

# *Serving Without Hinderance*

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Recognising The Hinderance To Service.

[1 Corinthians 7:1–9](#)

*<sup>1</sup> Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. <sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, **to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.** <sup>3</sup> Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.*

Removing The Hinderance To Service.

*<sup>4</sup> The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. <sup>5</sup> Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

Rejecting The Hinderance To Service

*<sup>6</sup> But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. <sup>7</sup> For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. <sup>8</sup> I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.*

Remedying The Hinderance To Service

*<sup>9</sup> **But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.***

Beloved it is so vital to notice that every part of Paul's communication with the Corinthian Church is one that has **the eternal as its focus**. In fact, there is almost nowhere to go in the scriptures where God is not more concerned for the eternal than he is for the temporal matters of life.

It is certain that the Bible presents the temporal matters of life as ONLY of value inasmuch as they affect the eternal.

The often poorly repeated phrase condemning the righteous as being "SO HEAVENLY MINDED THEY ARE NO EARTHLY GOOD" is the exact OPPOSITE of the truth, that is, "YOU CANNOT BE ANY EARTHLY GOOD WITHOUT BEING HEAVENLY MINDED".

Continually we are told by the Lord to "*Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth*". [Colossians 3:2](#) , that "*where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" ([Mt 6:21](#), [Lk 12:34](#)) and to "*Love not the world neither the things that are in the world*" [1 Jn 2:15](#)

So the Bible teaches the exact OPPOSITE of this nonsense phrase.

Again and again and again we witness men and women, pastors and deacons, in churches today, who know what the Bible says but will not do as the bible teaches and use such pitiful statements to justify themselves.

Everything in the Bible is given to us in the context of this life extending into eternity, teaching us that this life is what determines the next.

So, with this in mind, let us give **a summary of the passage** in the context of the chapter, in the context of ETERNITY.

In short, we can say this passage and chapter is pressing the Church to **SERVE THE LORD WITHOUT HINDERANCE**.

There was a letter written to Paul which he addresses in this passage (v1). That letter clearly had something to do with fornication (v2).

Chastity is clearly preferred by Paul as a better option (v1 & v7-8, 26, 32-35 & 40), yet marriage is the REMEDY for fornication (v2 & v9)

Fornication is here identified in contrast to marriage (v2), whereas the act itself is also expressed in scripture as marriage (Jn 4:18) and yet evidently unlawful, illicit.

Both the husband and the wife are to render to one another **the benefit of that marital relationship** (v4), which is seen as the right of the partner over the body of the spouse (v4) in which they are charged **not to deprive the other of that right other than by mutual consent**, limited both to time and purpose, lest they be tempted of the devil (v5).

The scripture again presenting the better option as that of abiding alone (v 1,7,8, 26, 40), for the joining of oneself to another is recognised as "*trouble in the flesh*" (v28).

Our focus ought to be on matters eternal (v29-31) and so the primary desire is to serve the Lord *without distraction*, without HINDERANCE (v 32-35).

Therefore the overall message we glean from this seventh chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians is that of permission for marriage **to contain/restrict the desires of the flesh to that which is lawful**, for *it is better to marry than to burn*, with the overall

**focussed desire in serving the Lord.**

**Again, the context MUST BE SEEN in eternal peace, that Satan does not get an advantage over you by encouraging sin.**

The marriage relationship therefore is to give the man and the woman **the freedom they need to serve the Lord without any focus on the yearnings of the flesh.**

With that said, this passage then brings to us greater understanding than a superficial reading of the text.

The Title of This Sermon is give to remind you of the overall purpose for the passage;

**SERVE THE LORD WITHOUT HINDERANCE.**

Pray

## **Recognising The Hinderance To Service.**

### **1 Corinthians 7:1–3**

***1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.***

It is clear from the beginning of this chapter that there were concerns and questions the Corinthians had and so those matters were put in writing to Paul to be answered;

***1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me:***

This Church was the contemporary church of the pagan world, those **saved out of the world** had much of their lives and customs **within the world** and so found themselves easily **conformed again to the world.**

While scripture says "*...be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...*" (**Rom 12:2**), these Christians like most Christians today, were allowing themselves to be conformed to this world and so the necessity came for such questions to be asked.

Paul addressed some clear problems in the early chapters.

Here, **to their credit**, they enquired now to obtain the mind of the Lord.

This is vital beloved.

Your desire is not to get someone's opinion on a matter, nor is it to be justified in your personal preference, Credit for you is for you desire of that **eternal blessing of the Lord**, and so they ask and so he begins to answer; *1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*

There are two words often framed in the scriptures, both of them are idioms for the physical union of couples, one is the word "*Know*";

*And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, ...* [Genesis 4:1](#)

*And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth:* [Genesis 4:25](#)

When the angel spoke to Mary of her bearing a son, she responded saying  
*... How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* [Luke 1:34](#)

The other is that represented here, it is the word "*Touch*"; *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*

In [Genesis 20:6](#) When Abimelech suffered the warning of God in a dream regarding the wife of Abraham, God said

*...Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.*

[Proverbs 6:29](#)

*29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.*

Boaz speaking to Ruth the Moabites said: [Ruth 2:9](#)

*9 Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee?*

Beloved, *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*

And Paul speaks more to explain this in this chapter and will address it more fully in the third point.

Suffice to say this begins our RECOGNITION OF THE HINDERANCE TO SERVICE

as Paul continues;

*It is good for a man not to touch a woman. <sup>2</sup> **Nevertheless, to avoid fornication**, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. <sup>3</sup> Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.*

There is a **recognition** here of the potential **hinderance of the Christians service to to the Lord** due to the youthful lusts that may have him/her turned aside to an illicit relationship, and so provision is made.

*<sup>2</sup> **Nevertheless, to avoid fornication**, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.*

The purpose of marriage here is to "*avoid fornication*". The remedy to "*avoid fornication*" is marriage.

Sex seems to be the single biggest problem in the Church of Corinth, illicit sex is driving the Church away from **even the ability to judge that which is good and evil**.

It blinds the eyes and allures to the flesh things that are unjust as we had already seen.

From the earliest chapters we had seen a problem respecting the carnal nature of the members of the church of Corinth, and by chapter five we had come to its source;

*"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you"* writes the apostle in the first verse of chapter 5.

Illicit sex has been known for millennia to be the primary source of corruption in nations.

If you would like to bring a people to their knees, enticing them through the lust of the flesh is the way to do it.

*<sup>26</sup> For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread:*  
[Proverbs 6:26](#)

Like all sin, our **RECOGNITION** of this vice is the first step toward dealing with the matter, and so a letter was written to Paul respecting this question and so provision was made; *let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have*

*her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.*

In 1961, in the eight edition of "The Naked Communist" by Cleon Skousen, a list of 45 goals was published to bring the western world to its knees. 45 goals for the Communist Government of Russia to destroy the western world from the inside and enslave its people into a Communist form of Government (Which we are today the witnesses of in Australia).

Communism could not defeat the world through war, for the moral standing of the western world on its Christian principals made them stronger and more courageous than any of the wicked atheistic nations of the world.

But what they could not do to destroy the world from external effort, they would work to destroy it from the inside out. And so 45 goals were discovered to be the prime attack points.

Speaking to the 45 goals, Mr Skousen wrote;

*"For the most part, Americans believed that such blatantly declared assaults on the 'American way' would be virtually impossible to achieve. People believed that Americans would never accept any of those goals in the great and impervious sanctuary of virtue and liberty known as the United States of America.*

*And yet within two generations...all but one of the goals were reached"*

Let me read a couple of pertinent goals. Now note, these were identified in 1958 and published in 1961.

**Goal 25 "Break down cultural standards of morality by promoting pornography and obscenity in books, magazines, motion pictures, radio and TV."**

**Goal 26. "Present homosexuality, degeneracy and promiscuity as 'normal, natural, and healthy'"**

**Goal 40. Discredit the family as an institution. Encourage promiscuity (fornication) and easy divorce.**

There are many political goals in that list, but it is fascinating to RECOGNISE that Satan is fully aware of what hinders our service to the Lord and thereby destroys our

civilisation.

To "Corinthianise" was a well known expression historically, it literally refers to all forms of sexual promiscuity (Fornication), Some may remember the song title "Californication" in 1999 by Red Hot Chili peppers.

God made provision through marriage to address the desires of the flesh, understanding that is VITAL to understand the next few verses of this chapter.

## Removing The Hinderance To Service.

1 Corinthians 7:4-5

*4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

The recognition of our hinderance to service to the Lord is witnessed in those first few verses, but to understand why this is the overarching topic it is worth noting why Paul believes abstaining from "touching a woman" is better than marriage.

In verse we read "*it is good for a man to not touch a woman*", but we need ask the question WHY is that "good"?

In [verses 7 to 8](#) we will read of the rejection of that hinderance with the words;

*7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, **It is good** for them if they abide even as I.*

Again in [verse 26](#) with respect to retaining virginity he writes;

*26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.*

In [verse 28](#) he refers to marriage as "Trouble";

*<sup>28</sup> But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.*

(Yes, we will get to that...pray for me)

Then we finally get to the understanding of why the first preference is to remain single in Paul's view. In this we gain the recognition of the eternal aspect of the matter.

[1 Corinthians 7:32–35](#)

*<sup>32</sup> 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: <sup>33</sup> But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. <sup>34</sup> There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. <sup>35</sup> And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.*

If you are gifted that you have no need of the physical desires of the flesh, you ought to remain unmarried and to serve the Lord without trouble, for you only have the Lord to please.

BUT if you cannot abide this way, it is better to marry than to burn in lust, for this has a complete hinderance in your relationship to Christ.

Paul is writing that God is pleased either way, remain single if you can abide, or marry if you cant abide. Yes one is preferred above the other, but worst of all is illicit sex, fornication, for this truly distracts you from any hope in a close walk with the Lord.

Beloved, the Bible cares for matters eternal, and that is the key to understand the verses we will now deal with ([v 4-5](#)). The problem when men or women withhold their bodies from one another is the risk of them burning in their lust and turning to things that truly hinder their walk with the Lord.

[1 Corinthians 7:4-5](#)

*<sup>4</sup> The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. <sup>5</sup> Defraud ye not one the*

*other,*

The context of the passage is one submitting themselves to the other knowing that otherwise their becomes a risk of sin. You REMOVE THE HINDERANCE TO YOUR SERVICE to the Lord when you understand the right to your body belongs to your spouse and withholding your body from them defrauds them from the freedom to serve the Lord without GUILT.

Beloved, there is not simpler way I can say it. This is not a passage about FORCED CARNAL KNOWLEDGE.

NO man can use this text as giving them the right to FORCE a wife into that which is to be given voluntarily.

Jesus does not FORCE the love from his bride, and men are to love their wives *even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it* (Eph 5:25), how on earth can a man be unwilling to contain himself for his wife also be the same man willing to die for her???

Are you serious? That is not the love of Christ beloved.

Any man that would dare to do so with his wife (or wife to the husband) has no knowledge whatever of the love Christ has for his bride.

All love is given voluntarily, our love to the Lord is given voluntarily, as ought to be the love that gives the body, and anyone who forces such upon their spouse ought to be imprisoned!

It is both our faithfulness to the Lord AND our understanding of the difficulties we have when our fleshly desires risk HINDERING our walk and service to the Lord.

Brethren, *<sup>5</sup>Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

Let me make two things abundantly clear:

1. Celibacy is NOT right for a marriage brethren. **Marriage itself has its purpose**

**in the opposite of celibacy** (see v2 & 9), and those partners who wilfully withhold themselves from their spouse defraud them, hinder their walk with the Lord and do not understand what they may be encouraging.

2. **Both** fornication AND forcing your partner into sex is without excuse. **Both are sin**, one ought to be imprisoned.

I hope I have made the position of scripture clear here.

## Rejecting The Hinderance To Service

1 Corinthians 7:6-8

*6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.*

In saying *6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment*. Paul was not saying that every man ought to marry and it was a sin if they do not. Nor was he saying that a life of celibacy outside of marriage is a more holy elevation for any that are not given to the ability.

Matthew Henry makes a good point in the previous verse which well applies here;

*"Note, Persons expose themselves to great danger by attempting to perform what is above their strength, and at the same time not bound upon them by any law of God. If they abstain from lawful enjoyments, they may be ensnared into unlawful ones. The remedies God hath provided against sinful inclinations are certainly best.<sup>1</sup>"*

It is not a COMMANDMENT for all to marry, neither is it a sin if they do not marry if they can contain. Paul goes on demonstrating his ability to reject his hinderance to

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2255.

serve the Lord at the first saying *7 For I would that all men were even as I myself.*

Paul leads about no wife. He had no need of a wife and there is no evidence in the scriptures that he ever had a wife. Some have speculated that Paul was a full member of the Sandherin and that such membership required him to have had a wife at some point and all manner of speculation has come from that.

But the Bible neither explicitly teaches Paul to have been such a member, nor that he ever had a wife. In this passage it seems clear that he had no need of a wife as it is in those former passages.

Paul lays no commandment to marry *7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.*

In abiding alone they thereby also reject any potential to hinderance of their service, and give themselves to please the Lord alone.

## Remedying The Hinderance To Service

Lastly we read of the remedy to uncleanness and fornication;

**1 Corinthians 7:9**

*9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.*

Here God has provided the perfect remedy and gives to each of us an understanding that the value of our physical union is not for selfish desires but to keep us from sin.

Husbands and wives, give yourselves to one another knowing that you are to live to each other and not to yourselves. Do not hinder you partners walk with the Lord by defrauding them of you, for 'if they cannot contain, let them marry'.

Marriage has a part of its purpose in removing the temptation to that which is unlawful and hurtful.

Societies are destroyed for the sinfulness of fornication and sexual depravity.

Proverbs 6:26 nails it well saying;

*26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.*

Many men have lost everything to indulge their temporal lust. Many perhaps had been enabled by the spouse who refused to give herself to him. There is no doubt cases also the other way around, men given over to their business or work and have defrauded their wives.

Do not place a hinderance on your spouses walk and service to the Lord beloved. Do not hinder your own progress in marriage by withdrawing that which is both given as a gift and lawful in the Lord.

SERVE THE LORD WITHOUT HINDERANCE.

