

# Intentionally Awesome Marriage

Long Beach Alliance Church • May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.**

**~ 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:4 (NASB)**

## **1) Concerning What You Wrote Me About...**

- A) The grammar of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:1 is difficult to translate, and produces significantly varied versions. In order to proceed, we must first determine Paul's intent in relation to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-half of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:1.
  
- B) The first clause reads, "Now concerning the things which you wrote..." The second clause...
  - b1) can be rendered as an assertion/statement of fact (NASB):  
"it is good for a man not to touch a woman."
  
  - b2) can be rendered as a question (CEV, NLT):  
"is it best for people not to marry (touch a woman)?"
  
  - b3) can be rendered as a Corinth-letter quotation (NIV, ESV):  
"it is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman."

- C) Either of the last two translation options are best (b2 or b3). The context of this immediate passage makes the last option (b3) the most consistent and smooth reading. Don't miss Paul's intent here, it is NOT to bash or belittle marriage!

## 2) Celibacy & Marriage Are Different Gifts/Don't Mix Them Up!

- A) The question to which Paul is addressing is, "is it good for MARRIED men not to touch their WIVES?" Even though they were married, as an act of spiritual devotion, men and women were denying one another sexual relations.
- B) Paul recognized the danger (sexual immoralities) in this question (7:2). Rather than encourage "celibacy within marriage," Paul distinguishes the two from one another.
- C) Paul affirms marriage (7:2-3), and encourages the "fulfillment of duties" between husbands and wives. Awesome marriages don't happen by mistake. Intentionally serve one another! This makes for an awesome marriage!
- D) Further, a healthy and regular sexual relationship between a married couple is a critical component of an intentionally awesome marriage (7:4-5). If you are called to a marriage, don't act like you're celibate! Show the world that the best romance is between Christian married couples!
- E) Paul then transitions into a wish (not a command) he has for all men (7:6), that they would have the GIFT of celibacy (7:7). Why (you might ask)? To promote "undistracted devotion to the Lord" (cf. 7:35).