

# Studies In First Corinthians

## (I Corinthians 7:12-24)

1. Did Paul teach that, if a person is married to an unbeliever, such is a reason to put him or her away?

No: *“(12) But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. (13) And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him” (I Corinthians 7:12-13).*

- Paul’s teaching here is certainly consistent with the New Testament in regard to divorce (**Matthew 19:3-9** and **Romans 7:1-3**).
- While it is permissible for a Christian to be married to a non-Christian, it is hard to imagine a strong Christian developing a relationship with a non-Christian in light of many Scriptural points (**Psalms 1:1-2**, **Psalms 119:115**, **Proverbs 1:10**, **Proverbs 4:14-16**, **Proverbs 29:27**, **Matthew 12:30**, **Romans 12:9**, **I Corinthians 15:33**, **James 4:4**, etc.).
- Under the Law of Moses, being married to an unbeliever was a Scriptural cause to put them away (**Ezra 10:10-19**).
- In regard to the statement “**speaking I, not the Lord**”, consider our notes from the last class we had discussing **I Corinthians 7:6**:
  - No: “Even when an inspired man gave his “opinion”, is his the same as ours? Of course not, for these men are still led by the spirit in all they say (**I Corinthians 7:40**)? Moreover, congregations had men there who could verify if the things being written were of God or not (**I Corinthians 14:37**).
  - Paul had authority to speak (**II Corinthians 10:8**). To reject these things is to reject the Lord (**I Thessalonians 4:8**).
  - Added to all of that, Paul could help them understand truths (**Nehemiah 8:8**)?
  - We can test what Paul writes with other Scriptures (**I Thessalonians 5:21**).

2. Is the marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian an impure relationship?

No, the believe makes the marriage sanctified: *“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy” (I Corinthians 7:14).*

- Consider these verses as “commentary”: **I Timothy 4:1-5** and **Titus 1:15**.
- While this point should be obvious, stupid does abound at times. This verse is not saying that a believing spouse makes the unbeliever a Christian. The Scriptures still refers to the other party as “unbelieving” (cf. **Hebrews 11:6**).

3. Has a Christian erred if his or her unbelieving mate decides to leave him or her?

No: *“But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace” (I Corinthian 7:15).*

- If the unbelieving depart, you are not enslaved to that person. This does not mean you have the right of remarriage (**Matthew 5:31-32**, **I Corinthians 7:10-11**, and **I Corinthians 7:39**).
- We can be at peace if this occurs knowing that peace is God's desire for us (**I Corinthians 14:33**, **II Corinthians 13:11**, **Philippians 4:7**, and **James 3:18**).
- We can expect family divisions when we stand for the Lord (**Matthew 10:34-37**).
- For additional discussion, when marrying a Christian there are more things that can be done to keep the marriage intact (cf. **Matthew 18:15-17**).

4. Is it possible for a Christian to convert his or her unbelieving spouse?

Yes: *"For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife"* (**I Corinthians 7:16**)?

- **I Peter 3:1-7**.

5. Did Paul teach all Christians, in every congregation, to remain in the state that they were in upon their conversions (i.e. circumcision, uncircumcision, slavery, etc.)?

Yes, obedience to Christ does not change your obligations: *"(17) Only, as the Lord hath distributed to each man, as God hath called each, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all the churches. (18) Was any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Hath any been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. (19) Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God. (20) Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. (21) Wast thou called being a bondservant? Care not for it: nay, even if thou canst become free, use it rather. (22) For he that was called in the Lord being a bondservant, is the Lord's freedman: likewise he that was called being free, is Christ's bondservant. (23) Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men. (24) Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God"* (**I Corinthians 7:17-24**).

- We are called by the Gospel (**II Thessalonians 2:14**).
- Paul taught the same things in all the congregations (**I Corinthians 4:17**; cf. **I Corinthians 16:1** and **Colossians 4:15-16**).
- Circumcision or uncircumcision does not matter now (**Romans 3:30**, **Galatians 5:1-6**, **Galatians 6:15**, and **Colossians 3:10-11**). That being said, some had obeyed the Law given to Abraham and Moses and thus were circumcised prior to obeying the Gospel (**Genesis 17:10-14** and **Leviticus 12:1-3**).
- If you were a slave or slave owner upon conversion, that did not need to change to obey the Lord (**Ephesians 6:5-9**, **Colossians 3:22-4:1**, **I Timothy 6:1-2**, and **I Peter 2:18-20**).
- We are bought with a price (**I Corinthians 6:20**, **Titus 2:14**, and **I Peter 1:18-19**); therefore everyone is the servant of Christ (**Luke 17:7-10**, **Romans 12:11**, and **Colossians 4:12**) first and foremost (**Mark 12:30**, **Acts 5:29**, and **Galatians 1:10**).
- In whatever non-sinful state you were physically in before being called by the Gospel, ABIDE with God (**John 15:10**, **I John 2:3-6**, **I John 2:24**, and **II John 9**).