

1 Cor Sermon Series Chapter 7

Final Outline:

OUTLINE:

1. Purpose of thought (v1)
 1. In response to what you wrote: Corinth wrote asking for clarification.
2. Response (v2-40)
 1. Instructions to the Married (v2-7)
 1. Reason (v2)
 2. Sexual Relations within marriage (v2)
 3. Do not deprive (3-7)
 1. Husbands and wives have duty to one another.
 2. Abstinence should be mutual and for a short period.
 3. Prolonged abstinence can lead to temptation.
 2. To the unmarried (v8-9)
 1. It is good (not bad) to remain unmarried. (v8)
 2. Better to marry if theres lack of self control (v9)
 3. On Divorce (v10-16)
 1. Do not divorce (10,11)
 1. Do not divorce.
 2. If divorced, remain unmarried or reconciliation.
 2. Living unequally yoked (12-16)
 1. Do not divorce your unbelieving spouse.
 1. The unbelieving may leave if they desire.
 2. By remaining, you may save your spouse.
 4. Remaining (v17-24)
 1. On circumcision (17-19)
 1. Dont undo or get circumcision.
 2. Circumcision isnt important, obeying God is.
 2. Regarding Slavery (20-24)
 1. Slaves remain
 1. Dont run away
 2. Seek freedom if possible
 2. Freeman, dont become slaves
 1. you are slaves to Christ
 2. you are bought with a price
 5. Paul on the unmarried and marriage (v25-38)
 1. Remaining (25-31)
 1. Those bound in marriage, dont divorce
 2. Those unmarried, Paul prefers you stay this way.
 1. But getting married is not a sin.
 2. Explanation (v29-31)
 1. Paul explains why he supports remaining unmarried.
 3. Support (v32-38)

1. Concern and distraction
2. Self control
 1. It is better to marry then to lack self control.
6. Remarriage of Widows (v39,40)
 1. A wife is unbound after her husband dies.
 2. It is ok to remarry, but within the church.

Now in response to the matters you wrote about:
This is something Corinth wrote to ask about
 "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." But because sexual immorality is so common, each man should **have** sexual relations with his **own** wife, and each woman should **have** sexual relations with her **own** husband. A husband should **fulfill** his marital duty to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. A wife does not have the right over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband does not have the right over his own body, but his wife does. Do not **deprive** one another—except when you agree for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all people were as I

Question

Instructions to Married People

get w/ll marriage

Don't deprive your partner

SO important!

am. But each has his own gift from God, one person has this gift, another has that.

I say to the unmarried and to widows: **It is good** for them if they **remain as I am**. But if they do not have self-control, they should **marry**, since it is better to marry than to burn with desire.

not a command

In that, His not bad

Paul addresses that it may be better to remain unmarried, but certain better to marry than to burn with passion

To the married I give this command—not I, but the Lord—a wife is not to leave her husband. But if she does leave, she must **remain** unmarried or be reconciled to her husband—and a husband is not to divorce his wife. But I (not the Lord) say to the rest: If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he **must** not **divorce** her. Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she

Paul stressed that the following is his own exhortation

It is not permissible for the saved party to divorce an unsaved party because of unbelief.

must not **divorce** her husband. For the unbelieving husband is made holy by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to live in peace. Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife.

Giving Unrequited Love

Let each one **live** his **life** in the situation the Lord assigned when God called him. This is what I command in all the churches. Was anyone already circumcised when he was called? He should not **undo his circumcision**. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? He should not get circumcised.

Remember

Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not matter. Keeping God's commands is what matters. Let each of you remain in the **situation** in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Don't let it **concern** you. But if you can become free, by all means take the opportunity. For he who is called by the Lord as a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called as a free man is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not **become** slaves of people. Brothers and sisters, each person **is to remain** with God in the situation in which he was called.

Remaining

Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I do give an opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is faithful. Because of the present **distress**, I think that it is good for a man to remain

Paul on getting married

This is what informs Paul's opinion

What is to follow is Paul's own opinion, through an opinion of one whose fidelity

*This isn't really expressed elsewhere.
Is this instruction due to Corinthian issues?*

as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not **seek** to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not **seek** a wife. However, if you do get married, you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. *It is not a sin to marry* But such people will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.

And as gets married
explanation
This is what I mean, brothers and sisters: The time is limited, so from now on 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 didn't own anything, and those who use the world as though they did not make full use of it. For this world in its current form is passing away.

5c part
I want you to be without concerns. The unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. But the

married man is concerned about the things of the world—how he may please his wife—and his interests are divided. The unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. I am saying this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but to promote what is proper and so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.

If any man thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, if she is getting beyond the usual age for marriage, and he feels he should marry—he can **do** what he wants. He is not sinning; they can get **married**. But he who stands firm in his heart (who is under no compulsion, but has control over his own will) and

has decided in his heart to keep her as his fiancée, will do well. So, then, he who marries his fiancée does well, but he who does not marry will do better.

A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants—only in the Lord. But she is happier if she remains as she is, in my opinion. And I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

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Now in response to the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” But because sexual immorality is so common, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman should have sexual relations with her own husband. A husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. A wife does not have the right over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband does not have the right over his own body, but his wife does. Do not deprive one another—except when you agree for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all people were as I am. But each has his own gift from God, one person has this gift, another has that.

A WORD TO THE UNMARRIED

I say to the unmarried and to widows: It is good for them if they remain as I am. But if they do not have self-control, they should marry, since it is better to marry than to burn with desire.

ABOUT MARRIED PEOPLE

To the married I give this command—not I, but the Lord—a wife is not to leave her husband. But if she does leave, she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband—and a husband is not to divorce his wife. But I (not the Lord) say to the rest: If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce her husband. For the unbelieving husband is made holy by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to live in peace. Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife.

VARIOUS SITUATIONS OF LIFE

Let each one live his life in the situation the Lord assigned when God called him. This is what I command in all the churches. Was anyone already circumcised when he was called? He should not undo his circumcision. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? He should not get circumcised. Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not matter. Keeping God’s commands is what matters. Let each of you remain in the

situation in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Don't let it concern you. But if you can become free, by all means take the opportunity. For he who is called by the Lord as a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called as a free man is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of people. Brothers and sisters, each person is to remain with God in the situation in which he was called.

ABOUT THE UNMARRIED AND WIDOWS

Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I do give an opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is faithful. Because of the present distress, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. However, if you do get married, you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But such people will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.

This is what I mean, brothers and sisters: The time is limited, so from now on 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 didn't own anything, and those who use the world as though they did not make full use of it. For this world in its current form is passing away.

I want you to be without concerns. The unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. But the married man is concerned about the things of the world—how he may please his wife—and his interests are divided. The unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. I am saying this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but to promote what is proper and so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.

If any man thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, if she is getting beyond the usual age for marriage, and he feels he should marry—he can do what he wants. He is not sinning; they can get married. But he who stands firm in his heart (who is under no compulsion, but has control over his own will) and has decided in his heart to keep her as his fiancée, will do well. So, then, he who marries his fiancée does well, but he who does not marry will do better.

A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants—only in the Lord. But she is

happier if she remains as she is, in my opinion. And I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

Draft Outline

As I've read through the chapter, I have outlined the major speaking points of the Apostle. Overall, the chapter deals with issues of marriage, though there is one paragraph that breaks from that overall theme. How it plays into Paul's overall theme of marriage is to be determined.

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ASIC

Now in response to the matters you wrote about:
“It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” ^{Why But? sexual morality has always been commended} But because sexual immorality is so common, each man should **have** sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman should **have** sexual relations with her own husband. A husband should **fulfill** his marital duty to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. A wife does not have the right over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband does not have the right over his own body, but his wife does. Do not **deprive** one another—except when you agree for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all people were as I ^{to what specifically}

am. But each has his own gift from God, one person has this gift, another has that.

I say to the unmarried and to widows: It is good for them if they remain ^{unmarried} (as I am). But if they do not have self-control, they should **marry**, since it is better to marry than to burn with desire.

To the married I give this command—not I, but the Lord—a wife is not to leave her husband. But if she does leave, she must **remain** unmarried or be reconciled to her husband—and a husband is not to divorce his wife. But I (not the Lord) say to the rest: If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he **must** not **divorce** her. Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she

must not **divorce** her husband. For the unbelieving husband is made holy by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to live in peace. Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife.

Let each one **live** his **life** in the situation the Lord assigned when God called him. This is what I command in all the churches. Was anyone already circumcised when he was called? He should not **undo his circumcision**. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? He should not get circumcised.

Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not matter. Keeping God's commands is what matters. Let each of you remain in the **situation** in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Don't let it **concern** you. But if you can become free, by all means take the opportunity. For he who is called by the Lord as a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called as a free man is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not **become** slaves of people. Brothers and sisters, each person **is to remain** with God in the situation in which he was called.

Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I do give an opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is faithful. Because of the present distress, I think that it is good for a man to remain

as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not **seek** to be released. ^{Is this due to contracts issues w/ incapacity?} Are you released from a wife? Do not **seek** a wife. However, if you do get married, you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But such people will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.

This is what I mean, brothers and sisters: The time is limited, so from now on 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 didn't own anything, and those who use the world as though they did not make full use of it. For this world in its current form is passing away.

I want you to be without concerns. The unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. But the

married man is concerned about the things of the world—how he may please his wife—and his interests are divided. The unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. I am saying this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but to promote what is proper and so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.

If any man thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, if she is getting beyond the usual age for marriage, and he feels he should marry—he can **do** what he wants. He is not sinning; they can get **married**. But he who stands firm in his heart (who is under no compulsion, but has control over his own will) and

has decided in his heart to keep her as his fiancée, will do well. So, then, he who marries his fiancée does well, but he who does not marry will do better.

A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants—^{within the church?} only in the Lord. But she is happier if she remains as she is, in my opinion. And I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

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Notes on verse 2 (“but”)

Critics of the traditional view point out that Paul himself, although celibate, was not an ascetic (Col 2:20–21; 1 Tim 4:3) and the idea that marriage might be thought of as a sin (7:28, 36) can only express a Corinthian point of view. The term “good” could be a Corinthian term, much the same as “wisdom” in chaps. 1–3, that Paul uses with his own meaning. As with the slogans in 6:12–20, Paul is responding to their perspective, not setting forth his own beliefs per se. He may agree with the Corinthian sentiment to a point, but he sharply qualifies their position (7:2–5). The phrase “not to touch a woman” indicates celibacy, but it does not signify “not to marry.” In other words, some in Corinth espoused celibacy as an ideal, even within marriage. To the Corinthian catchphrase, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman,” Paul responds, “Yes, but not within marriage.” Verse 1b is a slogan that expresses a viewpoint that Paul will accept only with certain modifications under certain conditions. Thus, in 7:2, Paul does not advise to “get married,” but rather he instructs the already married to maintain sexual relations within marriage and then elaborates in 7:3–5. The imperative of 7:5 reflects what is actually going on in Corinth; marriage partners are depriving one another from sexual relations. The verb “to have” in 7:2 means “to enjoy sexual possession of someone,” as it does in 5:1. The verb can refer to the already married in certain contexts (7:12, 13, 29), but the sense of the term in 7:2 does not seem to indicate the meaning, “to acquire a wife.” In this view, Paul strongly qualifies the Corinthian position of 7:1b. Celibacy is commendable for those who choose it, but it is not allowable in marriage. This gives due weight to the imperative verbs. Paul is not commanding marriage, but he is commanding that those who are married maintain their sexual relationship. Paul does not explicitly command, “Get married,” as he does in 7:9. This view does not change the force of the causal phrase at the beginning of 7:2, “Since there is so much immorality,” but it does give it a different focus. Failure to maintain sexual relations among married couples increases the temptation to engage in illicit relationships. Thiselton notes an increasing consensus toward this view, both in commentaries and in specialist monographs. 20411 Taylor, M. (2014). 1

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Do not deprive one another—except when you agree for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command.

The correct interpretation is thus diametrically opposed to the Augustinian reading. Paul does not concede that marriage and sexual relations are permissible; he concedes that married couples may abstain from sexual relations for a short period of time if they so desire. Another way of putting it is that there is no requirement or even inclination on Paul's part to recommend temporary periods of abstinence for married couples. If they wish to refrain from sex, well and good, but Paul does not think such a provision is necessary or required.¹¹ Schreiner, T. R. (2018). *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* (E. J. Schnabel, Ed.; Vol. 7, p. 137). Inter-Varsity Press.

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I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all people were as I am. But each has his own gift from God, one person has this gift, another has that.

A WORD TO THE UNMARRIED

I say to the unmarried and to widows: It is good for them if they remain as I am. But if they do not have self-control, they should marry, since it is better to marry than to burn with desire.

Paul may have been previously married, but is not as of this writing

7:8 The term “unmarried” could, of itself, refer to the unmarried in general, whether never married, divorced, or single again due to the death of a spouse. Some think Paul has in mind especially widowers since the word is used in conjunction with the term “widows,” who would also fall under the category of the “unmarried.”²³⁰ Fee holds this view and suggests the term “demarried” describes Paul’s use of the term in chap. 7 since it is applied to the divorced woman in 7:11 and set in contrast to the virgins in 7:34. In his view Paul probably does not have in mind the “never married” since he addresses this group more specifically in 7:25–38. This understanding of the term gives a balanced symmetry to the chapter as a whole; 7:1–16 addresses those presently or formerly married, while 7:25–38 addresses those never married. Fee contends that, although Greek has a term for “widower,” its usage was rare and never occurs during the New Testament era. Furthermore, Paul deals with mutualities throughout this passage, and it would fit his pattern to set “widowers” and “widows” side by side.²³² Ciampa and Rosner find these arguments unconvincing, pointing out that evidence is lacking for assigning a specific meaning to the term such as “widower” or the like. The term is ambiguous and simply means “unmarried.”

If the term “unmarried” denotes a widower, some see in this passage a hint that Paul was once married since he advises to “remain as I am.” That Paul would have been married at some point in his life would have been consistent with his Jewish heritage. The evidence is not conclusive, however, and ultimately we cannot know for sure. It is clear that Paul was not married at the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians, and there is no trace of a wife or child anywhere in Acts or Paul’s letters. It is best not to read beyond the evidence that we have and simply confess that we do not

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We have seen earlier that 'calling' (1:9, 24, 26) refers to God's effectual call to salvation, and here the situation or station of life of a person who is called to salvation is considered. The word *as* (*hōs*) is important here, denoting not calling per se but the circumstances in which a believer was called. *Believers* should not worry about changing their social status or their particular circumstances, as if such matters were crucial for their relationship to God¹¹ Schreiner, T. R. (2018). *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* (E. J. Schnabel, Ed.; Vol. 7, p. 146). Inter-Varsity Press.

Paul addresses those who were called to salvation when they were serving as slaves, and by addressing slaves directly he shows that he values their personhood and dignity. They must not be troubled about their situation—the word used for *trouble* is often translated 'worry' (*meletō*). Paul's counsel is instructive for discerning the situation he addresses. Some of the Corinthians were probably concerned that their status as slaves would make them less effective and less useful as Christians. However, changing status, according to Paul, is inconsequential and should not concern slaves.¹¹ Schreiner, T. R. (2018). *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* (E. J. Schnabel, Ed.; Vol. 7, pp. 149–150). Inter-Varsity Press.

"Each one" is placed in an emphatic position and occurs twice. Paul has in

mind God's assigned status to each individual Christian. The point is that one's station in life is under the sovereign hand of God. Paul will make a similar point in chap. 12 regarding God's sovereign distribution of spiritual gifts to "each one" in the church (12:7). In context God's assignment and calling has to do with one's marital status at the time of conversion. If backward referring specifically to 7:12–16, then Paul has in mind the believer married to the unbeliever. More likely, Paul has in mind all of the situations addressed in chap. 7 to which the principle, "Remain as you are," applies. Blomberg observes, "The entire verse implies that in whatever state we are when we come to the Lord, we should function faithfully in that state without immediately seeking to change it." The language of calling reminds the Corinthians yet again of the divine initiative in salvation that Paul emphasized repeatedly in chap. 1 (1:2, 9, 23, 26). In 1:26–31 Paul reminded them of their status in life when God chose them. Paul uses the term calling "of the condition in which a man is when the converting call of God comes to him and summons him to the life of Christian faith and obedience."¹¹ Taylor, M. (2014). *1 Corinthians* (E. R. Clendenen, Ed.; Vol. 28, pp. 179–180). B&H Publishing Group.

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Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. However, if you do get married, you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But such people will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.

Instead, as the niv attests, Paul refers to someone who is *pledged* (*dedesai*) to be married to a virgin. Reading the verse this way fits with the reference to virgins in verse 25. Also, Paul has already discussed whether a married believer can get divorced (7:10–11); thus it is more likely that he addresses a new topic. A man pledged to marry a virgin should not break his engagement and renounce the commitment he has made. Alternatively, a man who is not pledged to a virgin—one who is not confined by any promises he has made—should not make it his goal to seek (*zētei*) a wife. If he ends up getting married, such a decision is not wrong (see v. 28), but marriage should not be his aim and purpose. We see in this verse the application of the Pauline rule articulated in verses 17–24: one should not change one's station in life. Those engaged should not break an engagement, while those who are not so pledged should remain as they are and not seek to change their situation. At the same time, in subsequent verses there is the recognition that even one who is not pledged to a virgin is free to marry. Even though a man may not be seeking a wife, circumstances may turn out in such a way that he ends up marrying, and such marriage may be a good thing.¹¹ Schreiner, T. R. (2018). *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* (E. J. Schnabel, Ed.; Vol. 7, p. 155). Inter-Varsity Press.

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This is what I mean, brothers and sisters: The time is limited, so from now on 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 didn't own anything, and those who use the world as though they did not make full use of it. For this world in its current form is passing away.

The eschatological framework and foundation for Paul's instructions are now unpacked, and they lend support to the notion that 'the present distress' (v. 26, csb) is eschatological. Since the Christ has come and now reigns at God's right hand, the time before the end has been shortened. The 'culmination of the ages has come' in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:11). The hour before the end is brief, and believers should constantly live in the light of the end (Rom. 13:11–14). Everything in life must be recalibrated and considered in the light of the imminence of the end. Therefore, those who *have wives should live as if they do not*. A wooden reading of the verse would badly misunderstand Paul, for he certainly does not cancel out his instructions elsewhere in which husbands are told to love and cherish their wives, showing them the same kind of sacrificial love Christ exhibited for the church in giving his life for the church's salvation (Eph. 5:25–29). Paul's point is that marriage is temporary; thus believers should not live as if their ultimate joy and satisfaction are derived from their marital relationship. Since marriage is not permanent, believers must seek their ultimate joy not in marriage but in their relationship with

Christ.¹¹ Schreiner, T. R. (2018). *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* (E. J. Schnabel, Ed.; Vol. 7, p. 156). Inter-Varsity Press.