



The Book of 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 7:1-9

Session 23: God's Purposes in Marriage

Today we begin chapter 7. I think it is helpful if we take the last two verses from chapter 6, and create a heading for chapter 7.

1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore **glorify God in your body**, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Paul's whole instruction here is to have the Corinthians glorify God in their body, by a monogamous (exclusive) relationship as husband and wife.

Any sexual relationship outside of marriage is sin. Immorality brings all kinds of consequences:

- **Physical –**
 - Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are increasing in number (In 1980, the most common STDs were syphilis and gonorrhea, but since then there are more than 25 new STDs identified), but
 - STDs are spreading among the population (in 2022, there were more than 2.5 million cases of syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia reported in the U.S. That is an increase of 80% from 2018).¹
 - Congenital Syphilis (transmitted from mother to baby) increased 183% (thousands of babies born with Syphilis).²
- **Mental –**
 - They lose their moral compass of good and evil
 - They justify their immorality (sears the conscience)
 - They condemn/mock the righteous (the Bible/God)
 - They fuel the course of this world (CotW)
 - They reproach their Savior (saved)
 - They dishonor their own bodies
 - They suffer shame and guilt
 - Blind to how this affects other areas of life

¹ Center for Disease Control, Sexually Transmitted Infections Surveillance, 2022

² Ibid

- **Relational –**

- Their relationships have poor foundations
 - Founded on lust not true love (wanting God's best for the other person)
 - Immorality affects the commitment to the relationship
- They sow the seeds of failure in relationships
 - Distrust
 - Disrespect
 - Incontinence
- They continue the cycle by passing immoral thinking to their children

- **Spiritual –**

- Puts believers in bondage to sin
- Halts edification (limits growth to intellect only)
- Blocks grace
 - Grace – the desire to do the will of God
 - Grace – the power to do the will of God
- If you doubt the bondage part, just ask someone how hard it would be to stop sleeping around, looking at pornography, or fantasizing.

Why am I going through this? Because if you are watching this video and you are engaging in sexual relations with anyone who is not your spouse, I want you to understand that you have fallen victim to Satan's trap. I want you to be free from this bondage.

Beginning in chapter 7, Paul begins to answer questions that the Corinthians have written to him about.

1 Corinthians 7:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me:

The apostle Paul received a letter from the saints at Corinth asking his advice about 3 issues: 1) marriage and sex, 2) meat offered to idols and 3) spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 7:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

The sense of "not to touch a woman" is not talking about shaking hands, but this is referring to sexual intimacy. Paul is going to make the point that married people should not have sexual relations with anyone outside the marriage.

The usual way of interpreting the verse is to say that Paul is talking to single men, and this is his way of telling them not to commit fornication (sex outside of marriage). But he just spent the better part of chapter 6 doing that; is this just a repeat? I don't think so.

Also, if that is how we take vs. 1, then it looks like vs. 2 is telling men that the way to avoid fornication is to get married.

1 Corinthians 7:2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

Reading the verse this way makes it look like Paul is saying, "if you can't control your passions, then get married." But there are several problems with that interpretation:

- 1) Paul is not telling men to get married if they can't control their lusts: that is a terrible reason for getting married. A man who tries to fix his lust problem by getting married is not fixing his problem; he is bringing that problem into his marriage. A wife will sense that and she will react by withdrawing from her husband. The husband is then frustrated by her reaction. The relationship begins to break down and he starts looking elsewhere to satisfy his lusts.

Since we are on this subject, let's talk about God's purposes in marriage. As we do this, let me say that what I am about to say is for all of us. This is either for you as practical doctrine to guide your own marriage, or it is for you as wise counsel to help others.

There are six basic purposes behind marriage. Although there is much that can be said about each one, I am only going to expand my comments on the first one, and we will only list the other five.

1. Companionship:

God's design for marriage is the complete unity of man and wife. This unity is made up of a oneness of spirit, soul and body, and they should happen in that order. There are aspects of oneness of spirit that the couple will exhibit while they are in courtship, aspects of oneness of soul in their engagement period, and not until marriage do they experience oneness of body.

It is God's design for couples to experience a complete unity together, and it is the longing and desire of men and women to find fulfillment in the companionship aspect of marriage. The most important part of any couple's unity is oneness of spirit, for this is what generates deep and abiding companionship

Oneness of spirit is like happiness, in that it is a byproduct of other things. True happiness does not come by trying to be happy and true oneness of spirit does not come by trying to produce a oneness of spirit. Instead, oneness of spirit is produced by a husband and wife's treatment of each other within the marriage.

Without oneness of spirit, seeds of discontent may grow up to choke the marriage. This is why so many marriages built on a physical relationship either fail, or are unhappy. Oneness of spirit should be the foundation from which springs the entire marriage.

So, how does a husband create a oneness of spirit with his wife? Today we are going to cover 10 ways a husband can build oneness of spirit in his marriage.

Many husbands are unaware of the “little” offenses that cause an ever-widening separation in the spirit of their marriages. Men must understand that within the relationship there is a very delicate balance of “cause and effect.” Men assume that an occasional offense will soon be forgotten, but every offense is a seed of destruction of the relationship. It must be scripturally dealt with before it takes root and grows into a harvest of devastation.

In other words, there is “sowing and reaping” going on in your marriage all the time. No matter where your marriage is today, it is never too late to rebuild it. It is possible for an unsaved man to build the spirit of his marriage in some aspects, but if he is not justified unto eternal life (JUEL), there will be some areas of “oneness” (companionship) which will be missing. I think God, in his mercy, has made it so that even unsaved people might have “good marriages.” And I believe the reason for that is so that these good marriages might foster receptiveness to the gospel.

Let's look at the first way a man can build the spirit of his marriage.

1. Be the Spiritual Leader in Your Home

Every woman has certain needs which will only be met by strong spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership is not only where a man is spiritually, but it is also the direction he is going spiritually.

There are two major marks of a spiritual leader: first a man who has a heart for the Lord, and second, a man who lives by the doctrine. (I wish we had time to talk about these two issues, but we can't do that in this study.)

Sow: He shows lack of interest in being the spiritual leader.

Reap: She feels insecure; unable to place full confidence in him; seeks spiritual leadership from others.

But if he takes the lead spiritually in his home, he will build a oneness of spirit with his wife because she can trust him to make godly decisions in the best interests of the whole family and she will find security in that.

Evidences of a Spiritual Leader

Teach and model God's principles to the family

Deuteronomy 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Having a personal prayer life and praying with his wife and family.

1 Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Having regular times of bible study and prayer (this can be done by the notes from the previous week's lesson)

Memorizing scripture consistently

Sharing Christ with others

2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Refusing to compromise scriptural convictions

1 Corinthians 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2. Notice and Express Gratitude

Proverbs 31:28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.²⁹ Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

³⁰ Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.³¹ Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Sow: He is insensitive to special little things that she does to please him.

Reap: She seeks admiration and praise from others, loses creativity, and seeks outside interests.

If he takes notice of the things she does and acknowledges her accomplishments, he will build the spirit of oneness between him and his wife. The rule with children should be a praise to

criticism ratio of 10 to 1. I think it should be at least that for a wife, and even then, he should be careful not to wound her spirit. By the way, the more oneness of spirit there is between a couple the easier it is to hear constructive criticism without taking offense.

Many men fail to realize that a woman usually tends to be much more attentive to details than a man. She notices little things, and she responds to little things. She needs to have her husband do the same. The “little things” that she does to brighten the life of her husband and family are really “big things.” They represent her commitment, thought, time, and energy in making him and the family successful.

3. Demonstrate Self-Control

When a man lives out of his emotions, and loses control of his temper, he damages the oneness of his marriage. When he brings home or watches pornographic material, he disrespects his wife and violates the sanctity of his marriage. When a man exhibits bitterness and lack of forgiveness, instead of building a oneness of spirit, he produces a spirit of fear in his wife. Yelling at his wife or their children, talking down to his family, constantly criticizing, name-calling, and the use of profanity are all indicators of a lack of self-control. These do not glorify God and they do not build the spirit of a marriage.

We can flip the script to the other extreme and say that “the silent treatment” is just another way to punish the other person. Neither of these extremes build a oneness of spirit.

Sow: He lacks discipline in anger, displays moral weakness, and refuses to discuss it.

Reap: Her admiration and respect for him are greatly damaged.

But if he can control his temper, and treat his wife (family) with respect, and let his words be those which reflect a godly response to whatever circumstance, he will build the spirit of his marriage.

4. Be Appropriate in Public

Just as I would encourage you to never, ever yell or scream at your wife, I would also advise you never to correct her in public. Let your speech be as Colossians 4:6 describes:

Colossians 4:6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Husbands demonstrate what they think about their wives by how they talk to them, either in public or in private. If there is something that needs to be corrected, make sure it is done in love and in private.

Sow: He uses jokes or cutting remarks in public to emphasize something he has been trying to change in her.

Reap: She feels her self-worth is damaged and reacts with a desire to retaliate in public.

It is foolish for a husband to correct his wife in public, for he is actually criticizing himself. God holds the husband responsible to purify the wife by the word of God. The wife is actually part of the husband and a reflection of his care, wisdom and leadership. Rather than correcting in public, a wise husband will pray for his wife while examining his own life.

The Book of 1 Corinthians

Session 24: God's Purposes in Marriage, cont.

We left off looking at how a husband can build oneness of spirit in his marriage. The point we are discussing is Be Appropriate in Public. At the end of our previous session, we talked about not correcting your wife in public.

But there is another aspect of conducting yourself in public I want us to talk about. Sometimes when I am out, say at the grocery store, I see men get out of the car and head across the parking lot toward the store, leaving their wife behind. Sometimes she is way behind because she is pulling a baby out of a car seat, but off he goes leaving her in the dust. I have also seen this same thing with older couples.

Let me give you a scenario. The husband gets out of the car, and heads into the store. The wife gets out and by the time she goes around the car, she is about 8 steps behind. Once she catches up to him in the store, she may say to her husband that she is hurt when he does not pay attention to her in public. If he then exaggerates affection by grabbing her up close to him with his arm around her, she may respond with "I don't want you to pay attention to me in public." So, he just walks beside her toward the store, to which she replies, "I wish you would pay attention to me in public." The man counters with "Well I just can't make you happy, can I?" The wife may follow up with "I don't expect you to pay attention to me in public." To the husband, it seems like she is being inconsistent and contradictory. He becomes frustrated with her. What he does not realize is that she is speaking out of her emotions, will, mind, and spirit.

The real meaning of her statements is these:

- I want you to love me (emotions)
- I don't want you to embarrass me (will)
- I want others to know you love me (mind)
- I want you to be sincere (spirit) (I don't want to have to tell you to love me)

What is the solution? First of all, the man ought not to run off and leave her behind (we'll talk more about that shortly) but walk into the store beside her. Maybe he could even hold her hand.

5. Discuss Major Changes

We make decisions about things every day. Most of them are small and insignificant. There are some decisions that we make in life which are big decisions. Let your wife be the first person you talk with about these decisions. You are in this life together and you should decide things together.

Major decisions would be moving to a new location, or changing jobs. If a wife is going to make a major change, such as moving to a new location, she usually needs to mentally move before she physically moves. This means she needs to see the new location and visualize how she will carry out her daily responsibilities within that context.

If you are thinking about changing jobs, she will be concerned about financial security and a wise husband will listen to those concerns.

Sow: He does not give her time to rearrange her frame of reference for major adjustments.

Reap: She becomes insecure, apprehensive and bitter.

But when she is part of every decision, she trusts her husband and can fully support him even if she has reservations about what they have decided to do. Remember what you are doing here, you are creating a oneness of spirit with your wife.

6. Praise Her for Godliness

Do you recall when I gave you the 10:1 rule on praise to criticism? Well, I want to give you another rule of ratio; make most of your praise about godliness and character. Sure you can tell her she is beautiful, and you should. But do not let all your praise be about physical things.

First of all, that is the shallow end of praise. Hopefully, you married her for the person she is, not just for what she looks like.

When a man sows all of his praise to physical things, he does several things: 1) it causes fear of the future: as he gives the impression that he may not love her as she gets older and her looks change, and 2) it de-emphasizes godliness: as his praise makes her more concerned with the physical, and 3) it tells his wife that he may be looking at other women who are attractive. And since we are on this point, never make comparisons of your wife with any other women. Any sentence that begins with "why can't you be more like..." is damaging the spirit of your marriage.

2 Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Sow: He openly admires appearance or abilities of other women, which she lacks.

Reap: She is deeply hurt, becomes jealous and begins to reject herself.

Comparisons can be made in many areas: work, cooking, housekeeping, dressing, gardening, responding to pressure, etc. When a husband compares his wife to another woman in any of

these ways, it not only destroys her sense of self-worth, but it causes her to have a wrong focus on the individuals with whom she is being compared.

On the other hand, when a husband favorably compares his wife's character with that of the Lord Jesus, he encourages her to delight in the inward qualities and to grow in her relationship with the Lord.

When a man delights in inward character, it frees his wife to respond to physical difficulties that would normally devastate a woman. (Like when a woman starts losing her hair or beauty.)

A wise husband will praise his wife for her character and godliness, and not just her physical appearance.

7. Value Her Opinions

Matthew 27:17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? ¹⁸ For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. ¹⁹ When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

Sow: He evaluates her opinions from his larger frame of reference verses her immediate frame.

Reap: She is hurt and hindered from sharing cautions concerning his judgment or character.

There are several rewards that come to a man when he listens to the cautions of his wife. First of all, he strengthens the spirit of his marriage. Secondly, he may avoid unwise decisions.

God has given the wife the calling of being an "helpmeet" and sometimes a wife will foresee a danger which the husband does not see.

8. Make Your Wife #1 in your life

1 Corinthians 7:32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: ³³ But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Sow: Preoccupied with people, possessions or activities

Reap: She doubts his love and becomes insecure

How to Make Your Wife “First Place”

Establish a date night (weekly or bi-weekly, esp. w/ children in the home.)

On date night, steer away from:

- Your mind on other things
- Phone calls
- Being late to get started
- Talking to friends you meet
- Looking at other women
- Lack of manners
- Improper dress or grooming
- Distracting music or surroundings
- Bringing up unpleasant subjects

Learn to communicate. Know topics your wife enjoys discussing with you and ask her about them. These might include:

- Events of her day
- Needs and activities of the children
- Her ideas on home improvement
- Enjoyable past memories
- Spiritual lessons and insights
- Clothes she is buying
- How she really feels about certain things

Make surprise appointments for lunch

Give her occasional calls during the day

Help with the dishes

Allow direct access to her phone calls

Prepare for the most exciting moment of her day

Meet her deepest need – intimate conversation

Intimate conversation takes place when a wife is able to trust her husband with the secrets of her deepest emotions. Very often a wife will have fears, guilt or other anxieties which she needs to discuss. She may, however, be hesitant to share them for one or more of the following reasons:

- Feeling guilty for having them
- Hoping they will pass
- Fearing rejection from you
- Desiring to reduce your burdens
- Knowing you don't have answers

Your wife finds out how you will respond to her fears and whether or not you have answers by telling you about “another woman” who has the same problem. She then watches to see if you have compassion, understanding, patience and practical help.

It is the husband’s responsibility to lovingly and patiently assist his wife to identify and verbalize her fears and to gain wisdom from God in resolving them.

Some of those fears might be:

- Insecurity if the husband dies
- Getting old
- Becoming unattractive to her husband
- Ill health due to past sins
- Failing as a mother or wife
- Husband losing his job
- Having a mental breakdown
- Social awkwardness
- Educational deficiency
- Physical safety when alone
- Future of children
- Being displaced by another

Take each fear your wife expresses and spend time praying and searching the scripture to resolve it.

- Which scripture deals with this fear? Study and memorize it.
- What steps of action can you take? Begin taking them.
- What steps of action can she take? Encourage her to take them.
- If you cannot find the answer on your own, ask someone for help.

9. Ask Forgiveness (Refer to the Transformation Study on Forgiveness)

Sow: He tends not to want to admit failures.

Reap: She reacts to his pride and loses respect for him.

10. Manners

Purpose to have good manners, which is a show of respect.

- Godly charity has good manners.

1 Corinthians 13:4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,⁵ Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

- Discuss the following manners with your wife and ask her to assist you in consistently practicing them. She can do this by waiting for you to open the door, standing by a chair, handing you her coat, etc.
 - Helping her on and off with her coat
 - Seating her at the table
 - Opening doors for her, especially the car door
 - Lifting heavy objects
 - Knowing and using table manners
 - Picking up after yourself at home
 - Punctuality
 - Properly introducing your wife
 - Telling her your schedule
 - Refraining from crude language, criticism and improper subjects
 - Personal cleanliness, neatness and grooming

Having good manners is an excellent way to demonstrate to your wife how valuable she is to you; that you cherish her and that you enjoy being in her presence. Your wife unconsciously “measures” your awareness of her presence every day. Attention to the details in good manners tells her she is an important part of your life.

There is a lot more to say about how to rebuild or strengthen the spirit of our marriage, but for now, we are simply going to list the other five purposes for marriage.

2. **Pleasure:** It is important to distinguish between godly pleasure and lustful pleasure. The principle for pleasure is: self-control. Satan’s goal is: self-gratification. One of the keys here is in observing times of abstinence, such as during a woman’s cycle. In 1 Corinthians 7:2-6, Paul warns couples not to defraud each other in this area.
3. **Completeness:** God took part of Adam and made Eve; then He brought her to Adam to complete him. God’s hidden design is for couples to have a oneness of spirit.
4. **Fruitfulness:** Couples should consider how great an impact they could have on the world by their children. In the Bible, Jesse had 8 sons; if he had only had 7, David would not have been born. Satan’s Goal: pleasure without responsibility.
5. **Protection:** When a man enters the marriage covenant, he is pledging his strength, resources and life to his wife.
6. **Illustration:** Marriage is meant to picture the relationship between Christ and the church. A married couple is a living epistle of God’s truth by demonstrating this relationship by their marriage. What is the basic principle of the illustration? Self-denial. What is God’s hidden design for the illustration? The wife’s submission and the husband’s sacrifice.

We have gone through this because I want us to have some practical application of the principles we find in scripture. The point for this is to demonstrate that Paul is hardly telling people to get married just because they cannot contain themselves.