

## 1 Cor 7:1-9 : “To Whom the Body Belongs - Part 2”

**Starter: What were your expectations for marriage as a kid? Did you always dream of it or was it more of a nightmare?**

Read 1 Cor 7:1-9 and familiarise yourself with what immediately precedes this passage, “Flee sexual immorality” and “glorify God in your bodies.”

**Q. According to verse 1 in your translation, what is it good for a man to not do to a woman? Why do you suppose it has been translated that way? Remember that context is king.**

A. For some reason translators have made a hash of this word (Gk:*hupto*). Remembering that Paul has been talking about sexual immorality it makes most sense to translate it as “turn a woman on.” The literal translation is “kindle a fire” or “attach a fire to” which hopefully is an idiom or a euphemism. So the Corinthian church is throwing this phrase at Paul and Paul is saying “this is true except in the context of marriage.”

**Q. So then, in the context of marriage, why does Paul say that *hupto* is ok? What’s missing from this picture?**

A. Paul sees sex (at least in this passage) as being a way to stop sexual sin. You’ll note that nowhere does he allude to pro-creation.

**Q. How do you understand Paul’s command in verse 5; “Do not deprive one another”?**

A. Probably there’s some aspect of holiness here. As mentioned last week, God, through his Spirit is intimate with Christians and as two people become one body (and therefore one spirit) the act (or art?!) of sex is holy and pleasing to God within heterosexual monogamous marriage.

**Q. When you read this passage in light of Ephesians 5:22ff (“wives submit to your husband, husbands love your wife as Christ loves the church...”) does this put a different slant on the expectations that we have for one another in the marriage bed?**

A. Hopefully!

**Q. How do the genders tend to use sex as a weapon or abuse it’s holy intention?**

A. You probably came up with a few thoughts for both genders in which case you’ll see that both men and women are sexually immoral even within marriage.

**Q. Does Paul suggest that singleness (and therefore celibacy) is a higher calling? If so, why?**

A. Possibly he does. He calls it a gift from God (v7). I would also say that marriage is a gift from God. Both Jesus and Paul were single (possibly Paul *had* been married) and Paul says that when you’re single you’re free to be concerned for the things of the Lord (vv32-34).

**Close: What is God’s best - marriage or singleness (note verse 17)? Once married what does it mean to “glorify God in your body” (6:20)?**