life of Sodom and Gomorra wasn't different then the culture in this time thereby Paul gives us to think boldly. It definitely feels it is very sensitive issue to fit in the present context, however it is doable not outmoded.

2. Headship and Mutuality in Marriage

Paul needed to be clearer about the headship and the mutuality in the marriage because of *Rosner* comes to explain as per Deut. 20: 5-7 and 28: 30 the Jewish script and the Graeco-Roman culture, house or vineyard or wife were equated, in other words wife would be a man's property thereby Paul clearly marks the headship of husband in marriage but head above being the Jesus Christ (I Corin. 11: 3) as Paul develops his teaching from the Old testament. Paul further emphasises in (1 Tim. 3: 1-7) in order for the Bishop to take the job one should be the husband of a wife. *Clark* " The husband could be the head of the larger household, possibly including his children and their families and his servants and their families. Or, the husband could be the head of a unit within a household, or simply the head of a nuclear family living in its own dwelling."

Man being the head of the family doesn't make wife the less of a woman, as in the kingdom where there is king and the queen who rule over their subjects which could be the analogy where both are seen in the leadership for the welfare of the subject and the nations.

In the present cultural context, society thinks that man and woman are equal in everything; thereby in the marriage both the husband and the wife take the shared mutual responsibility. Striking, remarks would be, living standard is different then past therefore income of one would not be able to support the whole family hence husband and wife needed to work to fulfil the need of the family, thus might seems like exploitation of headship for the providence for the family, however in this regard husband and wife would have to come into the mutual shared headship in the family which would make more of the practical, moral and right practice or else headship of husband would be an anachronistic fascist.

3. Marriage, Christ and His Church

Paul esteemed marriage in the highest regards; being the cultured Jew and the student of Gamaliel thereby he certainly understands the scriptural viewpoint of the marriage too. In Hosea 2: 16-20, where prophet proclaims God will take Israel as wife. In the Corinth where there was so much of disfiguring and marring the picture of marriage, Paul was painting the picture of hope, family and home, by porting it is not only the union of man and woman but is deep down as God and the nation Israel. Building upon the foundation of the marriage from male and female to God and nation Israel to Christ and His church Ep. 5: 32 Paul writes, " This is a great mystery, and I

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am applying it to Christ and the church". Paul's comparison marriage of male and female with the Christ and church sums up how much above the marriage is for Paul has esteemed. From the lens of Paul marriage is very secret covenant and holy consummation in the oneness in the spirit, in the current climate and culture it seems difficult however it is very important to be thus intimate in the relation.

4. Marriage or Asceticism

Looking at the Paul's background and in the light of Judaism marriage is a good practice, as per Genesis 1: 28 " Be fruitful and multiply" and Genesis 2: 18, " It is not good for man to be alone", and certainly Paul doesn't condone the marriage however in 1 Corinthians 7: 1 Paul comes with a statement " It is well for a man not to touch a woman", where *Deming* explains by saying as per the situation that Paul was, message could mean " I think that this is good because of the present necessity, that it is good for a man to be thus". *Rosner* expands as " Paul in 1 Corinthian 7 is not as strongly in favour of singleness as some would assume, and though Paul doesn't adopt the Biblical/ Jewish preference for marriage but the way he conceives is very Biblical/Jewish". Because of the sexual sin in various shape and form, Paul in his letter had to explain why marriage. Because of the sexual sin there were some who were very extreme practicee of asceticism even to abstinence, within the marriage some stayed as never married, thereby Paul explains why the marriage was for in 1 Corinthians 7: 2-5. Paul's view in the marriage is not negative but it is very clear one ought to marry before be burned with passion, causing more sins which was the situation in Corinth at time

prostitution, incest sex and Paul doesn't says no to the asceticism also
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because it leads to self control whilst devoting oneself in prayers. Marriage not just about the procreation, but it is more than fulfilment of life or to have a meaning of life, to share not only the physical aspect but the spiritual, emotional and in deeper sense of human being, ie, human is never created to be alone but to have companionship and fellowship with each other which has the deeper connection. In today's materialistic and self-driven culture, for some marriage is nothing more than contract between two people living together. Today's culture is no different than how it was in Corinth thereby Paul's teaching in marriage is very much adaptable.

5. Marriage and Church leaders

Paul concept of church leaders to be a married man who is the husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3: 2, 5: 9 and Tit. 1: 6), as some say house and the family is the place where everything begins, as for child they start their learning from home so as the leadership starts at home, with the similar analogy Paul levels marriage as the stepping foundation for the leadership. Why Paul stressed leaders to be married to a one wife.

6. Marriage and Times of Crises

God appointed marriages thereby enemy is always in against the God's wonderful creation. Crises comes in marriages is when there is a breach of trust and time of passing away of spouse. Paul had to address the breach of trust by saying, " it is well for man to not to touch a woman", sex outside marriage was very prevalent in Corinth which was causing lots of tension so Paul went on explaining your body is not your it is your espouses hence makes you powerless to decide on adultery. Secondly, there is a reason why <https://assignbuster.com/is-pauls-teaching-on-marriage-easily-applied-to-todays-church/>

Paul advised for celibacy to the unmarried because, lots of the follower of the Christ were killed because of following Jesus thereby there were widows as well. It was a very sensitive issue for Paul to handle widows thereby Paul advised to marry the young widows before falling in sin, however if one could maintain celibacy giving life to the Lord whilst making Christ husband spiritually eternally would be a blessing too.

7. Celibacy

Paul says it is good to remain celibacy, but it is not bad to have wife, thereby will not be more of temptation.

Paul had to write this letter in regards to celibacy because; believers in the Corinth were interpreting unrealistic antisexual super-spirituality. This was the conclusion because immorality was rampant in that time and place, hence, why wouldn't the people at that time would want to practice celibacy and abstinence, here Paul had to point where they have erred. More of the women in the Corinth were looking at the example of Mary and Martha whom were praised by Jesus. Paul coming from the Matthew's gospel where disciples ask Jesus about the divorce, Jesus tells them if be this, it is better not to marry. Matthew 19: 11, 12; *everyone cannot take this saying there are some eunuchs since birth, some made eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven* ; celibacy is certainly needed for the kingdom of heaven however everyone cannot walk on that path but only who are chosen or given by God. I Corinthian 6: 20 for you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

- Not to touch woman because of sexual immorality
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- Not to marry
- Not to have sex for the purity
- Shortness of time

8. Marriage with an unbeliever

Marriage with an unbeliever occur when the work of gospel mirrors Matthew 10: 34-36 " Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth", when one hears the word of God, the spirit of God compels to respond to the calling of God then the change in heart wrestles within the hearer which leads to change in ones behaviour too that causes conflict in many activities, however the believer is to love the neighbour like oneself on that ground how much one is suppose to love the loved ones. Paul on Acts 16: 31 preaches, " Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household", who shows the hope of the unbelieving family member, would be saved. 1Cori. 7: 10-16, if one comes in faith later in life through the gospel, one's spouse is not believing, that marriage also stands by way of sanctification in belief that one day the spouse would embrace the faith and become communal in either of the case. *FEE* highlights " Security in Christ there is, to be sure, but it is a false security that would justify sinners who have never taken seriously, " but such were some of you". That is to whitewash the sinner without regeneration or transformation", yes it looks like false hope but " Is anything too difficult for the Lord" Genesis 18: 14. God is still at work in the present time and culture, gospel and the word of God is as powerful, life giving, saving grace to humankind, as a reminder Matthew 24: 35 " Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never <https://assignbuster.com/is-pauls-teaching-on-marriage-easily-applied-to-todays-church/>

pass away", these promises resound and encourage in this generation, yet we might have unsaved families, God certainly has the saving grace for everybody, one thing for us to be the witness and an ambassador of Christ.

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