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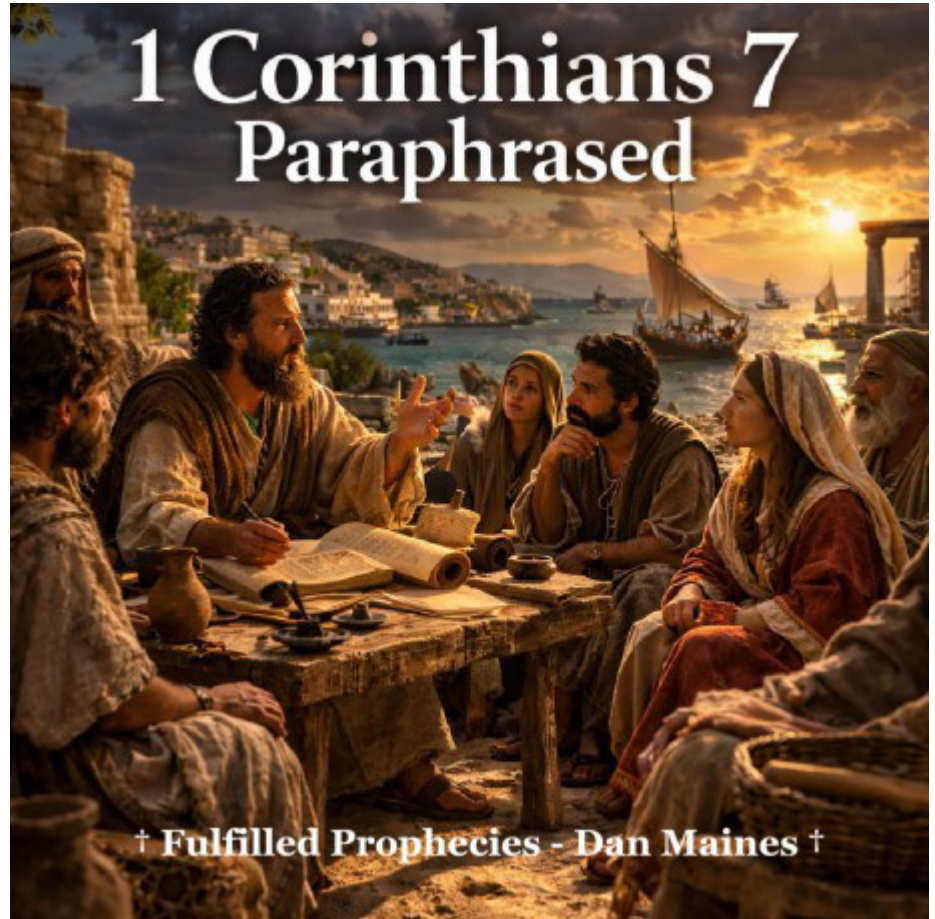
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## 1 Corinthians 7 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

## 1 Corinthians 7 Paraphrased

### Introduction

† The believers in Corinth had written Paul asking questions about marriage, celibacy, divorce, and how Christians should live in a corrupt society.

† Corinth was known for sexual immorality, so believers were trying to understand how to live holy lives in Christ (Acts 18:1-11).

† Paul answers carefully, showing that both marriage and singleness can honor God when lived faithfully.

## Scripture

### 1 Corinthians 7:1

Now concerning the matters you wrote about, it's good for a man not to be involved in sexual relations.

† Paul begins responding to the questions sent by the church about purity and relationships.

† Some believers thought total abstinence was the only holy option, and Paul begins correcting that idea (Hebrews 13:4).

† The goal is purity and devotion to God, not extreme legalism.

### 1 Corinthians 7:2

But because sexual temptation is common, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

† Marriage is presented as the proper place for sexual intimacy.

† This guards believers from the immorality surrounding Corinth (1 Corinthians 6:18).

† God's design from the beginning was one man and one woman joined together (Genesis 2:24).

### 1 Corinthians 7:3

The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and the wife must also fulfill her duty to her husband.

† Marriage requires mutual responsibility.

† Each spouse must care for the needs of the other.

† Paul establishes equality in marital responsibility.

### 1 Corinthians 7:4

The wife doesn't have authority over her own body, but the husband does, and likewise the husband doesn't have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

† This shows the unity and mutual belonging within marriage.

† Paul challenges selfish attitudes common in pagan relationships.

† Marriage joins two lives into one shared covenant.

## **1 Corinthians 7:5**

Don't deprive one another except by agreement for a time so you can devote yourselves to prayer, then come together again so Satan won't tempt you because of lack of self control.

† Temporary abstinence must be agreed upon by both spouses.

† Spiritual devotion must not create opportunity for temptation.

† Paul shows practical wisdom about human weakness.

## **1 Corinthians 7:6**

But I say this as permission and not as a command.

† Paul clarifies that he's giving pastoral guidance.

† The instruction helps believers navigate daily life.

† Wisdom sometimes requires flexibility rather than rigid commands.

## **1 Corinthians 7:7**

I wish that everyone were as I am, but each person has his own gift from God, one in this way and another in that.

† Paul was single and saw advantages in that life.

† Yet he recognizes both singleness and marriage are gifts from God.

† God gives different callings to different believers.

## **1 Corinthians 7:8**

But to the unmarried and to widows I say it's good if they remain as I am.

† Singleness can allow complete focus on serving God.

† Paul speaks from his own experience in ministry.

† However this isn't a command for everyone.

## **1 Corinthians 7:9**

But if they can't control themselves, they should marry, because it's better to marry than to burn with passion.

† Marriage is the proper place for strong desire.

† God designed marriage as protection against immorality.

† Paul recognizes human reality and offers practical counsel.

### **1 Corinthians 7:10**

But to the married I give instruction, not I but the Lord, that the wife shouldn't leave her husband.

† Paul refers to the teaching of Jesus about marriage permanence (Matthew 19:6).

† Marriage is meant to be lasting.

† The early church upheld Christ's teaching strongly.

### **1 Corinthians 7:11**

But if she does leave, she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband, and the husband must not divorce his wife.

† Reconciliation is the goal whenever separation happens.

† Marriage vows are serious commitments.

† God values restoration rather than separation.

### **1 Corinthians 7:12**

But to the rest I say, not the Lord, if any believer has a wife who doesn't believe and she agrees to live with him, he must not divorce her.

† Paul addresses marriages where only one spouse believes.

† Conversion to Christ didn't automatically break marriages.

† The gospel works within existing relationships.

### **1 Corinthians 7:13**

And if a woman has a husband who doesn't believe and he agrees to live with her, she must not divorce him.

† The same instruction applies to believing wives.

† Faithfulness in marriage still matters.

† Christian faith doesn't require abandoning family bonds.

### **1 Corinthians 7:14**

Because the unbelieving husband is set apart through his wife and the unbelieving wife is set apart through her believing

husband, otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

† The believer brings spiritual influence into the home.

† This doesn't mean automatic salvation.

† The household becomes a place where God's truth is present.

### **1 Corinthians 7:15**

But if the unbelieving one leaves, let them leave, the brother or sister isn't bound in such cases, God has called us to peace.

† If the unbelieving spouse abandons the marriage, the believer isn't enslaved to the situation.

† God desires peace for His people.

† The church recognized real life situations must be handled wisely.

### **1 Corinthians 7:16**

How do you know, wife, whether you'll save your husband, or how do you know, husband, whether you'll save your wife.

† A believing spouse may influence the other toward salvation.

† Faithful living can impact family members.

† Many came to Christ through the example of relatives.

### **1 Corinthians 7:17**

Only as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each person, let them walk in that way, and this is what I direct in all the churches.

† Paul's guiding principle is contentment in one's calling.

† Conversion didn't require abandoning one's social position.

† Faith transforms life wherever a person is called.

### **1 Corinthians 7:18**

Was someone called while circumcised, he shouldn't try to remove it, was someone called while uncircumcised, he shouldn't be circumcised.

† Cultural identity isn't the focus of the gospel.

† Faith in Christ matters more than external identity.

† Paul warns against trying to change status for religious approval.

### **1 Corinthians 7:19**

Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God matters.

† External rituals don't define righteousness.

† Obedience to God is what matters.

† Faith must produce faithful living.

### **1 Corinthians 7:20**

Each person must remain in the situation in which he was called.

† Paul repeats the principle of contentment.

† Christianity transforms hearts before circumstances.

† Believers were to live faithfully where they were.

### **1 Corinthians 7:21**

Were you called while a slave, don't let it trouble you, but if you can become free, take the opportunity.

† Many early Christians lived under Roman slavery.

† Paul encourages freedom if possible.

† Yet spiritual freedom in Christ is the greater reality.

### **1 Corinthians 7:22**

The one who was called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman, likewise the one who was free when called is Christ's slave.

† Paul reverses worldly thinking.

† A slave in Christ is spiritually free.

† A free person belongs completely to Christ.

### **1 Corinthians 7:23**

You were bought with a price, don't become slaves of people.

† The price refers to Christ's sacrifice.

† Believers belong to God because of redemption.

† Their ultimate loyalty is to Christ.

### **1 Corinthians 7:24**

Brothers and sisters, each person must remain with God in the condition in which he was called.

† Again Paul emphasizes faithfulness in one's circumstances.

† Conversion didn't require abandoning responsibilities.

† The Christian life is lived in everyday life.

### **1 Corinthians 7:25**

Now concerning virgins I don't have a command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

† Paul again distinguishes between Christ's direct teaching and his pastoral guidance.

† His counsel still carries apostolic authority.

† The church respected his instruction.

### **1 Corinthians 7:26**

Because of the present distress I think it's good for a person to remain as he is.

† The early church faced persecution and instability.

† Paul believed singleness could spare believers additional hardship.

† Historical writers confirm the pressures facing Christians.

### **1 Corinthians 7:27**

Are you bound to a wife, don't seek to be released, are you released from a wife, don't seek a wife.

† Paul's emphasis remains contentment and stability.

† Marriage and singleness both have value.

† The priority is devotion to God.

### **1 Corinthians 7:28**

But if you marry you haven't sinned, and if a virgin marries she

hasn't sinned, yet such people will have trouble in this life and I'm trying to spare you.

† Marriage isn't sinful.

† Paul's concern is practical difficulty, not moral wrong.

† Married life includes responsibilities and pressures.

### **1 Corinthians 7:29**

But I say this, the time has been shortened, from now on those who have wives should live as though they had none.

† Paul recognizes the approaching covenant transition of that generation (Matthew 24:34).

† Urgency shaped the early church mindset.

† Believers were called to live with eternal focus.

### **1 Corinthians 7:30**

Those who weep as though they didn't weep, those who rejoice as though they didn't rejoice, those who buy as though they didn't possess.

† Earthly circumstances are temporary.

† Believers shouldn't become controlled by worldly conditions.

† Devotion to God remains the priority.

### **1 Corinthians 7:31**

Those who use the world as though they didn't make full use of it, because the present form of this world is passing away.

† The covenant world centered in Jerusalem was nearing its end.

† Jesus had already warned that generation would see those events (Matthew 24:34).

† Believers were living during a major redemptive transition.

### **1 Corinthians 7:32**

I want you to be free from concern, the unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord.

† Singleness allows undivided focus on spiritual service.

† Paul speaks from experience as a missionary.

† Devotion without distraction can be powerful.

### **1 Corinthians 7:33**

But the married man is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife.

† Marriage brings additional responsibilities.

† These responsibilities require attention and care.

† Paul simply explains the difference in focus.

### **1 Corinthians 7:34**

His interests are divided, the unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord so she may be holy both in body and spirit, but the married woman is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

† Marriage divides attention between family and ministry.

† Both roles can honor God.

† The difference lies in available focus.

### **1 Corinthians 7:35**

I say this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but to promote what is proper and secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

† Paul's purpose is wise guidance.

† He wants believers to serve God with clarity and focus.

† Christian freedom includes wise choices.

### **1 Corinthians 7:36**

But if anyone thinks he's acting improperly toward his virgin daughter if she's past her youth and it must happen, let him do what he wishes, he doesn't sin, let them marry.

† Fathers commonly arranged marriages in ancient culture.

† Paul allows marriage where appropriate.

† Marriage remains honorable.

## **1 Corinthians 7:37**

But the one who stands firm in his heart, having no necessity but having authority over his own will and has decided in his heart to keep his virgin daughter unmarried, he will do well.

† Some families chose singleness for devotion to ministry.

† Paul acknowledges this as a good decision.

† The choice must be voluntary.

## **1 Corinthians 7:38**

So then the one who gives his virgin daughter in marriage does well, but the one who doesn't give her in marriage will do better.

† Paul again emphasizes the advantages of singleness.

† Yet he still affirms marriage as honorable.

† Both choices can glorify God.

## **1 Corinthians 7:39**

A wife is bound as long as her husband lives, but if her husband dies she's free to marry whomever she wishes, only in the Lord.

† Marriage lasts for life.

† Widows may remarry within the faith.

† Christian marriage was meant to unite believers.

## **1 Corinthians 7:40**

But in my judgment she's happier if she remains as she is, and I think I also have the Spirit of God.

† Paul concludes with pastoral wisdom.

† His counsel reflects spiritual discernment.

† The early church recognized the Spirit guiding apostolic teaching.

## **Historical References**

† Clement of Alexandria taught that Christian marriage should be governed by purity and devotion to God.

† Tertullian described Christian couples as partners in faith, prayer, and obedience to Christ.

† Eusebius recorded that the early church followed Paul's instruction about marriage and singleness.

### **How it applies to us today**

† Marriage should be faithful, loving, and guided by God's design.

† Singleness can also be a powerful calling for serving God.

† Believers should live faithfully in whatever situation God has placed them.

### **Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** Does Paul forbid marriage in this chapter?

**A:** No, he clearly says marriage isn't sin and is honorable (1 Corinthians 7:28).

**Q:** Why does Paul recommend singleness for some people?

**A:** Because it can allow undivided devotion to serving the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:32).

**Q:** What happens if an unbelieving spouse leaves a believer?

**A:** The believer isn't bound in that situation and is called to peace (1 Corinthians 7:15).

**Q:** Why does Paul say believers were bought with a price?

**A:** Because Christ redeemed them through His sacrifice (1 Corinthians 7:23).

**Q:** What is the main principle repeated throughout the chapter?

**A:** Believers should live faithfully in the situation where God called them (1 Corinthians 7:17).

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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### **Source Index**

† 1 Corinthians 7

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

† Tertullian, On Monogamy

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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