



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

An Eternal Perspective

Tuesday, 4 March 2014

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CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

152nd General Assembly

- TUESDAY @ 7:30 AM in 123 CAP
- TUESDAY @ 12 NOON in 328 CLOB

Capitol Commission Bible Studies are held Tuesday mornings at 7:30am (members only) *and again* at 12 Noon (open to all). The weekly Bible study is non-partisan and non-denominational. The study for the 2014 General Assembly is the book of First Corinthians.

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. I am here to serve you and to be a resource for prayer and counsel. Please accept my study in the Word of God, as an evidence of my desire to serve you.

– Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission Bible Study is

Tuesday, 4 March 2014

First Corinthians 7 – “An Eternal Perspective”

Romans 1:16-17 exhort the believer not to be “ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes . . . for in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.” As believers commit themselves to the Word of God, we will be readily identifiable for rejecting many unbiblical beliefs and practices of the prevailing culture (and we might even be castigated for our convictions to uphold God’s Word). As opposed to being “ashamed” of our faith, we are to live with an eternal perspective.

THE NECESSITY

(*I Cor 7:1-9*) The beginning of chapter 7 is both the logical development of the previous discussion addressing morality and the answer to matters that were a concern to believers. Apparently, someone was teaching that marriage was not preferable to being single, or at least was asserting that one who was married should abstain from sexual relations.

Verses 1-2 communicate the moral necessity for marriage. The danger of immorality is one of the reasons why the majority of people should be married; of course, it is not the only reason but it is certainly an important one. *Truthfully*, the only reason for believers to marry is the conviction that together they can glorify God more than they would remaining unwed.

Verses 3-5 communicate the physical necessity for marriage. The physical necessity of marriage is related to the moral necessity. Physical needs must be satisfied for one to avoid sexual immorality (fornication). A healthy sexual life is a deterrent to fornication (Gk. *porneia*). To abstain from sexual relations in marriage is to contradict the plan of God. Many failures and problems that occur in marriages can be resolved by heeding Scripture, especially as verses 1-5 are words from God as to how marital sex ought to be.

Each partner has a marital obligation to the other. Verses 3-5 contain a sexual primer to guide the behavior of married couples. Only those who “have self-control” of their sexual urges should embrace celibacy as an alternative to marriage (7:6-9). The single life is good, but not everyone can live a life of complete abstinence.

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One can derive, at least, three principles from verses 1-9. The threefold ethic for marital sexual relations is stated either implicitly or made explicit in the beginning verses of First Corinthians 7. *First*, a married person’s body belongs to his/her spouse. Within the marriage relationship, one “does not have authority over” his/her “own body” (7:4). Neither spouse has exclusive rights over their body. The inference is that no personal or selfish usage of the body is acceptable (e.g. adultery or masturbation). What is most important to note is that the sexual act results in giving: each seeks to satisfy the other’s needs.

Second, sexual relations must be frequent. Neither marriage partner has the prerogative to deprive the other of his/her body. *Third*, sexual relations should be satisfying “so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (7:5). Any prolonged abstinence provides an opportunity for temptation. The third principle would also seem to necessitate the need for erotic technique (i.e. Christians need to know what constitutes being a good lover). Specifics regarding such skills can be found in The Song of Solomon.

THE CHANGE

(*I Cor 7:10-24*) Scripture addressed specific questions regarding marriage, and now specific questions regarding divorces are addressed. As an addition to the discussion concerning marriage and divorce, the question with regard to the extent that a Christian’s faith affects his or her position in life is answered. Christian faith does not necessitate a drastic change with regard to one’s economic, marital, or occupational status. *Nevertheless*, the faith of a Christian may demand a change if the need arises from a moral transformation within the believer. The subject is related to the discussion of whether believers should divorce their unbelieving spouses for the purpose of sustaining

Capitol Commission Bible Studies

Tuesday (4 March) @ 7:30am – 8:00am, 123 CAP

Tuesday (4 March) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 328 CLOB

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An Eternal Perspective

an acceptable relationship with God.

Two specific situations are addressed in verses 10-24. The *first* issue is regarding both married partners who are believers. The *second* is regarding one of the married partners who becomes a believer while the other does not have such faith. The source of the instruction is “the Lord” (7:10). Jesus expressed his command regarding divorce (cf. Matt 5:31-32; 19:1-2) and established it upon the creation ordinance of Genesis 2:24, which implies that it is applicable to all humanity, not solely believers.

The command is not to divorce, but, if one does, to remain unmarried (1 Cor 7:11). The instruction coincides with Jesus’ teaching that divorce and remarriage — “except for immorality” — is indistinguishable from adultery (Matt 19:9). The prohibition against remarriage prohibits the majority of common reasons for obtaining a divorce. Divorce and separation could be done legitimately for the sake of safety (or for discipline of one of the partners, or to provide an opportunity for each to resolve feelings and to change behavior for the ultimate purpose of reconciliation).

The Christian who has become a believer subsequent to marriage should continue with that marriage on condition that the unbeliever is willing (1 Cor 7:12-13, 15). Verses 25-31 address why becoming a Christian does not necessitate a change in marital status. The unbeliever “is sanctified” through the faith of his or her spouse, which means that God recognizes such marriages as valid (7:14, 16).

Verses 17-24 form an appendix that communicates how becoming a Christian not only affects marriage but also influences all life’s situation. One might think that becoming a Christian requires a believer to change everything (not just marriage); therefore, 2 Corinthians 5:17 clarifies what becoming “a new creature” means and does not mean.

ULTIMATELY AND MORE EFFECTIVELY, IT WAS THE MESSAGE OF SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION THAT CHANGED SOCIETY.

Unless otherwise indicated, a person’s circumstances should be regarded as God’s calling (1 Cor 7:17-21). A believer may change circumstances, if the opportunity is available, and if the believer desires that change (7:21). In other words, Christianity does not always necessitate such changes, yet sometimes it does. A previously immoral lifestyle is necessarily changed when one has faith in Christ, and the same would be true regarding illegal “occupations.”

First Corinthians 7:23 – You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

Obedience to the Word of God is necessary, yet outward circumstances are not (7:19). A believer can obey and glorify God in the midst of adverse circumstances and can be quite effective in that regard as a Christian. Inward spiritual transformation counterbalances

outward circumstances (7:22-24). None of the individuals in Scripture could be regarded as social reformers in the primary sense. Ultimately and more effectively, it was the message of spiritual transformation that changed society. Even the political activity of the Old Testament prophets was always subservient to spiritual goals. The prophets did serve as counselors to ruling authorities because the king (or ruler), who heeded the words of the prophet, could best influence a nation in accordance with the purpose, truth, and will of God.

THE MISSION

(1 Cor 7:25-40) Verse 25 resumes the statement of verses 7-8, in which the single life was recommended; yet, it was acknowledged that such a life is possible only to those who have the “gift from God.” Judaism essentially condemned a man who did not marry and father children for the nation of Israel; it was also a disgrace to be childless, especially for a woman. One thus learns that drastic changes occurred with the coming of Christ, and these differences affect the new, unparalleled mission of believers to the world.

First Corinthians 7:35 – This I say to your own benefit . . . to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

The single life is neither morally or spiritually better than married life; however, it is preferable for those who have the “gift from God.” The single life does have advantages in times of “distress” (7:26). One avoids legitimate obligations of marriage by remaining single (7:27-35), and sometimes ministry is necessarily preempted as a result.

Verses 36-38 address an issue wherein one is deciding whether to marry an intended bride (“virgin”) or not. The man should marry if he is obligated and cannot control his sexual desires (7:36). The man should not marry if he is not obligated and can control his sexual desires (7:37). Verses 39-40 provide the summary: marriage is permanent and one can be happier by remaining single.

First Corinthians 7 addresses several important aspects of Christian marriage. The temptation to depart from biblical teaching concerning marriage is always prevalent. Chapter 7 requires us to examine the Word of God carefully, and thus evaluate our outlooks and practices in marriage.

A worldly perspective emphasizes personal spiritual status and results in arrogance and divisions. An eternal perspective allows the believer to overcome any “present distress.”

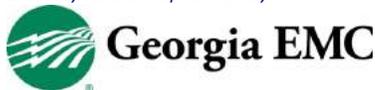
Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the honor to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact us by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

The mission of Capitol Commission is to reach Capitol communities for Christ—one person at a time, to disciple them, and to prepare them for a lifetime of ministry, wherever God chooses to place them. Did you know that Capitol Commission is now in 22 state capitols? God is accomplishing more than we could have ever imagined, as our various state ministries and national ministry work together. *Please join us in this ministry!*

**NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES:
TUESDAY, 11 MARCH @ 7:30AM in 123 CAP
and again @ 12 NOON in 328 CLOB**

Bible study luncheon sponsored by:



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