

## Bloom Where You're Planted—1 Cor. 7:1-24

- Bloom in the Marriage God has Given You (v.1-5)
- v.1-2—Pursue marriage, not sex, as God's good design.
  - "it is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman"
    - If you aren't married, you shouldn't have sex of any kind in any way with anyone.
    - Some people were falling into the camp that would pursue marriage but then reject sex inside of marriage.
      - You are not roommates...you are not business partners...you are spouses/lovers!
  - Paul is condemning SINFUL SEX not just sex—fornication, pornography, lust, etc.
- v.2—"But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband"
  - Paul is doing 2 things and we want to champion them:
    - Condemning wrong sex (outside of marriage)
    - Celebrating good sex (inside of marriage)—we are not anti sex...we are FOR marriage!
- God's good design to help us deal with strong sexual desires is the pursuit of marriage
  - Strong desires overtaking you? Walk with Jesus, find someone who is doing the same and pursue marriage with them.
  - If you have these desires, pursue marriage. Don't be sinful and lazy and just look for the sex (i.e. the pleasure)...pursue a person and enjoy all of what marriage offers with them!
    - You don't need a hookup...you need a husband!
    - You don't need a website...you need a wife!
- v.3-5—Husbands and wives ought to enjoy the beauty of a regular and intimate sex life
- v.3-4—"The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does."
  - Notice the Paradox:
    - Wife's needs and desires = Husband, "here I am to love and serve and satisfy you!"
    - Husband's needs and desires = Wife, "here I am to love and serve and satisfy you!"
    - Sex inside of marriage is mutual SERVICE
      - Sex isn't, give me what I want or else...The goal of sex inside of marriage is the pleasure and satisfaction of the OTHER! We aren't foremost in our minds but our spouses are!
        - Husband—"whatever you want and makes you happy!"
        - Wife—"whatever you want and makes you happy!"
      - Settle the Paradox—Eph 5—the husband leads by gently and tenderly seeking to maximize his wife's pleasure rather than pressuring her to adapt to his.
        - Acts 20:35—it is more blessed to give than receive
      - Holy, humble and self-sacrificing competition, in marriage, to make the other MAXIMALLY glad.
    - What is he saying—In marriage, we've lost the right to selfishly dictate things
    - Wives—you want to please and satisfy your husband, you recognize that your body is for him and is God's good gift to him
    - Husbands—you recognize that your wife is not just your sex toy. You are hers and are God's good gift to her to please and satisfy and fulfill her.
      - "I want to cuddle...could I have a massage...be my friend...talk to me"...you don't get the option to say, "I don't do that,"!

- Husbands, we need to recognize that God has given us our bodies as the means of loving, serving and satisfying our wives—how do we talk, touch and love them? Is it in the way that THEY want/feel love or the way WE WANT them to?
- “What could I do to be more attractive to you?” “What do you want?”
- v.5—“Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”
- The body is GOOD. Marriage is GOOD. God made the body for sexual pleasure and made MARRIAGE for the safe, joyful context to enjoy it.
- DO NOT DEPRIVE ONE ANOTHER—God’s command, husbands and wives, is have more sex. Why?
  - Sex is fun—Song of Solomon talks a ton about sex and never mentions children—God designed sex as a good and pleasurable gift.
  - Sex produces children—Genesis 1 is so clear that one of God’s main purposes in designing sex was as a means of multiplying, raising up future generations of people to love and follow Jesus.
  - Sex is for intimacy—Genesis 2:24/1 Cor. 6:17—sex was created by God as the means by which 2 people step into and enjoy FULL, COMPLETE oneness—emotions, spirit, bodies, souls.
    - God’s design is about having LIFE together not just SEX together—why premarital sex, fornication, cohabitation DOES NOT WORK!
    - There is a love, trust, affection, vulnerability that enters into and fills our sex lives that leads to flourishing. If those first factors are missing, enjoyable sex is going to be hard.
      - Problem with sex outside marriage—you can’t really get to know someone when you are sleeping together...it inhibits actual pursuit of them and investment in them and enjoyment of them as whole people. Then, on the backside of knowing, pursuing, investing in them, sex completes the package of the relationship!
        - Living in the sexual sin of immorality PROHIBITS all the vulnerability and life God meant for 2 people to enjoy because the guilt/shame of sin is crippling.
    - Sex is for purity—v. 2, 5, 9—can’t help but notice that sex here functions to provide a right context for our passions. To avoid sex with your spouse is to invite that temptation in!
    - Only tolerate infrequency in sex on a mutual basis for a specific reason
      - If one person wants it, have it. Otherwise, bitterness, anger, frustration mounts!
      - When one person is wanting it and the other is withholding, SPACE and HOLES form in the relationship—you go to bed with backs facing each other and lots of space in between (that is the space Satan wants to fill!)
      - Husbands and wives, stay so close together, so tight in your pursuit of one another and service to one another that Satan, temptation, anger, bitterness, frustration has NO WAY to work itself in!
  - Bloom in the Singleness God Has Given You (v.6-9)
  - v.6-7—We must ALL Recognize the beautiful, God-glorifying gift of singleness
  - v.6—“Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.”
    - Who saw this coming!? All the single people say, “Praise God!”
    - After all this talk of marriage and sex and pleasure, Paul says, “actually, the best option is to be single like me!”

- Married folks with several kids—they can testify for all the single folks in here what a gift singleness truly is!
- Can you have sex? No! Can you do a million other things that folks that are married with big families can't do? Yes!
- 2 Types of Single People Here:
  - Standard Idea of Single (never married)
  - Widowers and Widows (spouse has died)
- Maximize your bandwidth as a single person for the glory of God—your calendar, wallet, energy, and focus can be far more layered in!
  - Jesus had lots of real, vibrant friendships, no sex but lived a completely joy-filled life!
  - Jesus lived a full life with full emotions, tons of deep connections, tons of fruitful ministry and nobody ever came up to him and said, “you're just the JV...too bad you never had sex!”
- If you are single, until God sends you THE RIGHT person, Jesus is your person!
  - You must be in this place before you get married anyway or you'll put too much pressure on your new spouse to be your Jesus replacement!
  - You be with Jesus and then if Jesus sends you somebody else whose like him....great!
- Application:
  - Are you single? Will you look back on your single days and see days filled with anger, resentment, bitterness, sorrow? Will you look back on your days of singleness and see days filled with amazing relationships, deep connections, tons of ministry, trips all around the world, a life lived and spent in singular focused service to Jesus?
  - Commit to this season of singleness as God's best for you as long as your body is content or God sends you a fitted, qualified, spouse!
- v.10-16—Be Faithful in the Marriage God Has Given You (v.10-16)
  - Christian Married Couple: Commit yourself to your spouse as God's best for you as long as they are alive!
    - Keep divorce off the table
      - Matthew 5:31-32—It was also said, “whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.” But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
    - Should divorce happen, REMAIN single or be RECONCILED
      - You are demonstrating, in how you walk through this, the seriousness of the covenant of marriage and the seriousness that God has for his design in marriage.
  - Christian Married to Non-Christian: Commit yourself to your spouse as God's best for you as long as they are content!
    - This is not the IDEAL, but it is a gospel OPPORTUNITY.
      - This is an opportunity for you to display through word and deed, the truth of the gospel and what a true follower of Jesus looks like.

- v.17-24—Bloom Where You are Planted
- Life is about Jesus, not sex.
- We are consumed and fascinated by sex and so much of how we view ourselves, our lives, our maturation is connected to our marital status and sex status.
  - Paul does not demonize sex but he DETHRONES sex.
    - “Let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him”
- This is the heartbeat of this whole section—God is good. He gives good gifts. He created sex. He himself was celibate and single. He is blessing, not cursing us. He is for our good, not our devastation. For some, this will look like marriage and a family. For others, this will look like singleness. For all, it is blessing, fullness, flourishing, life!
- Jesus, by his grace, makes every season of sexuality BEAUTIFUL
  - Ecclesiastes 3:11—he has made everything beautiful in its time
  - After talking about all things having their season
  - God is sovereign over your seasons of sexuality and he means for each season, regardless of how long it lasts, to lead you into joy and flourishing!
- God and His gospel, not marital status, DEFINES US!
  - Single—Jesus was single
  - Married—you are not married primarily for the sake of sex; your marriage is meant to demonstrate the beauty, love, service and sacrifice of Christ for his Bride.