

## Making Wise Judgments

God's design in Paul's epistles enables us to be spiritually minded in marriage. As we read them and believe, God gives us the mind of Christ to make wise judgments. Since even God's 'foolishness is wiser than men' (1 Cor. 1:25), we can be confident. We are to purpose to apply sound doctrine in the situations of life to be wise.

As you're led by His Spirit in faith, exercise the Truth in your marriage, adjusting/learning as you go. As a situation arises, yield to respond in love: Hold your tongue, apologize, or speak a kind word. (Learn about yourself and your spouse.)

In this way, valuable experience is gained to move from being a babe to a spiritual adult (full age). *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of **full age**, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."* (Hebrews 5:14)

We have choices in relationships: to walk after 'the Spirit' or 'the flesh.' Humbleness of mind to yield unto God and think properly about our spouse helps us to be a pleasing sacrifice: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* (Rom. 12:1)

**Think on this:** You'll learn to make wise judgments when you: 1) Regularly read sound doctrine, 2) Believe what's read, and 3) Live what you learn to please God. **Study the issue of yielding unto God.**

## Just A Minute! With Scripture

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be underlined, or made bold for emphasis.



What's the goal in marriage? It's not putting on a happy Christian face to be seen by others. It also is not a vehicle for our selfish purposes and demands, having high expectations without grace. This is flesh driven. God's view is needed.



The perfect example given to us is the love relationship between Christ and the Church: *"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."* (Eph. 5:24-25) Each cherishes and respects the other with this love.

There are many ways to describe a godly relationship, but it is simply seeing each other as God does. A couple unites as one when they commit to one another & marry. *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be one flesh."* (Gen. 2:24) Two members of Christ can then live as one, when they yield to God and prefer the other. This is a selfless love attitude.

As the couple functions in unity with godly love, they can help each other accomplish God's purpose to be Christ's ambassador and servant. It's wise for them to look to the Word in prayer, so they move together through life's circumstances, learning & living the Truth. Open communication is a key. When a spouse 'seems' unlovable, humbleness and strategic responses in kindness work well. The husband leads, preferring his wife above himself. The wife submits to his authority (as unto the Lord), trusting God in the challenges.

*"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."* (Rom. 13:1) It's important to realize that God sets order in the marriage: *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man: and the head of Christ is God."* (1 Cor. 11:3) Christ enables the couple to function with wisdom in their roles, which they chose upon marrying. **Let this mind be in you!**



Search it out!

Living As Who You Are In Christ

## I Corinthians 7: Addressing Questions About Relationships

Examine verses!



Wise judgment in decisions is based upon learning sound doctrine. Yet, God doesn't give all-inclusive directives on every aspect of life as He did under the Law. We are to apply what we know in the Word, learn from experience, and apply it to other situations. I Corinthians 7 provides practical instruction in righteousness to motivate saints by God's grace to bring forth fruit unto holiness.

Believers at Corinth had many challenges applying basic teachings. They still needed the simple 'milk' of the Word: *"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."* (I Cor. 3:2) Examine Chapter 7 for yourself to assess the practical instructions that are designed to also help you:

- 1. Read through the chapter to gain an overview:** Sometimes it is quite helpful to scan a large chapter a few times to become prepared for the teaching. a) Target the main topics. b) Highlight repeating words.
- 2. Determine the various groups of people being dealt with in the chapter:** Write down the verses that address each grouping. What did you find?

**3. Pay attention to a consistent theme:** Determine the general attitude relayed throughout the chapter about remaining single. Did Paul provide insight into why he felt this way? Does this apply today or was it only good "...for the present distress?"

**4. Look up unfamiliar terms and words within phrases that are hard to be understood:** Skim through this chapter to select words, then define them. Spend time considering what was found and reread the section where the words were located. Did it help in your understanding of the verses?

**5. Notice when there seems to be an urgency (Vs. 29) relayed :** Read Verses 29-35 and determine what Paul is directing saints to do since 'the time is short.' How can this be accomplished in your life?

**6. Take time to meditate on verses from various viewpoints:** Sometimes a verse can be read from two very different angles. i.e. There can be disagreement on Verses 36-38. To whom do you think it is referring, when it says, *"But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin..."*? Is this the future husband, or the father of the virgin?

**7. Read a verse for application:** Meditate upon Verse 38. How does this indicate that there is more than one way to acceptably live unto God?

*\*Newer students: Focus on 'reading' Scripture rather than on using many new study insights.*

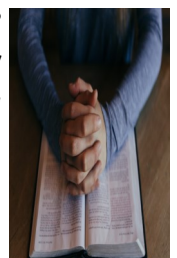
## Being Content: Is God's Grace Sufficient?

Can we be content in whatever state we are in, like being in a difficult marriage, single with no prospects, or having a physical infirmity? The problem is that our flesh is never satisfied. We're convinced we deserve everything, and more. Bitterness and envy can easily set in: *"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."* (Rom. 8:6) If we are married we want to be loosed and if we are single we want to be married. *"But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches."* (I Cor. 7:17) Thus, God calls us to acquire contentment, but the learning process is slow. There's no 'quick pill.'

As we submit to God's Word and grow, we can attain what Paul learned in Philippians 4 about contentment. Our focus does not 'have to be' on the physical. *"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."* (II Cor. 4:18) When Christ literally becomes our life, things of this world pale: *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh...Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* (II Cor. 10:3,5)



Read and pray together to develop and maintain spiritual unity. Yet don't forget personal quiet time in the Word to mature in your relationship with God. **His Grace Is Sufficient!**



## Idealism Feels So Good Until Reality Hits

Most Christian couples go into marriage mesmerized by love and the unspoken hope for an ideal life together. It can overwhelm the Truth that they each have a flesh. In time, life unfolds and challenges become more evident. As 'idealism' diminishes, frustration can slam them back a few feet. Each saint gains a new depth of reality and may start to realize: "My spouse is flawed! Could I have flesh problems too?" God designed marriage to be a powerful teacher for us. How does it work?

An important first lesson about our flesh is not being able to live these roles. We need God. Marriage is not like the 1960's free-spirited dances, where there was no partner or designated leader; one's flesh and emotions ruled. The couple needs to look at their feet, knowing they are a team with godly instructions for this new dance. Marriage can bring us to a place where we feel humbled and incapable. This is a good place to be really. It is just uncomfortable. Romans 7:24 summarizes the challenge of trying to live life by the flesh: *"Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death."* The couple will make choices: Will the flesh rule or the Spirit? They may become overwhelmed and immobilized, or humble themselves before God. Abram's abased response is exactly where God wants us: *"...the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect...And Abram fell on his face..." (Gen 17:1-3)*



Once humbled, a second issue to acquire as a couple is the 'one mind.' Read and pray together each day. This can help you see each other in Christ, rather than in the flesh. As a couple discusses Scripture and real life situations for application, communication and problem solving become smoother. The Word is now the standard in the marriage, not the self-centered flesh, nor a worldly view. Submission to God's teaching in problem solving will bring growth and improve the relationship. It also develops faith, confidence, and trust that God will be your help through all of life's challenges, as you believe and yield.

A third insight for a couple is to reflect on how things are going each week. Focus on the positive. Build each other up, acknowledging when kindness is shown and as change occurs. Keep communication open and recognize that your spouse has valid perspectives, but so do you. Value and respect each other, and yourselves as God does. Start discussions with prayer, with a willingness to be changed by God. *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."* (Eph. 5:21) Marriage teaches us to rely on Him.

Love is not 'just' a warm, fuzzy feeling with a physical attraction toward one another. It's a life long love commitment. Whether one is loveable in the moment or not, we can respond in godly love, yielding to God. Encourage and be a helper of your mate's joy, especially in tough situations. (II Cor. 1:24) Be patient, as ultimately this will positively affect you and the relationship. *"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."* (Rom. 12:10) This is a different way to think. Trust God and walk by faith. **Your reality: Christ's life can live within you!**



Live your marriage with grace thinking. *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."* (Gal. 5:1) Oftentimes, a saint can have unrealistic expectations of their spouse without knowing. Neither of you are perfect and you won't meet all of each other's needs. Unrealistic expectations can put others

or yourself under pressure. If there's perfect performance, all is well, if not, irritation. This is 'the law' and will create frustration and anger.

We can be confident that God will perfectly provide, but be careful not to put your spouse under this performance system. Become self-aware to realize what you expect of yourself and your spouse. The faith walk in marriage is a journey to learn and mature together. Be thankful for what God has given each of you and pray to progress in grace. Stay focused on things above.

**Discuss expectations and be open to listen in love.**

**Christian Life Coach Support Services**  
 (804) 519-1210 - lifecoachesdjbj@yahoo.com  
 Website: Christianlifecoachsupport.squarespace.com

Stamp

To:

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)**

**Personal Insights**  
**Practical Ideas on How to Study: Part I**

One key purpose in studying is to be conformed to Christ, living His life. In time, God teaches us how to do this. Simply read, then trust God. Study is an examination or further consideration of Scripture. As we slowly read and think about each verse, reading transitions into study. How?

As you read and meditate on verses, the Spirit helps you notice topics and key words, stirring interest. Some terms are repeatedly used, so you wonder about their meaning. Often, insight or illumination doesn't immediately occur. You may become motivated to look up a definition or do further thinking on it and continue reading. As you learn, it prompts you to study for more interesting nuggets. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* (Rom. 10:17)

When you spend regular time in the Word, soon you'll recall another place in Scripture where something similar is written. A concordance or Bible app can be helpful to look up a term. Before you know it, you're on your way to studying! *“...for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God...Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”* (1 Cor. 2:10, 12)

There's no need to put pressure on yourself to study. In grace, rejoice to simply Read, Read, Read! Purpose to notice the context of passages and 'rightly divide the Word.' Basically, this refers to realizing that all the Bible is 'for us' and is 'for our learning' (Rom. 15:4), but not all of it is written

It Is THIS MONTH...Plan to Attend!  
**Annual Ladies Florida Retreat**  
 Fellowship Bible Church, Orlando, FL  
**April 13-14, 2018**  
**Topic:** Grace-How To Really Live It (Rom. 14-16)  
 Contact Sue for details: **(804) 690-6789**

**Join Us For Fellowship & Bible Study**  
 In the Richmond, Virginia Area  
**Family Study: Fridays, 7-9pm**  
**Ladies Study: Wednesdays, 10:30-12**  
**Call For Locations: (804) 519-1210**

Join us for a new ministry  
**Christian Couples Date Night**  
 The last Saturday of the Month  
 Call for information: **(804) 519-1210**

directly 'to us,' to apply today. Keep in mind that the Apostle Paul writes direct doctrine 'to' the Body of Christ for application today, that is, Romans through Philemon.

It often takes time to learn how and feel comfortable to *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* (II Tim. 2:15) If you would like more information on the subject of 'rightly dividing the Word,' or desire advanced study tools and insights, contact us: (804) 519-1210. We would enjoy sharing!

\*This will be a continuing series on 'How To Study' to assist those who may have questions or are new to the reading-studying process. We welcome comments & questions. **Our desire: To encourage personal study.**