



Today's text is used incorrectly by many who want to find exceptions to "married for life." We will consider those attempts/arguments, for the purpose of helping us understand what IS being taught.

A few things to keep in mind as we study:

- the Bible does not conflict itself (in this chapter, nor this chapter with other passages)
- Paul was an *inspired apostle* (1 Cor 4, Gal 1:11-2:10)
- Jesus taught clearly on marriage principles, & based his teaching on what God had always intended (Mt 19:3-12, Gen 2:18-24, Mt 5:31-32, Mk 10:2-12, Lk 16:18)
- Paul is writing Christians with all kinds of moral and marital backgrounds. Some had become Christians & their spouse hadn't (vs 12-14); others had become Christians after leaving their spouse, or after their spouse had left them (vs 11); others had both become Christians (vs 1-7 & 10-11); others were unmarried or widowed, or had an unmarried child (vs 8-9, 25-40); and some would become Christians but still at times choose not to follow God's laws (vs 11).

Unscriptural Teachings:

(A) Leaving is OK if you don't divorce Vs 10-11

This argument is made based on verses 11 & 15.

1. Why is this **not** in keeping with the Bible? [consider Mt 19:4-6, 1 Cor 7:39, & the points in the intro comments.]

2. Summarize what vs 10-11 IS teaching.

(B) If your spouse leaves you: Vs 12-16

- **it's a second exception to God's marriage laws**
- **it's OK to remarry**
- **It's the equivalent of adultery**

This argument is made based on vs 15, and assumes that the "bondage" is referring to the "marriage bond". (*However*, the context so far has been meeting our marital obligations, & staying together in a "mixed" marriage – *not* the marriage itself.)

3. Explain why this is **not** what is being taught? [consider 1 Cor 7:39; the context of these verses; Jesus' teaching; & the intro points.]

4. The "under bondage" in vs 15 is not referring to being married. What is it referring to? [Hint: see the ESV; look at the context. "Bondage" here and "bound" in vs 39 come from different words!]

5. Summarize what vs 12-16 **IS** teaching.

(C) Paul is teaching his *opinions* throughout this section, so they aren't binding vs 12-16, 25-40

This argument is made based on Paul referring to some teachings as from the Lord (vs 10-11), and other as not from the Lord (vs 12-16, 25-40).

However, note: **(1)** Paul lists instruction as “from the Lord” that Jesus taught – like a quote - & instructions as “I say, not the Lord” that PAUL is giving as an apostle, clarifying that he is not quoting Jesus; **(2)** Paul states 12-16 as commands, but he lists 25-38 & 40 as his opinion - & says there is no right or wrong choice in *this* section (25-40); **(3)** He bases his advice to widows on a statement of fact (39-40); **(4)** His advice of 25-40 is based on a *current social situation* (vs 26, 29-31)

6. Paul says his advice regarding a man giving his daughter in marriage (25-40) is based on what unusual circumstances? [vs 26, 29-31]
7. If Paul **were** teaching this (25-38) as applying for **all time**, how would it be in conflict with God's word (& thus make him not inspired)? [consider Gen 2:18-25, Gen 9:1, Mt 19:4-6, Titus 1:5-6, 1 Tim 3:1-2]
8. What part(s) of 1 Cor 7:12-40 are listed as advice/opinion based on the social situation of that day, & what part(s) are stated as commands, that are *not* tied to the social situation of the Corinthians?
- 9.(a) What **is** vs 12-16 teaching regarding marriage of Christians to non-Christians?

(b) What **is** vs 25-40 teaching regarding the unmarried?

(D) Paul mistakenly thought Jesus was about to return

This is argued based on vs 26 & 29-31. This assumption would make Paul's teaching in this section invalid, if it's based on a wrong assumption.

10. If Paul was mistakenly teaching this, thinking Jesus was returning soon – what would that say about his being inspired, AND the rest of Paul's writings in the New Testament? [Hint: in addition to the Intro comments, consider Mt 24:36, Jer 28:9, Deut 18:21-22]

At first read, **verses 17-24** seem to be tangential – unrelated to the topic of the rest of the chapter (marriage situations). However, Paul is using situations they could understand, to help illustrate how this same principle applies to marriage (the rest of chapter 7.) **His point is – becoming a Christian does not change our social situation.** (It only changes our spiritual status.)

11. What does Paul repeat 3 times to make sure we get this? [vs 17, 20, 24]

12. What specific social situations does Paul list that are not changed by becoming a Christian?

13. (a) There are some today who teach that baptism washes away an unscriptural marriage, making it OK to be remarried. What does this section (17-24), as well as vs 12-16 & 39, tell us about this teaching?

(b) Others take this section (17-24) to teach that whatever marriage you happen to be in when you are baptized, is the one that God counts; any previous marriages don't count. *What is the flaw in this logic?*

Note from verses 12-13 – becoming a Christian might have the consequence of your spouse leaving you because of that decision!