

**Divorce and Domestic Abuse**

**H**ear the Cries of the Oppressed

**E**stablish Safety

**A**pply the Gospel

**L**ead in Developing New Patterns

Introduction

I. Biblical Grounds for Divorce

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II. The Context of 1 Corinthians 7

* vv. 1-7: Is celibacy the biblical way of life?
* vv. 8-9: Should the unmarried and widows get married?
* vv. 10-11: Should married people remain married?
* vv. 12-16: Should you remain married if you partner is an unbeliever?

Key Point: Paul was addressing situations the Corinthians asked him about.

III. Case Law: The Biblical Method of Ethical Teaching

Case laws give rules that govern a particular situation. It is expected that we discern a universal principle from the law, and apply it to other situations.

* Example: Exodus 21:33-34

General principle behind 1 Corinthians 7:15: if the actions of one spouse effectively break the bond of marriage, the other spouse is not obligated to remain married.

IV. Applying 1 Corinthians 7:15 to Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse creates an oppressive environment in the home that forces the wife to leave for her own well-being.

Effects of Domestic Abuse on the Survivor:

* + Life may be threatened
  + Physical injuries
  + Questioning her sanity
  + Severe anxiety
  + Panic attacks
  + Intense nightmares
  + Insomnia
  + Digestion problems
  + Depression
  + PTSD
  + Suicidal thoughts

Effects on Children Who Grow Up in Abusive Homes:

* + Failure to thrive in infants
  + Fear
  + Anxiety
  + Insecurity
  + Self-blame
  + Defiance
  + Poor grades
  + Bed-Wetting in children over 4
  + Intense nightmares
  + Eating disorders
  + Substance abuse
  + Teen pregnancy
  + Cutting
  + Suicidal thoughts
  + Boys: more likely to become abusive
  + Girls: more likely to marry abusive men

V. Remarriage

Matthew 19:9 permits remarriage if the divorce was for sexual immorality.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 assumes that divorced people can remarry.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 prohibits remarriage if the divorce was for unbiblical reasons.

1 Corinthians 7:1-16

**7**Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” **2**But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. **3**The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. **4**For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. **5**Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

**6**Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. **7**I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

**8**To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. **9**But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

**10**To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband **11**(but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

**12**To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. **13**If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. **14**For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. **15**But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. **16**For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?