

MAY 15, 2022
LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
BEST IN THE BROKEN
1 CORINTHIANS 7:10-16
SPRING QUARTER WEEK 3 OF 7

Getting to Know Each Other Better

1. What do you own a ridiculous amount of?

Watches. I know others who own more, but I own way more than I have the capacity to wear. I am also collecting a ridiculous amount of baseball caps (which I am trying to wear more).

How about you?

Renewed by Grace/Equipped as Disciples

Read 1 Corinthians 7:10-16

2. What stands out to you from these verses? Why?

I want to give space for people to share their observations from the passage. No wrong answers here. I will share some of my insights with you, in hope that it will assist in discussion if needed.

Observations -

- Paul gives a “charge.” This is a command. Here is what some research revealed:
 - “3853 paraggéllō (from 3844 /pará, "from close-beside" and aggéllō, "inform") – properly, to charge, give a command that is fully authorized because it has gone through all the proper (necessary) channels.”
 - “[3853 (paraggéllō) "originally meant to pass on or transmit; hence, used as a military term, of passing a watchword or command; and so generally to command" (WS, 222).]”
- He commands or charges that “the wife should not separate from her husband 11 (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband).”

There is one insight from the Greek that might be helpful. The Greek word is xōrízō which means to “vacate” and it refers to “divorcing a marriage partner who vacates the relationship in soul or body.” (cf. Moulton-Milligan, 696).

Vacating the relationship in the body can’t mean adultery, however, since adultery is a valid reason for remarriage. There are ways I am sure we can all think of how a husband might vacate the relationship in the body without having an affair. Paul says, “Don’t divorce from your husband just because he has checked out, but if you do, remain unmarried or seek reconciliation with him.” Remaining unmarried would have been very difficult in Corinth since there were not many ways for an unmarried woman to support herself. This is a call to remain in a tough marriage.

- He also commands or charges that a husband should not divorce his wife. What does this word “divorce” mean?

“863 aphíēmi (from 575 /apó, "away from" and hiēmi, "send") – properly, send away;

release (discharge).” It means he sends his wife away. He is not to do this. No reason is given for why he might want to. He is just told not to. He is to stay in the marriage even if he doesn’t want to, and even if it’s tough.

- These commands that Paul gives are restatements of Jesus’ clear teaching on divorce in Mark 10:7-9, 7 *‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, 8 and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”*

This speaks to the permanence of marriage and is where I always start in marriage counseling. As we discover, divorce is an option but never the best option.

- Sometimes two unbelievers will meet and marry and one will come to faith in Christ. That conversion isn’t a pass to divorce an unbelieving spouse who wants to be married to them.
- Being married to an unbeliever doesn’t defile you or make you unclean.
- Being married to an unbeliever actually makes them holy and set apart in some way. I saw this in my in-law’s marriage where my mother-in-law came to Christ after they were married.
- God would prefer a believer be married to an unbeliever than divorce the unbeliever just because the two are now unequally yoked.
- God can use a believing spouse to bring about the salvation of an unbelieving spouse. It might be rare, but I have seen it happen at least once.
- What else do you see?

3. What principles do you find embedded in the verses? Which of them, in addition to the ones Ryan pointed out in his message, are particularly helpful for you right now? Why? How?

Here are some that I see, and that Ryan saw and pointed out:

- Marriage is intended to be permanent (vs. 10 & the Mark 10 passage). This is always the goal when working with couples who are struggling. The question all struggling couples should be asking is, “How can we strengthen our marriage?” The question all couples with a healthy marriage should be asking is “How can we strengthen our marriage even more?”
- Though marriage is intended to be permanent, there are times when God allows for divorce. In the Corinthian context it was when an unbelieving spouse wanted to be released from his or her marriage to a believer.
- Paul looks out for the women as well as the man in his comments in this chapter. Women are not pawns in the chess match of a bad marriage. They have the same rights as the man does. They also have the same expectations and obligations.

- The principle Paul argues for in this text is to stay away from treating divorce with the same kind of flippancy that many in Corinth and our culture treat it with. Treat marriage as permanent and important. Fight with your whole self for your marriage. View divorce as a last-ditch option. My friend once said that getting a divorce is taking the hard way out.
- Though the principle is permanence, God always meets us where we are and not where He wishes we were. Thus, He does allow for divorce when a couple has done everything they can, or when one of the spouses has done everything he or she can. Divorce was not His design, but it was the best He could offer us given our hard hearts. So, He does make allowances for our hard hearts.
- If married to an unbeliever, consider your influence not your preference. I would say that is a great general preference for marriage when thinking through, “Do I want a divorce?” These days the only question that seems to be asked is, “What do I want?” That’s not the best question to start with.
- Realize you can’t control people but you can choose peace. We know the context of the passage, but we also know that living at peace with an “ex” can be a difficult thing in any divorce situation. I know a couple who have been fighting each other in court and out of court for decades after their divorce was finalized.
- Look for strength to stay, not reasons to leave.
- Trust that God’s grace is sufficient.
- Trust that God will meet you in your brokenness and lead you to His best.
- What else do you see?

Have fun discussing these, as well as the *Why?* and the *How?* with your group.

Sent in Love

4. What is one way you will apply the text this week?