

Discipleship: A Starting Place In the Beginning was the Word Part 2. - Undated. This document was rather long so it has been split into parts 1 and 2. Unsure when shared with SCF*

Discipleship: A Starting Place Part 2. This concludes that which was begun in Part 1.

Advice on marriage. Husband or wife, you do not belong to yourself any longer.

1 Corinthians 7 verse 1-6

Now for the matters you wrote about: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." 2 But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. 3 The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. 5 Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6 I say this as a concession, not as a command.

But this is not a command, simply good advice that we would be foolish to ignore. Here is some good advice to those who have unbelieving partners; Paul takes the pressure out of the situation showing how God has made provision for every eventuality. Being married has its drawbacks when it comes to serving the Lord.

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1 Corinthians 7 verse 25-35

Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26 Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. 27 Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife. 28 But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this. 29 What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; 30 Those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; 31 those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away. 32 I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs - how he can please the Lord. 33 But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world - how he can please his wife - 34 and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world - how she can please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

The married person will have conflicts of interest and this will lead to problems, unless both husband and wife submit to God's order in marriage. This is why so many marriages are being wrecked by the devil.

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Ephesians 4 verse 17-32

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. 20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

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Further useful reading: ***Ephesians 5*** and ***1 Peter 2 and 3.***

Unless we have a heavenly concept of marriage then we shall never be in that place of peace that we all search for. These scriptures point us in the right direction and we are encouraged by Paul to understand and practice these things until we reach a place of excellence. We shall know when we are approaching that excellence when we put our partner before our own desires and standards and live with Jesus as King.

The Code of Practice for Every Christian

To do these things requires radical changes and the constant help of the Holy Spirit. Do lay aside your old self. Do be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Do put on the new self, that is to say righteousness and holiness of the truth. Do lay aside falsehood, this is being insubmissive to God's Word. Husbands, love your wife by being responsive to God's Word and being responsible as head of your wife and family. Wives, respect and submit to husband in everything, if you both play your parts, God will do the impossible things. Don't stay angry. Forgive and forget or God will not hear your prayers, neither will your children be blessed. Don't steal anymore. Husbands and wives, don't deprive yourselves of each other in any matter or else the devil will get in and spoil your lives. Your words will create blessings or curses, unwholesome words are discouraging, disrespectful and swear words will bring both the speaker and hearer down spiritually. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Observe the do's and the don't's above.

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Bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander and malice are to be put away and replaced with kindness, tenderheartedness and forgiveness in the same way that God in Christ also has forgiven you. Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Ephesians 5 verse 18-21

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

The whole of this chapter is full of instructions for each one of us and covers the same areas that we read about in **1 Corinthians 5 - 6**.

There is encouragement to be careful about how we walk. We are to walk wisely, making the most of our time. Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord. The joy of the Lord is to be expressed rather than our complaints about our circumstances or our partners.

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John 15 verse 10-11

If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Jesus goes on to tell us the key to a successful marriage. We are to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. This means that we are to be aware of our position in Christ. Husband and wife are Christ given positions and we are to respect them. Husbands, love the position of wife that is occupied by the one that you are married to. Wives, submit to the position of husband that is occupied by the one that you are married to. In the same way we are all to submit to every human institution, every authority simply because God's Word says so. Act as free men and women and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. To be a bondslave is a privileged position. There are some important basic things we have not yet fully grasped.

1 Peter 3 verse 18-22

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. 19 After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits - 20 to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.

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In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand - with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

This tells us what things we are to submit to and why we should submit to them.

1 Peter 2 verse 13-20

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. 16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. 17 Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor. 18 Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. 19 For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

Act as free citizens and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as a bondslaves of God. To be a bondslave is a privileged position. There are some important basic things that we have not yet fully grasped.

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1 Peter 3 verse 18-25

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. 19 After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits - 20 to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand - with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

The scripture tells us the things we are to submit to and why we should submit them. Honour all members of the church, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour Jesus. Submit to your employer, again we are to respect them whether they are gentle or unreasonable, this applies to any office or authority. The following scripture explains why.

1 Peter 2 verse 21-25

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

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24 "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed." 25 For "you were like sheep going astray," but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

1 Peter 3 verse 1-6

Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. 4 Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

There is an enormous challenge to the church in these scriptures, the spirit of the age would remove these God given instructions. Do we ignore them or embrace them? If we say that they are for a different culture or time in history, how much more of the Word of God shall we eliminate? Husbands should see that here is a tremendous trail of our faith! We are to acknowledge that that our wives are the weaker vessels! This does not mean that a woman is less important or less intelligent but she is in a unique place with her man.

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She can influence him easily because she is his wife and possesses that which her man needs; God made it this way. The woman is weaker in that she cannot rule over her man (at least she ought not to). When she does rule over her man she removes her cover, or her God given protection and exposes herself to satan's attacks. Adam did not take up his place as the head of Eve and she was exposed - and even worse - exposed the whole of mankind to satan's plan and it almost worked. Who was to blame, Adam or Eve? God's plan was right for mankind, Adam and Eve spoiled that which was very good, today it is just the same. There is a higher and better way, we can choose to walk in it or out of it! Wives and our children can easily live outside of God's plan. We are all (male and female) to understand and come to terms with with the truth that will set us free from satan's deception. Men are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. Jesus had a hard time with his disciples, they had to be loved, encouraged, forgiven, directed and disciplined.

1 Corinthians 11 verse 1-3

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you. 3 But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

Paul speaks here of a practice that should be remembered. Head covering is mentioned in the later verses (4-16). Some take this to mean that a woman should cover her head with a hat or a scarf; I believe that we should see this in context with the following scripture.

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1 Peter 3 verse 4

Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

There seems little point in having an outer covering on the woman's head if in reality she does not submit to her husband in the heart or in the home. What is submission anyway? Is it doing what you are told to do? The simplistic answer is *yes, its black and white*. Submit or rebel, we make our choice. I can hear you say that *its not fair*. But God's word gets things done, also it creates something out of nothing. Perhaps our difficulty is with God's Word rather than with men? When a man or a woman is in a wrong place there is only one place to go, to God's Word.

1 Samuel 15 verse 23

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD....

There are no in between's, no plan B alternative. This seems very legalistic, yes God's Word is legal and binding, obedience to it is being legalistic. The alternative is to do my own thing. We do, however have freedom of choice, we don't have to obey. The problem is, however what fruit will come from my disobedience?

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1 Corinthians 6 verse 12-13

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

Judges 21 verse 25

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

This is the last sentence in Judges. Where Christ rules there will be no confusion. When man takes up his human rights, there is chaos. God wants His Son to rule both on the throne and in our hearts.

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