

# END-TIMES ISSUES



**#116** Commandment #7 – Marriage options (1).

GOD DOESN'T TELL US TO KNOW ALL THE END-TIME DETAILS. HE TELLS US TO BE READY.

A N D B E Y O N D I

1

## SEVENTH COMMANDMENT MARRIAGE OPTIONS.

- We have seen what God says concerning this commandment...
    - ✓ In the book of Genesis; in the Law given to Moses; in Jesus' words.
    - ✓ Now it's time to see what God says through the Apostle Paul.
  - 1 Corinthians gives us all of our options (as well as "non-options").
    - ✓ Some of the options are given in response to a specific question the Corinthians apparently asked; some are given in the process of Paul telling them how to deal with sin in the church.
    - ✓ What Paul says agrees with the testimony of Genesis, the Law, and Jesus.
    - ✓ He also gives some advice that Jesus did not mention anything about – though that does not mean we can call it "mere opinion." In each case, he points out the *facts* that lead to his conclusion – and these supporting facts are *not* "opinion." (Now, having become part of Scripture, his conclusions are shown to have God's approval.)
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- Be aware that different parts of Scripture will have different emphases (though they all have the same over-all message).
    - ✓ God/Jesus focus mostly (not exclusively) on the nature of marriage. There are some "do not" statements; but most "do not" statements are given (by God) through the prophets and apostles.
    - ✓ The prophets (including Moses) and the apostles (including Paul) explain the implications of the Seventh Commandment. They often have to focus on the "do not" aspect. They mention some issues that are not dealt with in Genesis/Exodus, or by Jesus.
  - Circumstances that influence what we find in Scripture.
    - ✓ First, sin has entered the world. Because of this, prohibitions that would have *never* needed to be mentioned are now necessary.
    - ✓ Second, we are now living in what the New Testament calls the "last days." This fact is to influence our attitude toward this topic of marriage ... as well as toward *all* of life.
    - ✓ In no case do "good" options and "evil" options switch places. *This does not happen.* Good remains good; evil remains evil.
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## SO, WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?

- The apostle Paul mentions, whether briefly or extensively, *all* of our options.
    - ✓ He also alludes to the "spiritual" dimension of this commandment. (After all, this is the *ultimate* reason for God creating sexuality. *All* creation was designed to glorify God and to teach us about him.)
- Ⓜ OPTIONS REGARDING SEXUAL SIN OF ANY KIND.
- Paul does not need to list *every possible* sexual sin.
    - ✓ People are constantly inventing new ways to do evil (Romans 1:30).
    - ✓ Regardless of what the sexual sin may be, they *all* belong in the same *category*: conduct that violates God's definition of male, female and marriage, and that goes against the nature of God.
    - ✓ However, he *does* mention a few examples in 1 Corinthians 5 and 6, as he is dealing with an example of such a sin – one that was present in the Corinthian church.
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- The *specific sin* that was present in the Corinthian church.
  - ✓ This man was cohabiting with his father's wife (most likely either his stepmother or his father's mistress).
  - ✓ This was something that even the *Gentiles* found objectionable.
  - ✓ Paul opposed it because *Scripture* said it was sin, not because he had an "opinion" that it was wrong. See: Leviticus 18:7-8; Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20. [In the Leviticus passage, the contrast between the two verses seems to indicate that it wasn't his *biological* mother. (Verse 7 would apply to her.)]

It is actually reported that there is **sexual immorality\*** [= fornication] among you, and of a kind that is intolerable even among pagans: A man has his father's wife.

1 Corinthians 5:1 (BSB)

\* "Fornication" is a word that has fallen into disuse in our society. Today, most young people commit it; and they prefer calling it something that doesn't sound so sinful. Because of this resulting *ignorance* of the word, most translations now use the term "sexual immorality" – something that people better understand, but which is less precise in meaning.

- The Corinthian's reaction to this sin; their obligation to deal with it.

And **you are proud!** Shouldn't you rather have been stricken with grief and have removed from your fellowship the man who did this?

1 Corinthians 5:1-2 (BSB)

- ✓ The church was characterized by its boasting about how "spiritual" they were. Paul had already mentioned this issue in previous chapters, and would mention it again, later.
  - ✓ Like a typical self-absorbed, boasting church, their response to sin in the church was to *ignore* it. They just closed their eyes to it, and pretended it didn't exist ... and continued in their prideful boasting. *Yet this was a sin that even pagans condemned!*
  - ✓ Paul continues by explaining the *necessity* of discipline in the church – in this case, excommunication. Not only is the unrepentant person in danger of *eternal* destruction, but his presence would have a corrupting influence on others in the church. *This is not a matter to be ignored!* People who indulge in such sins are not saved! *Don't pretend that everything is OK!*
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- Paul gives examples of *other* types of sexual conduct that belong in this same category.

Do you not know that **the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God**? Do not be deceived: Neither the **sexually immoral [= fornication]**, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers**, nor **men who submit to or perform homosexual acts**, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor verbal abusers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (BSB)

- ✓ These examples of sexual sin are representative of *all* sexual sins and perversions. They all belong in the same category; and they *all* fall under the same condemnation.
- ✓ Note that older translations don't use the actual word "homosexual." Like many languages, English *used* to use euphemisms and roundabout ways to discuss such issues. (This has obviously changed.) Also, that word was invented in 1868... and translations are slow to change!
- ✓ Note also that Paul essentially says that *all* sinful conduct places us into the "will not inherit the kingdom of God" category. And if this was the end of the paragraph, *there would be no hope for any of us.* HOPE!

- God offers hope!

And that is what some of you were. But you were **washed**, you were **sanctified**, you were **justified**, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6:11 (BSB)

- ✓ God offers hope to those who are willing to accept what Scripture says, repent of their sin, and trust him for the power to change. Paul is writing to people who had done just that – though as *new-born* followers of Jesus, they *still* had much to learn (and much to change).
- ✓ In the specific situation mentioned in chapter 5, the man was excommunicated. It seems that (based on 2 Corinthians) he later repented of his sin and was welcomed back into the church.

#### What does *your* church do?

Many churches are unwilling to obey God in this matter. They tend to be just like the Corinthians originally were – ignoring the sin, and boasting about how "spiritual" or "alive" the church is. Often, when people get pregnant from fornication, others in the church even *congratulate* them!

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- What do *other* sections of Scripture say? Do they agree with this?

- ✓ **The Law** – It lists a wide variety of sexual sins, and says they are evil. Depending on the nature of the sin, the consequences could range from a punishment or fine, to excommunication, or even death.
- ✓ **The prophets** – They mention these sins *many* times, always describing them as evil, and worthy of God's wrath.
- ✓ **Jesus** – He mentions a few sexual sins (mainly while discussing the nature of sin in general), and affirms that they are evil. But the Jews already knew these things; so, he doesn't have to repeat everything.
- ✓ **Paul** – He affirms the evil nature of sexual sins in many of his epistles. The Gentiles, to whom he was writing, needed to learn these things.
- ✓ **Other New Testament authors** – Sexual sins are mentioned in various contexts by several other New Testament authors, and are *always* described as evil.

★ Nowhere in all of Scripture are any of these practices described as "righteous," "acceptable" or even "neutral." They are *always* treated as sin. *All of Scripture teaches the same message as Paul.*

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#### ② SPIRITUAL MATTERS RELATED TO SEXUAL CONDUCT.

(We will look more at this issue in the future.)

- This is *not* Paul's main focus in 1 Corinthians, but he does mention it.
  - ✓ God created human sexuality for something *more* than just creating children or enjoyment. It was to teach us things that we could call "spiritual" truths.
  - ✓ One such example has to do with our union with Christ and what it means... not just in *eternity*, but its spiritual significance *now*.
  - ✓ Here, Paul points out the *incompatibility* of a person being *united* to Christ AND being *united* to a prostitute.

Do you not know that your bodies are **members of Christ**? Shall I then take the **members of Christ** and **unite** them with a prostitute? Never! Or don't you know that he who **unites** himself with a prostitute is **one with her in body**? For it is said, "**The two will become one flesh.**" But he who **unites** himself with the Lord is **one with Him in spirit**. Flee from sexual immorality [= fornication].

1 Corinthians 6:15-18a (BSB)

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- What do *other* sections of Scripture say? Do they agree?

- ✓ **Old Testament** – Many passages (especially in the prophets) have similar themes, describing the relationship of God to Israel, as well as what Israel was like, when they turned away from God. You will find the marriage concept mentioned, along with virginity, divorce, adultery, prostitution, etc. Their sexual practices tended to parallel their relationship with God (or with false gods).
- ✓ **New Testament** – Many passages use marriage-related concepts, as well as sexual sins, to describe various situations related to Christians, the church, church-going fakes and false teachers, the world, spiritual compromise, etc.
- ✓ **"Object lessons"** – Scripture also uses historic events that were associated with sexual sin (such as Sodom) to teach or warn us about sin and its consequences.

★ **Be aware:** Our use of the word "spiritual" does *not* imply that it is imaginary or unrelated to "real life" (the way the world often views it). God intended a *real* parallel between the "physical" and the "spiritual"; so don't pervert what God designed to be *holy*!

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#### WHAT'S HAPPENED IN THE LAST FEW DECADES?

- **Society in general** is experiencing the *consequences* of a generation that was raised without the moral influence of the Bible (which has been increasingly *suppressed* and treated as irrelevant to life).
- **The result of suppressing the truth?** Nearly every sexual sin is now considered acceptable – and is often *encouraged* by people who no longer have a moral conscience (except maybe a *fake* one).
  - ✓ They had to *suppress* the moral conscience that God originally gave them, so that they could agree with the perverse views of the world.
  - ✓ But the following was originally true of them:

Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, **their consciences also bearing witness**, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.

Romans 2:14-15 (NIV)

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- **Where the world goes, so goes the apostate church.**
- ✓ As often seen in the Old Testament, and warned about in the New Testament, those who *claim* to follow the God of the Bible are often more like "wolves in sheep's clothing." As Paul warned:
 

... **savage wolves** will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number, **men will rise up and distort the truth** to draw away disciples after them.

Acts 20:29b-30 (BSB)
- ✓ Today (just as you might expect), many false teachers have crept into the church, and have led many people astray.
- ✓ It's *not* that Scripture is *unclear* about these issues – for these things are condemned throughout the Bible! Rather, people are *unwilling* to examine Scripture for themselves. They would rather believe *human* teachings over what *Scripture* says.



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- **The end result?**
- ✓ Sin that was *always* recognized as being *totally contrary* to God's Word, for over 1900 years of Christianity, is now not only *tolerated*, but also *encouraged*.
- ✓ The "churches" doing this are not only *proud* of it, but they *often boast about their pride*. They haven't just returned to the "Corinthian situation" of *ignoring* sin in their midst... they have *surpassed* Corinth in their sin.
  - ✦ At least the church at Corinth *repented* (unlike these apostates).
- ✓ *None* of this modern-day evil is due to the truth "changing" – because it doesn't. Rather, it's because people who *claim* to be "Christian" have gone apostate in their desire to accommodate the views of the *world... rejecting the clear teaching of Scripture*.
 

They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality ...

Jude 1:4b (NIV)

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- **What are they accomplishing?**
- ✓ They *don't* bring people to *Christ*. They don't expose them to Scripture (unless it's distorted), nor do they encourage them to admit that their sin *is* sin, to repent of it, and to trust Christ for change.
- ✓ Instead, they drag people deeper into *depravity*. They encourage and reinforce conduct that will eventually result in their hearer's *eternal destruction*.

JESUS WELCOMES YOU, AND AFFIRMS YOUR SEXUAL CHOICES!

THOSE THINGS AREN'T SIN! ONLY INTOLERANT PEOPLE SAY THEY ARE!



You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces.  
You snakes! You brood of vipers!  
How will you escape the sentence of hell?

Matthew 23:13b, 33 (BSB)

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- ✓ They also *encourage* people to be *hostile* to the truth. →
- **Is there any hope for people who are deceived by these false teachers?**
- ✓ We cannot forget *grace* (which we've already mentioned). However, *grace is unavailable for those who reject what grace teaches!*
- ✓ We have a responsibility to be *willing* to accept the truth. If we persist in *refusing* the truth, we may lose the ability to accept it. →

Many will follow their depraved conduct and **will bring the way of truth into disrepute**.

2 Peter 2:2 (NIV)

**It teaches us** to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age ...

Titus 2:12 (NIV)

For the time will come when **people will not put up with sound doctrine**. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. **They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths**.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 (NIV)

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**The Seventh Commandment Marriage Options**

*Today: We saw what is NOT an option.*

**NEXT TIME:** We plan to look at the *legitimate* marriage options.

## TODAY'S MISSION:

### PURSUE AND LOVE THE TRUTH!

★ The only other option is to perish. ★

**They perish** because **they refused to love the truth** and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

2 Thessalonians 2:10b-12 (NIV)

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For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (NIV)

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