

1 Corinthians 7:6 – 17

New American Standard Version

1 ⁶ But this I say by way of concession, not of command. ⁷ Yet
2 I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However,
3 each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner,
4 and another in that. ⁸ But I say to the unmarried and to
5 widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I.
6 ⁹ But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it
7 is better to marry than to burn *with passion*. ¹⁰ But to the
8 married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife
9 should not leave her husband ¹¹ (but if she does leave, she
10 must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her
11 husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.
12 ¹² But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a
13 wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with
14 him, he must not divorce her. ¹³ And a woman who has an
15 unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she
16 must not send her husband away. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving
17 husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving
18 wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for
19 otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are
20 holy. ¹⁵ Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the
21 brother or the sister is not under bondage in such *cases*, but
22 God has called us to peace. ¹⁶ For how do you know, O
23 wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you
24 know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?
25 ¹⁷ Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has
26 called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in
27 all the churches.

*Use the suggestions on the back page as a starting point for your own **Observation, Interpretation, and Application.***

Observation (What does it say?):

What do you notice in this passage?

- *Repeated words or ideas?*
- *Comparisons or contrasts?*
- *Purpose or explanation?*
- *Unusual or symbolic language?*
- *Commands or instructions?*
- *Conditional (if–then) statements?*
- *Other observations?*

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- *What parts seem clear and straightforward?*
- *What parts seem unclear or confusing?*
- *What parts challenge your previous thinking?*
- *What questions come to mind as you read?*
- *How would you title this passage?*

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- *What parts of this passage fit your current life situation?*
- *What parts seem unrelated to your circumstances?*
- *How might this passage affect your understanding of who God is and what He is doing?*
- *What part of this passage would be the most challenging for you to apply?*
- *What would be different (attitudes, behavior) if God used this passage to change you?*

Questions for further thought and discussion:

- After what Paul said in the previous passage about not touching a woman (7:1) and remaining single as he was (7:7), does anything in this passage surprise you? How might this passage affect your understanding of the previous passage, and vice-versa?
- What do you make of Paul's statements such as "concession, not command" (v. 6); "I give instructions, not I but the Lord" (v. 10); "I say, not the Lord" (v. 12)? Is Paul making distinctions about the inspiration of Scripture? Is he making some instructions optional? Can you think of other places where Paul (or other Biblical writers) make this kind of statement? How do these comments affect your understanding of the authority of Paul's writing in this part of his letter to the Corinthians? How do you think the Corinthians understood his words?
- What is the "bondage" (dedoulotai, δεδούλωται, lit. enslaved) in v. 15? Does it mean the abandoned spouse is not bound to stay with the deserter, but they are still married? Does it mean the abandoned spouse is not bound to the marriage and can remarry? Does it mean something else? How much can we learn from this passage about this situation? How does it apply to our culture?

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation
(What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation
(What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application
(What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**