

# 1 Corinthians Part One

## Lesson #23, Chapter 7:1-7

Read all of chapter 7 before beginning your lesson. Ask the Lord for discernment and understanding of His Word.

1. What does the statement, “*Now concerning the things about which you wrote,*” from chapter 7 verse 1 tell us about what Paul intends to do in this section?
2. What kinds of topics is Paul going to be discussing in chapter 7?
3. What do you know about the Corinthians and their culture that would explain why the Corinthians asked the questions they did of Paul in their previous letter? [If necessary review background information about life in Corinth from your study Bible or introduction in a commentary.]
4. How does the previous instruction from 1 Cor. 5:1, 12-13; 6:9-11, 12-20 lead into Paul's discussion in chapter 7 verses 1-7?
5. What question from the Corinthians seems to have preceded Paul's opening answer in verse 1?
6. The NIV Bible and many commentators say that the phrase, *it is good for a man not to touch a woman* should be translated *it is good for a man not to marry a woman*. Yet in the other 38 times the Greek word *hapto* is used in the New Testament, it is never translated as marry. It's translated as *touch, light, kindle, cling,* and *handle*, but never as marry. That means it's time for us to dig deeper into the passage and really examine this section of Scripture.

Whenever we have a word translated a variety of ways we know the word has richness and depth to its meaning. So we need to discover what the Greek word *hapto* means and then seek to apply the nuances of its meaning *according to the context* of our own passage, for a word primarily derives its meaning from its context.

- a. First, what do you learn about the word from Matt. 8:3, 15; Luke 11:33; Acts 28:2; 1 Cor. 7:1; 2 Cor. 6:17; and Col. 2:21?
  
  - b. Second, how does the context help us define the word? See 1 Cor. 6:18-20 and 7:2, 5.
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7. Based on what you've just learned about the word *hapto*, what did Paul mean when he wrote, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman"? In other words, provide us with a definition of the word.
  
  8. When should a man apply this admonition not to touch a woman?
  
  9. What degree of responsibility do we as women have to help our brothers in Christ apply this command? And what will that look like in our daily lives?
  
  10. Verse 2 provides us with a reason for applying the command not to fan the flame of sexual desire. What is the reason according to the beginning of verse 2?

11. What is the answer to overcoming many of the temptations men and women face in an increasingly immoral world (verses 2-3)?
  
12. Define *fulfill* (NKJV *render*; ESV *give* [Strong's #591]).
  
13. Based on the context of verses 1-7 what is the *duty* that each husband and wife is to fulfill to their spouse?
  
14. How would fulfilling that specific duty help married believers overcome temptations toward immorality?
  
15. Based on verses 1-7, if a wife does *not* fulfill this duty toward her husband what are the potential consequences?
  
16. Is the solution found here in these verses the *only* way we can escape sexual immorality? See also Ps. 119:11; Gal. 5:19-24; Eph. 5:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:14; Rev. 2:21. Why is that balanced understanding about temptation and ways to overcome it helpful?
  
17. What kind of attitude should a wife have about fulfilling this “duty?”

18. If you're married, consider how well you're attending to these admonitions. Based solely on your responsibility toward your husband, would he say he's bulletproof or easy prey to sexual temptation? If you're not sure, why not ask him and come up with a plan for protecting him from sexual immorality.
  
19. If you're not married, consider ways you can apply this passage in your life. Try to think of at least three specific ways.
  
20. Verse 4 provides us with another aspect of the intimate side of marriage. What is that? How would understanding this truth help us to serve our spouses in this way? Give a practical way this could be applied.
  
21. What guidelines are given if the “special duty” is to be laid aside for a while (verse 5)?
  
22. Paul's statement in verse 6 might seem confusing until you read similar ones in verses 10, 12, 17, 25, and 40. What is Paul's purpose in making those distinctions between himself and the Lord?
  - a. What do you learn about the authority of the apostles to proclaim God's Word to us? See Luke 10:16; 2 Cor. 10:8; Titus 2:15.
  
  - b. What impact should that make upon us as we hear the Word of God proclaimed?

23. Verse 7 tells us Paul has a wish for everyone. What is it? See verses 7-8.
  
24. We'll spend more time on this subject in the next lesson, but what significant piece of revelation is revealed in verse 7?
  
25. As you think about these verses, what misunderstandings about sex, marriage, and spirituality did the Corinthians have which were harmful to their relationships in marriage, with one another, and with the Lord?

Sexual expression within marriage is not an option or an extra. It is certainly not, as it has sometimes been considered, a necessary evil in which spiritual Christians engage only to procreate children. It is far more than a physical act. God created it to be the expression and experience of love on the deepest human level and to be a beautiful and powerful bond between husband and wife.<sup>1</sup> ~ John MacArthur

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *I Corinthians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), pg. 157.