

Discussion Questions Set #1

“Now for the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:1-4)

It appears some within the Corinthian church believed that to be spiritual – to have the Spirit - meant to be non-physical; therefore they began denying sexual intimacy with spouses or actively seeking divorce when such a lack of intimate physicality caused conflict within marriages.

1. This is a doozy of a question, but here goes: discuss how you believe faith in Jesus – and more specifically newfound faith in Jesus - impacts a marriage?
2. How does the physical and the spiritual intersect in the life of a follower of Jesus? What might a balanced understanding of these two realities look like?
3. Note the boundaries placed around sexual relations in the above passage. Why are such boundaries helpful? What cultural assumptions might such boundaries challenge in our world?
4. Note the incredible mutuality of “ownership” expressed in the above passage. How does this challenge cultural assumptions about marriage and sexual intimacy (i.e. my body, my choice)?

Discussion Questions Set #2

“Each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that ... But if [the unmarried] cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” (1 Corinthians 7:7,9)

“To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:10-11)

“How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?” (1 Corinthians 7:16)

1. How might understanding celibacy as a gift of God, rather than a choice (willingly chosen or forced through circumstances) help us arrive at a healthier understanding of sexuality within the church?
2. If such things truly are gifts from God, why do you think the church is often reluctant to discuss such realities? Our culture is incredibly open about sex and sexuality, so why might the church be closed to such discussion?
3. How does marriage, as a safe place for sexual relations, provide us protection from immoral expressions of sexuality? How might marriage be protective and sanctifying in this regard? Do we generally view marriage in this way?
4. Why do you think Paul is so adamant that followers of Jesus not divorce, unless under very specific circumstances?
5. Discuss the following statement in light of our culture’s stance on divorce and remarriage: *“if separation from one’s spouse is unavoidable, Paul directs us not to simply become serial monogamists – moving from one marriage to the next - but to aim for reconciliation with a believing spouse or else remain unmarried”.*

Discussion Questions Set #3

“Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them.” (1 Corinthians 7:17)

1. Discuss the following statement: “the point of following Jesus isn’t to simply seek changes in earthly status, but to work out how one’s faith ought to be applied within one’s present circumstances. How does this inform our ideas about marriage and sexual intimacy?”
2. Does your faith influence your parenting, your marriage, your work life, your finances, your understanding of your sexuality?