

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

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

Our Addictive Nature

Theme: I Corinthians 16

From birth forward, each person learns to serve his own physical needs, progressively developing a passion for a multitude of worldly enticements. Our nature is to hyper-focus on our bodies, becoming addicted (under its power) to serve its every need. If we're hungry, we feed it, and when fearful, we protect ourselves. The flesh also learns to lust after many things: *"All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."* (I John 2:16)

Man grows up to be his own god, obsessed to serve 'self' and therefore, setting aside the Living God. The process: *"Because that, 1) when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; 2) but became vain in their imaginations, 3) and their foolish heart was darkened. 4) Professing themselves to be wise, 5) they became fools, 6) and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man..."* (Rom. 1:21-23)

This inherited nature from Adam (Old man) is crucified once we believe, so we no longer 'have' to be controlled by it. *"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power (addicted) of any."* (I Cor. 6:12) God graciously provides a perfect replacement for fleshly addictions: *"I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have **addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints**)." (I Cor. 16:15)*

This Scripture speaks in the positive way about saints being addicted to serving others and their needs.

Think on this: Read and study Romans 1-11 as this is foundational teaching to prepare us to exalt others in godly love. Now, read on as Romans 12 introduces our interrelationship with all members of the Body and how to love them. The Spirit teaches us a genuine care for the saints above serving 'self.' When we see others benefit from our service, it causes us joy. In time, joyful serving can develop a natural addiction to ministering to others on God's behalf, as a living sacrifice.

It's Not Just About the Money

In a time when finances are tight and needs are high, how can we give, doing all things unto God? *"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."* (Col. 3:23) While I Corinthians 16 provides direction on financial support to others, we are to know that this is just one way to give of ourselves:

Financial: In this chapter, order was given on how to collect money. They were to lay it aside on "the first day of the week," not waiting to take a collection when Paul arrived. (vs.1-2) Doing it ahead of time avoided doing it with the wrong motive, to be seen of men: *"...that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness...Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."* (II Cor. 9:5,7)

Physical: This is helping with physical needs. It could be making a meal for a family whose mother is in the hospital, sending study books to a saint in need, or, as in this chapter, hospitality. The Corinthians had the opportunity to open their home unto Paul to abide. (verse 6)

Spiritual: Saints are able to hold forth the Truth as ambassadors unto others, sharing the spiritual Truths God had taught them. Timothy, Apollos, and Stephanas worked with Paul to do this for the Corinthians. (vs. 10-18)

Encouragement: Some individuals are overwhelmed by circumstances or need emotional support, having grief, hurt, anger, or depression. We can encourage and show them godly love, using the Word, i.e. a chat over coffee. This kindness is evident when Paul warns the Corinthians to treat Timothy with care, knowing he is young and fearful. (vs 10-11) In this way, saints can refresh each other. (vs. 18)

Prayer: When we pray for the saints, it can work the doctrine within us to give clarity in how to help others according to God and His will. It stirs up godly charity for others, enabling us to help them stand fast. (vs. 13-14)



Study Tools: How the Timeline Can Help Us Understand



(Refer to Prior Three Issues)

The Time line: This is the last in a series on the study tool about the timeline. The goal has been to help readers understand how the Bible is organized to improve a student's ability to read/study the Word. This tool is #6 on p. 17 of "Exploring the Bible Using Study Skills," available on Amazon or free on our website. (see top of p.1) Answers to common questions can help readers understand rightly dividing:

1. How do I rightly divide when I read outside of Paul's epistles i.e. the Gospels? Read slowly, thinking about the context. Ask yourself questions. Who is writing and to whom? Does this apply directly to me? Is this a general Truth or inconsistent with Paul's teaching? Two examples: In John 1:1-4 there is no instruction, yet it teaches about Christ's deity, who is also the Word. This is an inter-dispensational issue that is true throughout Scripture. In contrast, Matt. 6:14-15 states, 'if you forgive, then God will forgive you.' This is not grace, is contrary to sound doctrine, and NOT to be applied to us. It is conditional forgiveness, 'if' we forgive, then we're forgiven.

2. Was Paul one of the Twelve Jewish apostles? No, Paul had a separate ministry from the twelve. In Acts 1:15-26 Peter cast lots to replace Judas, fulfilling Scripture. (vs. 16) He asked God to relay which man 'He' selected; God chose Matthias, not Paul. (vs. 26) This section also relays the qualifications for this position: one who accompanied the disciples following Jesus in His earthly ministry, beginning with the baptism of John, until the Lord's resurrection. (vs. 21-22) Paul obviously did not meet this requirement, as he was persecuting the followers of Jesus. (Acts 8:3,9:1-2) Instead, Paul was the Apostle of the Gentiles. (Romans 11:13)

3. Is Acts written to the Body of Christ? No, the main thrust of Acts is the diminishing/fall of the Nation Israel. It relays a renewed offer to Israel to accept their Messiah. However, they blaspheme the Holy Ghost by the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7), so Israel diminishes and is finally set aside. The book also introduces Paul, a new apostle and salvation message to the Gentiles.

4. Why was Paul raised up as an Apostle? God's mystery plan (I Cor. 2:7-8), the dispensation of grace, was to be taught by Paul to all mankind. God gave him this Gentile office to preach grace, revealing the purpose of the cross for the Gentiles. (I Corinthians 1:17-18)

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

Being Refreshed

What does it mean to be refreshed by saints: *"For they have refreshed my spirit and yours..."* (I Cor. 16:18) In the context, Paul relays that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus were men in the ministry who regularly supplied his needs. In the process of serving Paul, they refreshed his spirit. Paul often refers to being refreshed when saints came to him, did service to him or others, or he saw saints living out the doctrine. He stated one's bowels (deep inner parts) can be refreshed in *Philemon 1:7*. This word is also used in the Old Testament, such as in connection with the playing of a harp (*I Sam. 16:23*) or resting on the Sabbath: *"It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."* (Ex. 31:17)

A dictionary definition of being refreshed: regaining energy; reinvigorate, revive or restore, or gain new strength. We get the clear picture in Paul's letters how saints have a unique ability to revitalize one another. As we observe other saints spiritual growth (allowing Christ to live in them to manifest charity toward one another), this can produce a refreshment to our soul, being a great encouragement. A good example is when Paul asks for prayer from believers, in *Romans 15:32*, to be delivered from certain dangers on his journey, so that his service would be accepted by the saints. The reason: *"That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed."*

Think on this: Have you recently been refreshed? When? Can you be a refreshment to others this week? Make a plan!

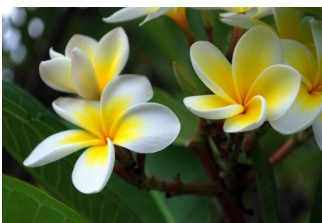
How The Bible Shows Us To Love in Marriage

By Erin Young

Marriage is one of the oldest known forms of bonding and commitment known to man. The Bible talks about marriage in the very beginning. *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”* (Genesis 2:24) But why did God create marriage? I believe it is to help teach us to understand the truest form of love there is. When you marry, you are no longer living for yourself, but for someone else. *“The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.”* (1 Corinthians 7:4) This is the purest and most selfless love there is. *“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.”* (Ephesians 5:28)

There is a connection between earthly marriage and Christ’s love for the Church. These connections are so that we can truly know just how deep His love is for us. *“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the saviour of the body.”* (Ephesians 5:23) *“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself: and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”* (Ephesians 5:33)

Marriage is loving someone more than yourself, honoring and respecting them. If you want to know how to do this, just look at the way Christ loves us.



On A Personal Side

Question & Answers

by Deborah Johnson

Question 1: Is it wise to use every spare minute to listen to Bible teachers and read books/commentaries by those who rightly divide?

Teachers and books can be very helpful, but these are NOT to replace daily time directly in the Scriptures. Books, commentaries, and even sermons are someone’s viewpoint ‘about’ the Bible. Throughout the Bible, God instructs us to read His Word. Why? *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* (II Tim. 3:16-17) When we listen to a man teaching or writing, it is important to prove what is said for yourself or the teacher or author will become your authority. Look up verses in context to become fully persuaded in what God the Spirit is teaching you. Thus, it is most profitable to read, study, & dwell on the Word, led by the Spirit to understand and apply it in your life.

Question 2: What would it look like to live as who I am in Christ?

Build a routine into your life to pray and daily read the Word. This prepares your heart and gives you a storehouse of sound doctrine in your inner man to draw from to make wise decisions. As you dwell on the Scripture through the day, the Spirit/Word will flag you when you’re on the wrong road (living contrary to who you are in Christ). This flag is to help you stop, think, and pray about the situation to be led by the Spirit. Determine how God would desire you to respond, consistent with who you are in Christ. Then, choose to obey, doing what the Truth teaches, walking by faith. This is yielding to God’s wisdom in you to access His power, which is designed to renew your mind (Rom. 12:2)

Question 3: I just moved to a new state and cannot find fellowship and sound teaching. What can I do to develop a ministry in my area?

Here are a few general suggestions to start a local group:

1. Make a plan to progressively meet your neighbors and share the gospel. You could drop by to introduce yourself and explain how you trusted the glorious gospel of Christ. You could bring cookies to share.
2. Start a Bible study. Place notices at the library or in the local newspaper with the time/date/place and/or use as flyers for mailboxes in your neighborhood. Research a good location to meet. For safety, it may be best to meet in a public place such as a library or clubhouse.
3. Make your own tract with the basic, simple gospel. Add your phone number & Bible study info to prompt interest. Pass them out or leave them at key locations in the community, i.e. car shop, Dr. office, etc.
4. Write a monthly one-page newsletter. Begin with the basics of the gospel and progress to simple topics of interest: i.e. faith, prayer, love, etc. At the end of each newsletter, offer an opportunity to talk on the phone and invite them to your Bible study. Progress can take time.
5. Reach out to your local community. Sponsor a free car wash at a gas station. As you serve your neighbors, discuss the gospel and let them know of your new Bible study. Provide a handout or tract with the time, location, and phone number. Be persistent, creative, & in prayer.

*Also, there is a wonderful resource directory on Facebook (**Mid-Acts Pauline Bible Conferences and Functions**) developed by Sharon McEntee to connect stranded grace believers to other saints & bible studies.

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Stamp

To:

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

Let, Be, and Yield (Part I)
 by Jeanette Scallan

“...that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Romans 7:4b)

It is a joyous occasion when a baby is delivered into a loving home. A new life to cherish, the fruit of love’s labor. Though sin has marred the original purpose, there is still a gentle grace to the process of conception. The world would have us view the entire process as contingent upon the women’s will, but in God’s plan the opposite is true.

A man speaks softly to a woman and she lets her heart be won. He gives her his name and she becomes his family. He asserts his desire for her and, in yielding, she conceives. He protects her and provides nourishment, which allows the fruit of her womb to grow. Even as she labors to bring forth the child, his presence brings assurance of future provision. Her entire role in this delicate dance is to let him have his way, be his, and yield to him. The precious fruit she reaps fulfills her heart’s desire for a child.

Romans 6:16-7:6 draws comparisons between this natural process and our new identity in Christ. We were slaves to sin and death, but the gospel, according to the revelation of the mystery, spoke softly to us. We let ourselves believe and became *“...dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” (Rom. 7:4)* Now we are dead to sin but alive unto God. *(Rom. 6:11)* He asserts His desire: *“...yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness...” (Rom. 6:19),* and as we yield, we conceive *“...fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” (Rom. 6:22)* To be continued next month.

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