

Commands Concerning Marriage | 1 Corinthians 7:10-13

- Verse 10 - Paul gives a **command** from **the Lord** that a husband and wife are not to *be separated*. Note that the verb translated **depart** is in the passive tense, not active. Therefore, *be separated* would be a better translation. Paul is not giving a command to the wife, but to the couple.
- Verse 11 –
 - The phrase **but and if** is used five times in the Greek text, and each time is a contrast to an instruction given.
 - Since the Greek for **depart** is in the aorist passive, this should read *if she be separated, let her remain...* (Disclaimer: the Greek doesn't have a past tense, so it could also be "*if she becomes separated...*") In either case, **depart** is in the active tense, not the passive, and is thus not accurate as a translation. Darby translates correctly, "but if also she shall have been separated."
 - This is a direct command to **the husband**, given in the active sense, and is best translated *leave*, in v. 13, speaking of the wife.
- Verses 12-13 - In these verse, Paul comes again to his own *permissible opinion* which says that an unbelieving spouse should not leave the marriage (concerning **put her away** see note on v. 11). In these verses Paul clarifies that the rules for the separation of a spouse apply even if the partner is unbelieving.

The Sanctification of Marriage | 1 Corinthians 7:14-17

- Verses 14-16 - These intriguing verses must be taken in totality.
 - By logical necessity, we must conclude that the husband / wife being **sanctified** is not the same as being saved. This logic is based on two realities:
 - Paul calls the spouse **unbelieving**, and thus they cannot be saved.
 - Paul give hope in v. 16 that salvation would come (thus it is not currently present).
 - In 1 Timothy 4:4-5 Paul states that **every creature of God is good...for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer**. The context is meat that one would consume. Paul's use of **sanctified** shows that he does not mean *saved*.
 - In all likelihood, v. 14 is a reference to Jewish traditions. This is especially noted by the use of the word **unclean** for the children. In Gentile culture, nothing is *clean* or *unclean*.
- Verse 17 - This is another way of saying, "live with what you've got."

Before and After | 1 Corinthians 7:18-28

- Verses 18-19 – Concerning Circumcision
 - Paul is saying, I believe, that the matter of circumcision is a matter **of the commandments of God** (that is, of the Law), and is of no relation to the church, which is not under the Law.
 - BUT, what of the circumcision of Timothy in Acts 16:3?
 - In light of Paul's instructions to the Corinthians, how could he have insisted that Timothy be circumcised? Especially since Acts 16 comes on the heels of Acts 15, where the issue of circumcision is hotly debated.
 - In both Acts 15 and Galatians 5:2-4, the issue at hand is salvation, not witness (note Galatians 5:4 especially). Paul would never allow circumcision for salvation

purposes. In this passage, the issue at hand is closely related to salvation as well, and Paul insists that it is not an issue.

- Verses 20-24 – Concerning Calling
 - Verses 20-22 - In the matter of vocation (specifically, of servitude), Paul says that a person should remain in their **calling**. The word *vocation* comes from *vocal*, and is closely connecting to *calling*. It is not only a pastor who has a *vocational calling*, but it is every employed individual.
 - Verses 23-24 - A vocational calling (i.e.: employment) is not to be abandoned. Equally true, the saved employee must recognize that he/she is **Christ's servant** (v. 22) and is to avoid becoming **the servants of men**. So, in whatever the vocation, the believer is to **abide with God**.
- Verses 25-28 – Concerning Singleness or marriage.
 - Paul cannot (as he has done with vocation and circumcision), say "remain as you are," because he has already argued that marriage is given with a godly purpose.
 - So, Paul instructs hearers to remain as you are if you can remain single, otherwise it is not a sin to marry.

A Warning About Time | 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

- Verse 29 – **the time is short**
 - The New Testament epistles are filled with warnings about the approaching end (Rom. 13:11-12, 1 Peter 4:7, 1 John 2:17, James 4:13-16, 5:3).
 - This is not proof that the writers were wrong, but proof that the timing of God's work was not revealed.
 - Remember that they were living under a recently revealed mystery, one that shook the very foundations of their Jewish faith and of the previously revealed prophetic time-line. Furthermore, every indication was that "life as we know it" would not continue long (the Jewish revolt was simmering, Rome would put down the revolt, Jerusalem would be no more). So far as they could see, the Messiah would surely come quickly.
 - Note that all the references to short time have a very Jewish audience in mind, so it very well could be that this was a warning about the end of Jewish national life.
- Verses 29b-31 - Because **the time is short**, Paul encouraged people to *carry on with diligence*, not slowing down for things that would be regular activities of life in other circumstances. The issues shown here are clearly an "emergency alert" and not normal living.