1 Corinthians Chapter 7 Verses 10 – 11

* Now remember that Paul is answering ***specific questions*** that were asked of him by the church in Corinth. They were getting *all confused* and getting *all messed up* because ***they were giving ear to the culture rather than Christ.*** Whatever is moving you off of a life lived close to the Lord, I want you to know, ***that is the thing that is chipping away at your joy.*** That is the thing that is ***stealing your peace.*** If Jesus returning today would cause you to change anything about you, then that is what is delaying your development, holding you back from the joy available to you in this life and by the way, the joy you’re looking for in the first place.
* You out there *trusting the Lord, walking with Him, filled with His Spirit*, even the little things will start adding to your joy. Like even the day itself…I mean, I love the way the earth rotates! **It really makes my day!** HA!! Why are you just *surviving?* What is stealing your joy…whatever it is that is moving you off of a life lived unto the Lord.
* We get all beat up when we hear something like that but that’s not my intention nor the Lord’s. Listen, if you find yourself in a *straight jacket* of a life and you realize it, that’s not time to allow the enemy to lead you into a depression over what your life has become. **It’s time to trust the Lord right now!**
* The Ark of the Covenant, the representation of God’s presence on earth, on top of it was the **mercy seat.** You don’t remove that. If you remove the mercy then there is only judgment. The enemy would like nothing more than for you to do that…***Stop putting your trust in the trial or in the flesh and put your hope in the Lord.*** God’s mercy is for you too!
* Paul has already dealt with singleness in the first part of this chapter and now he begins to deal with the married. The question being answered here is probably, *“Is it more spiritual to not be married? Should marriages be essentially dissolved in order to bring about holiness?”*
* That’s the question he is answering for them but I do so love the **simplicity** of these two verses and the clarity of them for the church today. Wives are **not to depart** and husbands are **not to divorce.** SO VERY CLEAR. That is the command of God. The will of God. These are our orders as Christians and these are ***extremely and entirely*** clear. I will never counsel someone to remain in a physically abusive situation and there is provision in the case of adultery for divorce, but if anyone ever counsels towards the end of a marriage and sexual immorality is not involved, ***then they are not in alignment with God on the matter.***
* But I know, I’ve seen, I’ve counseled folks in and through marriages that are just absolutely horrible. Let me help you now regarding how not to get there. ***Wives, don’t depart.*** That word *depart* in the Greek is the word *“chorizo”* and it means literally, *“disengage.”* **Take your heart away**…stop putting your heart into it…once your hearts not in it anymore…things get ***very very very*** hard.
* I know that he may not care for your heart as he should. And perhaps your heart has been hurt time and time again…I know, I’ve been there…listen, ***take your heart to the Lord.*** ***Grow in your walk and relationship with Jesus.*** Speaking about marriage, Peter said in 1 Peter 3:9, *“Don’t return evil for evil, but on the contrary bless!”* The fact is that being sinned against can lead us right into sin also. ***Don’t do it.***
* Lifehack, marriage hack, you ready? *Girl you don’t need skincare, what you need is sincare!* HA!! This is what you need, it’s what your husband needs from you and its what your marriage needs so that you won’t get to the point that you ***can’t*** do anything but physically depart. Why? Because you, ***the real you***, departed long ago.
* And husbands, don’t divorce your wives. That word in the Greek is *“aphiemi.”* It’s a word used 146 times in the Bible and rarely is it used for divorce. It literally means **forsake or suffer.** ***Husbands stop causing suffering in your wives.*** Stop! This is the command of God, that you love your wives as Christ loves the church and gave Himself for her. Any husband that does that, you will not end up in divorce.

1 Corinthians Chapter 7 Verses 12 – 13

* Paul wants us and the church to recognize that this is him speaking and ***not*** a direct commandment from the Lord. I appreciate that in him but three things I’d like for you to consider because I’d like to make the case that even though in humility he makes this statement, my opinion is that I, we and the church ought to still heed what Paul is commanding **as if it was a commandment from the Lord.**
* First, later in this chapter, in verse 40 Paul says, *“According to my judgment…and I think I also have the Spirit of God.”* Second, what Paul is commanding is **entirely in line** with the Spirt of God and the Word of God. Malachi 2:16 says*, “For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one’s garment with violence…”* Also, Jesus speaking on the subject in Matthew 19:8 said, *“From the beginning it was not so…”* And so what Paul is saying is directly in line with the Word of God and the heart of God…God’s design of the thing…
* Finally, the Bible commands ***me, you, us, the church*** to be obedient and to give heed to the word and command of leadership. Hebrews 13:17 says, *“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give an account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”* And so even though I appreciate Paul making this statement, he is filled and led by the Holy Spirit, what he says is in line with the Holy Spirit and he has been ordained by the Holy Spirit with authority and ***those three things***…when those three things are there…***I will obey.***
* If those three things are not there…***I’m out.*** Period, end of story, gone! Give me advice, counsel, guidance that is not in alignment with the word of God and the heart of God then I know you are not operating in the Spirit of God and therefore no authority whatsoever because Romans 13 says that all authority is given by God…
* Paul says here, if one person comes to the Lord or finds himself or herself in a marriage that is unequally yoked…don’t depart and don’t divorce. ***You’re going to grow very close to the Lord***…you’ll have to in order to make it, man… It’s been said, a man will have a godly wife and be happy or a man will have a worldly wife and be an amazing philosopher! **HA!** For you, there may be three rings involved in marriage. *The engagement ring, the wedding ring and suffering!* HA! But truly suffering in the flesh brings about great spiritual opportunity for growth. Paul says, stick it out…and check this out…

1 Corinthians Chapter 7 Verse 14

* **Super important verse here.** Paul says the that unbeliever is sanctified by the believing spouse. He did not say they that are saved, *“associate Christians”* on account of their spouse’s faith. It simply means that the home, the marriage, the whole deal will be blessed by and unto the Lord. Why? Because there is one Christian there.
* Think about this. The entire time Jesus Christ walked this earth, He was (and truly still is) the only person that was without sin. Everyone else was absolutely filled with the reality of sin. **Sin everywhere.** Yet *He embraced, He loved them, He served them, He healed them*, *He gave His life*…everywhere He went became holy no matter who was there…*which made me thing, what did they say when Jesus sneezed?*
* If you’re a Christian today not only has your sin been dealt with, paid for, taken away by the cross of Calvary, but you also, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, **you also have the power to no longer walk in the flesh.** You **can** follow Jesus. That is the thought behind the statement here.
* And Paul gives us six absolutely stunning words here as well, *“Otherwise your children would be unclean.”* We talk a lot about the ***“age of accountability.”*** It’s an understood and accepted doctrine in mainstream Christianity but I want you to know that **no where** in the Bible is it spoken of directly. People have asked me, *“In the rapture, what will happen to the children, to the babies?”* The only authoritative answer I can give is this, if at least one of their parents is a Christian, they will go to heaven…and this is the scripture for that.
* Now, when we are in heaven with the Lord and observing all that He is and all that He has done we will say, as it says in Revelation 16:7, *“Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”*  And I know Deuteronomy 32:4 which says, *“He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all his ways are justice; A God of truth without injustice; righteous and upright.”* So, whatever happens I know is righteous but based on the authority of scripture, the guarantee of a child going to heaven is only there if they have at least one believing parent.

1 Corinthians Chapter 7 Verses 15 – 16

* Following the Lord and sticking close to Him, obeying Him and trusting Him **will produce in you a heart of hope**…so stick with him, stay with her, trust the Lord and seek the peace of your home. Let God do the ***rest*** and He will. He will provide the ***rest.*** As in the stuffs/things and as in ***the refreshing of your soul and Spirit.***
* Paul says that you and I have been called to peace. That word literally means *security, safety, prosperity*…**exempt from the power of rage, war and cruelty.** God has placed a call on our hearts to that kind of strength of life. And that call comes through the cross. That’s what happened when Jesus died in my place and because of my sin. He brought me peace. ***Rest and relief from the weakness of the incessant flesh…and strength to live life as God designed.*** In fellowship with Him…in joy and strength and even growing in joy and in strength.
* The desire of the Lord, put on display at the cross, is for you to allow Him to lead you right into that…right into what His heart is for you…my part in that, your part in that…***work with Him.*** That’s what a relationship is all about. Whatever delays you in your devotion to the Lord…that’s what’s delaying you in your development towards freedom…and the Lord asks you for it now…*give it up, put it down, shake it loose, turn from it*…and turn to Him.