

“THROUGH THE BIBLE”

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1 CORINTHIANS 7

Did you hear about the woman who'd been married to four men. Her first husband was a **millionaire**... Her second husband was a **film producer**... The third man in her life was a **butler**... And her fourth husband was a **funeral director**... *A millionaire, a film maker, a butler, a mortician*... Of course, the woman explained her choice in men as follows... “It was one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go.” Well, believe it or not, that's a good lead-in to tonight's Bible study. In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul deals with marriage, divorce, and singleness. He addresses **marriage in verses 1-9** - **divorce in verses 10-24** - and **singleness in verses 25-40**. There's something for us all in tonight's text.

Verse 1 begins, “**Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.**” Up to this point in Paul's letter he's been addressing problems he's heard existed in the church at Corinth. The believers had a divisive attitude... They were prideful and carnal... In the name of tolerance, church members were overlooking blatant sin... Unable to settle their own disputes, they were suing each other in secular court... And like their immoral surroundings, they had lax sexual standards... *Paul had taken the Church to task on these subjects and more!* Now in chapter 7 Paul answers questions that had been posed by the Corinthians. Apparently, these last 10 chapters constitute Paul's response to a previous correspondence. And he begins with the topic of marriage...

“**It is good for a man not to touch a woman.**” In verse 1 the Greek word translated “**touch**” refers “**to an act of intimacy, to touch in a sexual way.**” Here is Paul's first point on marriage – **It is good that you avoid it!**

In Genesis 2:18, God said, “**It is not good that man should be alone.**” And his answer for our loneliness was marriage. Here the Holy Spirit says through Paul, “**It is good for a man not to touch a woman.**” Well, which is it? It reminds me of the old saying, “**Marriage means showers for the bride, and curtains for the groom.**” Folks have read this chapter and accused Paul of having a negative attitude toward marriage. That's an unfair conclusion.

Understand Paul's intent in this book is not to layout a comprehensive teaching on marriage. He's answering questions posed by his readers. If you want the unabridged version of “*Paul on Marriage*” you should also read Ephesians 5:22-33 where he exalts marriage by proclaiming it to be a picture of Christ's relationship with His Church... Read too, Hebrews 13:4 where Paul assures us that sex in marriage is pure and holy... Also read 1Timothy 4:3 where he lists “**forbidding to marry**” as a mark of apostasy... When you consider the totality of Paul's teaching there is no contradiction. Generally speaking, Genesis 2 is right... “**It is not good that a man should be alone.**” Yet under certain circumstances, in specific cases, 1 Corinthians 7 is also right. “**It is good for a man not to touch a woman.**”

Paul goes on, "Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband." In Matthew 19:11-12 Jesus spoke of people who had been given *the gift of celibacy*. He referred to them as "Eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." They had the gift of singleness. I believe there is such a gift. For some people sexual appetite isn't a problem. They have no burning desire to be married. They can take it or leave it. Life seems just as appealing flying solo, as it does getting married.

Paul's point later in the chapter is that singleness can be an advantage. Singles aren't distracted by many of the concerns that preoccupy married folk. A *single-Christian* can be more *single-ly devoted* to the Lord. But, either you've got this gift or you don't! If the sight of a pretty girl causes a man's pulse to race, and his hormones to heat up - then God hasn't blessed him with the gift of singleness. He needs a wife... If a lady goes to sleep dreaming of a Prince Charming who'll sweep her off her feet and give her a happy home - then she doesn't have the gift of singleness... If you're "the marrying type" then its best that you marry. If you don't, your desire for intimacy with the opposite sex could lead you to sexual sin.

Paul says in verse 3, "Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does." I'm sure some selfish, sex-crazed husband somewhere has misused this verse as a Scriptural endorsement for a kinky or perverted demand. When Paul says, "*the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does,*" he's not turning her into her husband's personal sex toy. A wife is not to be *used* or *abused* for a husband's selfish gratification. Ephesians 5:25 explains what should be a man's motivation. "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it." God calls husbands to love their wives in an unselfish, sacrificial manner - in a way that cleanses her mind, and purifies her heart - not in a way that pollutes or damages his wife.

Anything Paul expects of husbands or wives is certainly in the context of a loving arrangement. Yet, love does carry with it certain expectations. Paul is very clear, in marriage both spouses have an obligation to meet each other's sexual needs. The word translated "*due,*" means "*owed.*" You owe it to your spouse to have sex lovingly, passionately, *and frequently*. As long as both parties are physically fit, it's not unreasonable to expect sexual interest and expression from your spouse. It's a Christian's duty!

Verse 5, "Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." Did you hear about the couple who were moving from a cramped condo into a spacious new home? They had a little girl, and needed more room. As they toured a prospective house the daughter saw a third bedroom. She got excited. She whispered, "Mom, this house is perfect! There's enough bedrooms here so you and Daddy won't have to share!" Well, Paul is saying, mom and dad need to share the same bed on a regular basis. Every married couple needs to realize sex is a tool to **build with** - not a weapon to **fight with**. Withhold sex as a form of punishment and you're disobeying God... Use sex to reward your husband for a behavior you like, or bribe him for what you want – and that's *manipulation*, not *affirmation*... That's a cruel use of what should be an expression of committed love. Pastor Charlie Shedd wrote a series of letters to his daughter before she married. He offers good advice. "Dear Karen, smart girls don't ration their men... Your husband needs sex even when it may be the farthest thing from your mind. Convince him, if you can, that you love him so much you enjoy sharing your charms with him simply because he's in the mood for more."

Wives, your husband goes out into a sex-obsessed world every day, and you need to remember he has not been blessed with the gift of celibacy. If he had a *low libido* he wouldn't have gotten married, he'd be single-ly serving the Lord... I'm sure this wasn't the only reason he got married – but trust me, it was a chief reason. He has a need for a holy, healthy sexual outlet – and he committed to forego relations with all other women to cultivate that relationship with you. *A wise wife doesn't ignore the obvious.* Loving, passionate, **and frequent** sex with his wife is what takes the sexual pressure off a husband. The temptations in the world aren't as strong if he knows he's got all the feminine affection he can handle at home.

Verse 6, “**But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.**” You don't have to get married. It's not a “*commandment*,” it's a “*concession*” to healthy human sexual desires. According to Scripture nobody has to marry, but if you do, remember the **vow** comes with a **vow**. Remain faithful to the sexual obligation you made to your mate.

Verse 7, “**For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.**” Since Paul was single that was *his* preference. But both singleness and marriage are gifts from God, and should be used for His glory.

“**But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am...**” There is some question as to Paul's marital status. *Was he a widower? Or a divorcee? Or had he never been married?* Though we're not certain, there are clues... In Philippians 3 Paul says that according to Jewish Law he was “*blameless.*” It would've been hard for him to make that statement if he'd never been married... The Jews said there were seven people God wouldn't accept - at the top of their list was a man who'd never married. Second, was a man with no children... Of the 613 Jewish Laws number one was the command to repopulate the Earth. We also know from Acts 7 that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin. To sit on the Jewish Supreme Court you had to be married and have children. It's my opinion that Paul was married with kids at one time – but upon his conversion to Christ, his wife deserted him. In some Orthodox Jewish homes today if a family member becomes a Christian they hold a religious funeral. The Christian convert is divorced from the community, stripped of his inheritance, and considered dead. This might've happened to Paul.

However he got there, Paul was single - yet he knows it's not for everyone. He says in verse 9, “**But if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.**” Once a pastor preached a sermon entitled, “*Great Sex For Christians.*” He began, “**Brothers and sisters, sex is great on days that start with the letter “T” - Tuesday, Thursday, Thaturday – even today and tomorrow...**” Sex is a beautiful, God-ordained gift reserved for the marriage bed. Don't ever think *celibacy* is more spiritual than *sexuality*. That's simply not true. If God has given you a normal sex drive; then your goal should be to position yourself for marriage. Graduate, get a job, move out from mom... This might take some time, so while you're single learn to resist to temptation and develop self-control - as you do, pray for a spouse, and be on the look-out for the right person... Marriage is good. It's God's means to relieve sexual pressure. Paul puts it, “***It is better to marry than to burn.***”

In verse 10 Paul tackles the subject of divorce. “**Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.**” Malachi 2:16 clarifies God's attitude toward divorce, “*The Lord God of Israel says that he hates divorce.*” And Paul echoes that in 1 Corinthians 7.

He continues, “But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to *her* husband. And a husband is not to divorce *his* wife.” In Matthew 19:8 Jesus acknowledged the reality of divorce. He credited it to the hardness of man’s heart. Moses laid out stipulations to discourage divorce by making it more difficult. He wanted to minimize the damage it would cause - but divorce *was never*, and *is never*, God's ideal. With God no marital problem is unsolvable. This is why according to verse 11 if a spouse departs the marriage, he or she has two options: remain unmarried or be reconciled to their estranged spouse. If you divorce your spouse *without a biblical justification* it is a sin. Sometimes a cooling off period, or a temporary separation can prove beneficial – *but it needs to be followed up by a sincere effort at restoration.*

Verse 12, “But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.” First, don’t trip up over Paul’s phraseology. Several times in this chapter Paul sounds as if he's downgrading his counsel from **divine inspiration** to **human opinion**. But that's not what Paul means. If what he was saying wasn't inspired by the Holy Spirit it would’ve never ended up in the pages of sacred Scripture. Generally, Paul's writings ran parallel to the teachings of Jesus. But there were subjects Paul addressed that Jesus did not deal with directly. Here’s an example. For most of Jesus’ ministry *there were no believers*. Even His own disciples didn’t truly believe until after His resurrection. Thus, Jesus had little opportunity to address the subject of a believer married to an unbeliever. That meant on this issue Paul couldn't write, “**The Lord said.**” Yet the Corinthians were facing this challenge. They desperately needed godly wisdom. Thus, through the process of biblical inspiration God provided the Corinthians the counsel they needed through the pen of Paul.

Now here’s Paul’s instructions... You’re a believer in Jesus married to an unbeliever. **Your spouse rejects the Lord... but that doesn’t give you the right to reject your spouse.** If he or she wants to stay married – you stay put. This addresses a common problem in the first century... The Bible is clear a believer should never marry an unbeliever. 2 Corinthians 6 tells us this is like hitching two species of animal in the same harness – **an unequal yoke**. A Christian and a non-Christian have two different natures and priorities That means there’s bound to be tension. An old Puritan proverb put it, “**If you're a child of God, and you marry a child of the devil you're going to have problems with your father-in-law.**” And what would be the best way to avoid marrying an unbeliever? How about **not dating one!** The sign at the start of the Alaskan Highway reads, “**Choose your rut carefully, you'll be in it for the next 200 miles.**” The same is true with marriage. If you’re single be careful who you marry. Christian marriage is until death do you part, *whether you’re happy or not.*

But here’s the phenomena that happened often in the first century... Many of the first Christians were married before they ever heard the Gospel. Inevitably, Christianity became a wedge between these couples. People were converted, while their spouses were not. Here Paul is telling the Christians that if their unconverted spouse wants to remain married, they should remain in the relationship - *and here’s why...*

“**For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.**” Understand, what Paul is not saying... He’s not teaching that the unbelieving spouse, or the kids, will get to heaven on the coattails of the believing spouse. Salvation is not by proxy. The words “**sanctified**” and “**holy**” are from the same Greek word “**hagios**,” or “**to set apart.**” The word speaks of position and opportunity. Paul is saying when a believer remains married to an unbeliever the light of God continues to shine into the dark life of the unbeliever, and the lives of the kids. Christian *witness and wisdom* remains a constant influence. The believer’s involvement ensures a degree of spiritual safety for the family, and enhances the likelihood of the spouse and children’s ultimate salvation.

If you're a believer married to an unbeliever it can get tough. Imagine a three-legged race. Middle aged men tied to short, chubby 9 year-old boys. It's amusing to watch the mismatched couples awkwardly stumble along. But this is what everyday looks like for a believer married to an unbeliever. Permanently attached to a person of uneven stature, and unequal stamina. Often the believer carries an inordinate share of the load. Such a life isn't easy, but if it means the eternal salvation of your family, then it's worth it! If this is your life, God loves you and will give you strength.

Verse 15, "But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save *your* wife?" A believer in Jesus should not depart as long as the unbeliever wants to stay married - but if the unbeliever does choose to depart, then the believer is no longer under bondage. He or she is free to move on with their lives. There are two scenarios where God permits divorce and remarriage...

The first is in Matthew 19:8. Jesus said, "Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery..." Note the exception, "*pornea*" or "*sexual immorality*." It includes all illicit sexual activity - *homosexuality, adultery, pornography*. If a person falls into **persistent sexual misconduct** their spouse is free to divorce and remarry. It's not commanded. They can choose to forgive and restore the marriage, but it's an option God makes available to the offended spouse. In the OT an adulterer was stoned to death, making the victim a widow, and free to remarry. In the NT God shows mercy on the adulterer, but still affords the betrayed victim the same freedom to move on and start over.

The second biblical justification for divorce and remarriage is **desertion**. Here Paul says, "*If the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases*" If you're deserted by a spouse because of your faith in Jesus - and righteous conduct - then you have the prerogative to move on with your life and remarry in the will of God. The Greek word translated "*depart*" means "*to put room between*." A husband who ignores his wife and watches too much football is guilty of insensitivity, but not desertion. A wife who spends too much time and money at the mall is disrespectful, but she hasn't departed the marriage.

Yet are there more grievous betrayals that do count as desertion? *I believe there are...* A husband who repeatedly beats his wife or kids... A wife strung out on heroine who refuses to get help... these people might come home at night and like sleeping under the same roof as their family, *but does it mean they're still committed to the marriage?* Not hardly. After 31 years as a pastor I've concluded there're lots of ways to depart a marriage without actually vacating the premises and filing divorce papers. Certainly these questions are problematic, and I'd never want to give a person in a difficult marriage a loophole to disobey God and opt for the easy way out. *If the unbeliever wants to remain, then the believer should remain.* You can't divorce your spouse just because he or she is a royal jerk. *But is desertion limited to the unbeliever packing his or her bags and getting a change of address?...* Well, we all need to think through these issues and be led by the Holy Spirit. Let's be convinced in our own heart. One truth is certain, "**God hates divorce.**" Let's take marriage seriously.

Verse 17, "But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches." Paul has just addressed the subject of marriage. If you were married to Sam the Unbeliever when you were saved - then stay married to Sam. Who knows if you won't lead Sam to the Lord? Here's the principle - stay where you're called. But now Paul broadens this same basic

principle beyond marriage to various customs and culture.

“Was anyone called while circumcised?” This was the mark of a Jew. Paul is saying if you’re born a Jew - “Let him not become uncircumcised.” Don’t think being a Christian will get easier by adopting Gentile customs. “Was anyone called while uncircumcised?” in other words, a Gentile. “Let him not be circumcised.” If you’re a Gentile don’t try living as a Jew. “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.” Neither Gentile Christians or Jewish Christians have an advantage over the other. Both have their own challenges. Ultimately, culture matters little. It has zero bearing with God. Paul is saying if you’re a Jew - be a believing Jew. If you’re a Gentile - be a believing Gentile. Changing your circumstances isn’t going to make your life of faith any easier. Start living for Jesus wherever you’ve been called.

The key to living the Christian life is **to bloom where you're planted**. I hear folks say, "When I find a wife; I'll settle down and live for Jesus." Or "When I get a new job I'll start being honest and ethical" Or "We're living together now, but when we get marry we're going to start doing things God's way." No, no, a thousand times No! If you’re serious about following Jesus **start doing things God’s way now – where He has you**. If it takes moving out, or in with a friend – or informing your boss there're certain stuff you're no longer going to do – then so be it! Note, verse 20 “Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.”

Once we had a guy become a Christian who was a distribution manager for Budweiser. He drove a company van, and at our Men's Prayer Meetings he would park way down the street. He didn't want to park the beer truck in front of the church... *One day he confessed to me his occupation...* He was afraid we'd no longer accept him as a brother in Christ. I told him, "Scott, God says start where you've been called, so we're going to help you be the best beer truck driver you can be for Jesus' sake." I realized that would eventually present some problems, and it did. He resigned and got another job, but Scott started where he was called.

This is what all Christians are expected to do. Verse 21, **Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it.** Paul mentions slavery. The Roman Empire was built on the back of slave labor. No other culture owned as many slaves as Rome. In fact, many of the early Christians came from the ranks of the slaves. Yet Paul and the early Christians seldom attacked the evil of slavery head on. **Christianity changes institutions by changing individuals**. Here Paul doesn't discourage a slave from using his newfound faith to gain his freedom. Perhaps his master had an affinity for Christians! But Paul tells him, even if his *freedom from sin* doesn't translate into *freedom from slavery* – don't let it stop you from living the Christian life. Here's his point, begin your walk with the Lord wherever you're called. True happiness has nothing to do with circumstances. Paul had met *happy slaves* and *sad owners*. Paul knows that happiness is the byproduct of a right relationship with God, not comfortable and cozy circumstances.

Verse 22, “For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ’s slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.” This is so liberating... If you belong to Jesus you're free spiritually whether you're a slave or not. Your status is “in Christ.” It has nothing to do with your surroundings.

“Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called.” Often we experience some resistance – the road gets rough – and we want to bolt. Paul is telling us to remain in the prickly place God has us. We’re there for a reason. Don’t leave until God issues your release.

Verse 25, “**Now concerning virgins...**” In ancient times almost everyone got married. “*Single*” was not a recognized status. If he were writing this chapter today Paul would probably start it, “*Now concerning singles...*” And once again he writes, “**I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy.**” As we said earlier, Paul isn’t *abdicating* the authority of inspiration. He’s *indicating* he’s about to tackle a subject Jesus didn’t directly address.

“**I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress - that it is good for a man to remain as he is: Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.**” In the rest of the chapter Paul is going to extol the virtues of singleness. If you’re single these verses will provide *much hope* and *great help*. If you’re married, *you didn’t make a mistake*. Paul knows his Bible and sees value in marriage. But based on current events – “*the present distress,*” as he calls it – he’ll explain why marriage is not such a good idea.

This is what Paul says in verse 28, “**But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.**” Several factors complicated life for the early Church. First, was a often vicious persecution. The early Christians lived under constant threat of bodily harm. Under such conditions marriage could be an awful liability. Think about it, a day at the office for Paul was preaching to hostile crowds - stirring up a riot - taking a beating - spending the night in prison - or shipwrecked in the deep sea. Ladies, what if you were married to Paul?... *It wouldn’t be an easy life. “Honey, stop tracking your blood in on the carpets...” “Paul please talk to your angel about breaking you out of jail so you can be home by dinner...”*

Voice of the Martyrs founder, Richard Wurmbrand, tells of a fellow pastor persecuted by the communists. They tried to torture him into denying Christ, but he stood firm in his faith - *until*, they brought in his 14 year-old son, and began beating him unmercifully. It was all the poor pastor could handle. He finally broke down, and verbally renounced his faith. It’s been said, “**A man who is a hero himself is a coward when he thinks of his wife and children.**” A married man is vulnerable in a way he wouldn’t be if he were single. Paul’s advice to the married is to live with the liability. But if you’re single, don’t get married unless you can accept greater risk.

Notice verse 29, “**But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away.**” Paul says, “*time is short.*” He’s living as if Jesus were coming at any moment. He’s streamlined his life so his only care is Christ. And he encourages married people to do the same. Of course, Paul isn’t suggesting we abandon our family and our marital responsibilities. I’ve known people who use their commitment to Christ as an excuse for neglecting their families. That’s not what Paul advocates. Don’t stop loving your family, but neither should you turn them into an idol. Some Christian families are so busy providing for each other they never make a sacrifice for anyone else. The point of marriage is to serve the Lord together. Some Christian couples *focus too much on the family*. The *goal of every Christian family* needs to be the *glory of God*.

Verse 32, “**But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord - how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the world - how he may please his wife.**” Understand, a single person is *free from distress*, but he or she is also *free from distraction*... When you get married suddenly there’re two sets of worries, and expenses, and demands, and interests, and perspectives... If I weren’t married I wouldn’t have to maintain two cars – or hang Christmas lights – or purchase lipstick – or call home

when I'm running late. I could spend all my time witnessing to people and serving the Lord!

But now that I'm married, God commands me to go home and minister to my wife. Michael Meaney writes, "I didn't know what happiness was until I got married, but then it was too late..." Hey, I'm thankful for my family. They add to my life in incredible ways. My wife and kids are blessings from God. But Paul is saying, if you're single, why not avoid the extra baggage? The other day I asked my college-aged son why he didn't have a girlfriend? He said, "I have a hard enough time putting up good grades now. What do you think it'd be like with a girl to please?" That was Paul's attitude! In "*the present distress*" a woman was a distraction Paul didn't need.

Verse 34, "There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world - how she may please *her* husband." A wife's big concern is pleasing her husband. *That's not always how it works, but that's the idea...* "And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction." In Ephesians 5 Paul pictures marriage as a beautiful love story. But Paul isn't always that romantic. If you're single beware! Here his picture is not as flattering – marriage is a "*leash*." It's a dog collar that curtails your freedom. That's a little harsh, but it's true. Marriage severely limits our autonomy.

"But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry." Again, marriage is not a sin. It's good. "Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well. So then he who gives *her* in marriage does well, but he who does not give *her* in marriage does better." It's *unclear* whether this is addressed to fathers, or men who were pledged to a bride. Either way, Paul's purpose is clear - if you have the self-control to live a solo life – and serve the Lord without distraction – it has its advantages.

Hear about the wedding at the bride's house? It started at 6:45, but the host forgot one detail. Just as the pastor asked, "Do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?" – a little bird slid from the mouth of an overhead clock and sounded, "cuckoo, cuckoo"... seven hilarious *cuckoos*. Well, that sums up Paul's take on marriage. Why be cuckoo and forego your freedom? Serve God without distraction. Be single for the Savior! He concludes, "A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord." Christians marry only "*in the Lord*" – or "*to another Christian*." "But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment - and I think I also have the Spirit of God." Here's the key, God calls some of us to be single, and others of us to be married. Our job is to **bloom where we're planted**. Whatever your status do all that you do to the glory of God!