

The Royal Route to Heaven

1 Corinthians Chapter 7

Chapter 7 begins with the words “*Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me...*” This statement makes it clear that Paul is writing the next verses as an answer to questions the Corinthian church had asked him in a previous letter. It is important for us to get the cultural context. When you get to chapter 7 it is to be considered with the second coming of Christ or persecution. They believed that time was short, either the Lord was going to come for them or they were going to be martyred. With this in mind we will take the opportunity to see what the scriptures say for us to apply to our lives today.

Pray that as we take time to search the scriptures for God’s Word on each of the states of life: men and women, husbands and wives, single and widowed, slave and free, touching every state you might find yourself in today, we will know His will for us as we walk this Royal Route.

Key Word(s)

Read through the entire chapter, looking for words or themes that are repeated. You might want to underline them in your Bible.

1. This week we will not pick a word for you, so read the chapter and write the word or phrase that is repeated or simply jumps put at you.

2. What does the word or phrase you chose speak to you today?

As we consider Chapter 7 we will take the verses in groups according to topic, not necessarily in order. It is good to remember that Corinth was a very wicked and promiscuous city. There was a temple to Aphrodite with over 1000 priestesses who were really prostitutes; their religion involved sexual activity offering an abundant opportunity for sexual immorality.

Husbands and Wives - Read 1 Corinthians 7:2-6.

1. Summarize what Paul has to say about the marriage relationship in these verses.

2. 1 Corinthians 7:4 talks about a husband and wife having “authority” or “power” over each other’s bodies. These terms would be totally rejected in our society because they would be misunderstood. It is certainly not an opening for abuse in a marriage, but rather the opposite.

Read the following scriptures and share how they apply to 1 Corinthians 7:4.

a. Genesis 2:24

b. Mark 10:6-9

3. What do the following verses have to add to the understanding of how husbands and wives should relate?

a. Colossians 3:18

b. 1 Peter 3:7

4. Considering your answers from questions 1,2 and 3, how would you explain to someone God’s plan for the marriage relationship?

5. Now read 1 Corinthians 7:7-9. As you read these verses, remember that Paul is advising a church about to face persecution and do not take them to mean that marriage is not God’s will. What do the following verses have to say about marriage?

a. Genesis 2:18

b. Proverbs 18:22

c. Proverbs 19:14

d. Hebrews 13:4

Marriage - Read Ephesians 5:22-33.

Paul's words in 1 Corinthians are not the only place in scripture we have instruction as husbands and wives. Let's look to Ephesians for the principles given for marriage.

1. What does Paul compare the marriage relationship to in this passage?

2. Ephesians 5:24 says, "*Wives submit to your own husbands...*"
 - a. What does Ephesians 5:24 compare this submission to?

 - b. Ephesians 5:33 says for the wife to "respect" her husband. Look for a definition of respect and share your thoughts on how this expands our understanding of submission in marriage.

 - c. Write the definition of yield below and consider how that helps explain godly submission.

3. "*For the husband is head of the wife...*" Explain how the husband is to act as head from Ephesians 5:23.

4. How does Ephesians 5 go on to describe how the husband is to act toward his wife from this position as head?
 - a. Ephesians 5:25-27

 - b. Ephesians 5:28-29

5. Ephesians 5:30-33 uses terms we have seen before, "members" and "joined", in describing the marriage relationship. You might look back at lesson 6 for your key words or look for definitions, then explain how these terms relate to husbands and wives in marriage.

Marriage, divorce, separation - Read 1 Corinthians 7:10-16.

Divorce and separation are difficult subjects so we will stick to what scripture has to say that we may apply it to our own lives.

1. Specifically addressing the question of divorce, what do you find in the following scriptures?

a. Matthew 19:3-9

b. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

2. 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 discusses several different possible scenarios, and it appears that there were some specific questions in the original letter to Paul that he is attempting to answer in this section. But verse 16 sums up the main idea of this section. Write the thought presented in verse 16 below.

a. What does 1 Peter 3:1-2 say to wives of unbelieving husbands?

b. Look again at Ephesians 5:25-26. How might this apply to a husband with an unbelieving wife?

The Unmarried and Widows - Read 1 Corinthians 7:7-9 and 25-35.

1. In 1 Corinthians 7:7-9 Paul says it is better not to marry, to remain as he is. As he goes on, what reason does he give for marrying?

2. Now consider 1 Corinthians 7:25-35. He gave a reason for staying single in 1 Corinthians 7:35, "*I say for your own profit... that you may serve the Lord without distraction.*" What are some distractions he mentions in 1 Corinthians 7:30-35?

3. Paul had more to say to the single in 2 Corinthians 6:14 that would apply to any time and any culture. Write his words from this verse below.

Live as you are called - Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-24.

In this section Paul encourages all saints to “*Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.*” and, “*...as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk.*”

1. What do you see in the following scriptures that can apply to this thought?

a. Philippians 4:11

b. 1 Timothy 6:6-7

2. How does Colossians 2:11-12 help in understanding what 1 Corinthians 7:18-19 says about circumcision?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 7:21-23 and share what verse 23 says about slaves that can apply to you today?

The important thing is not whether we are single, married, divorced or widowed. It is not what job we hold. The important thing is the place that God has in our hearts and in our lives!

In closing... Keep God first!

No matter what state you are currently in – married, unmarried, widowed..., the most important thing to get from this chapter is to focus on the most important thing – the Lord your God! Keep Him first in all things and then you can know His will for your relationship.

1. Consider each of the following scriptures and write how they apply to serving God in the state in which you currently find yourself.

a. Matthew 6:33

b. Luke 10:27

c. Colossians 3:23

2. Think back on the place you were in your life when you first gave your life to the Lord.
 - a. How did God use you in that place?

 - b. Now consider where the Lord has brought you today. How is He able to use you in this place?