

## **“Now Concerning The Things ...”**

*“... whereof you wrote: it is good for a man not to touch a woman. But, because of fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:1-2).*

With these words the writer enters into a new section of the letter. In this chapter as well as chapters eight and twelve, statements of like nature appear. This statement implies that a letter had been sent to Paul from Corinthian brethren and this letter, at least in part, is devoted to the answer of those questions. In this chapter the apostles deals with a variety of questions: Should one never marry? What is the married person’s responsibility to their spouse? Is it right to divorce? In the event one does divorce, what instructions are to be given as to what he/she must do? What about marriage between unbelievers and believers? What about widows, is it right for them to remarry? All these, plus other scenarios, are posed by Paul, then answered by him.

Just precisely how this first subject was phrased to Paul is uncertain. Perhaps it was posed as a question: *“Is it good for a man not to touch a woman?”* Perhaps it was phrased as a declaration: *“We know it is good for a man not to touch a woman.”* However the subject was phrased, Paul responded by saying that it was good for a man not to touch a woman, meaning of course, that it was good that a man live a celibate life. As we will see later, Paul expressed his wish that all might be as he -- i.e., single, holy in life, but he recognized that not all could live that way. Tempering his instructions is the background circumstances, the *“present distress.”* We know that generally speaking, *“It is not good that the man should be alone”* (Gen. 2:18).

*“Yet because of fornication, let each man have his own wife; let each woman have her own husband.”* In one sweeping blow, the apostle condemns polygamy. God’s rule is, one woman for one man; one man for one woman. In times past God tolerated polygamy, but no more. At the same time the apostle emphasizes that marriage is good, the bed is undefiled (Heb. 13:4). Man needs companionship; he has physical desires and needs that can only be lawfully fulfilled in marriage.

In vss. 3-6, the conjugal duties of each mate is addressed. *“Let the husband render unto the wife her due; and likewise the wife unto her husband.”* Those who have no sexual desires should never marry, for when one marries he is to satisfy the needs of his wife; as she is to satisfy his own needs.

For mates to refrain from their duties must be a mutual matter. "*Defraud ye not one another, except it be by consent for a season,*" the apostle wrote (1 Cor. 7:5). But such seasons of abstinence was to be only for time and by mutual consent. There was too great a temptation for the abstaining parties to remain aloof from satisfying their physical desires. This is clearly noticed in times of war when soldiers and their wives are separated from each other for long periods of time. Infidelity is common on the part of both husbands and wives in such times. Still, this approval of abstinence for a season is a concession, not a command, the apostle states.

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