

A Series of Devotions About Marriage Based on 1 Corinthians Chapter 7

MARRIED TO A NON-BELIEVING SPOUSE

1 Corinthians 7:12-17 “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. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. 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. 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. For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?”

Optimistic singles are convinced that their passion and commitment will overcome all obstacles. A couple madly in love has great difficulty seeing the strengths and weaknesses of their relationship. One significant issue that is often overlooked are religious differences, especially if one is a devout Christian and the other is lukewarm or even more, a non-believer. St. Paul addresses the later situation in today’s devotional passage.

The believing, religiously devout spouse considers regular weekend worship a high life priority. The unbelieving spouse sees no importance in attending worship. At best the unbelieving spouse tolerates his or her spouse attending church regularly and at worst is resentful regarding the amount of time the believing spouse devotes to their faith life.

The second issue that is high on the list is how to raise their children. Children are perceptive and quickly realize that mom and dad are not on the same page when it comes to one’s spiritual life. This causes confusion for the child at the least and a significant challenge for the believing spouse to encourage his or her offspring to attend Sunday school, church, confirmation class, etc.

For widows and widowers contemplating marriage, when one is a devout, practicing Christian and the other is not, the same tensions potentially exist. At this stage in life, issues that arise revolve around the believer wanting to give a regular tithe, devote volunteer time at church, sing in the choir, etc., while the unbeliever sees doing so a waste of time, money and steals from them their “couple time.” Prayer life as a couple is probably non-existent. Sharing something so important as

a life together and not being able to share one's faith creates a divided heart. Thus, St. Paul's inspired words address great caution to single Christians who are seeking a life-long marriage partner.

Prayer: Lord, bless my spouse and me with a shared faith in You. Grant that we are able to build our marriage on this spiritual foundation so our marriage endures until death parts us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer: Lord, You know I am married to one who does not see the importance of faith in Jesus Christ and regular worship. Grant me a faith that remains strong and sure. Enable me to be a loving spouse witnessing Your unconditional love to my partner. Bless our marriage for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Prayer: Lord, today I pray for _____, who is contemplating marrying an unbeliever. Guide me in how best to witness and counsel _____. Protect her/him in her/his faith. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Oh, for a faith that will not shrink Tho' pressed by many a foe;
That will not tremble on the brink Of poverty or woe;

That will not murmur nor complain Beneath the chast'ning rod,
But in the hour of grief or pain Can lean upon its God;

A faith that shines more bright and clear When tempests rage without;
That, when in danger, knows no fear, In darkness feels no doubt;

That bears unmoved the world's dread frown Nor heeds its scornful smile;
That sin's wild ocean cannot drown Nor Satan's arts beguile;

A faith that keeps the narrow ay Till life's last spark is fled
And with a pure and heavenly ray Lights up the dying bed.

Lord, give us such a faith as this; And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en now the hallowed bliss Of an eternal home.
(TLH 396)

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Co 7:12–17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

