

I CORINTHIANS 7:15: PAULINE PRIVILEGE OR NOT?

by

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The phrase not under bondage (οὐ δεδούλωται) in 1 Corinthians 7:15 is a crux of controversy relative to the divorce and remarriage debate. This phrase is understood by some scholars as a ground for divorce and remarriage of a deserted partner. A second interpretation suggests that the phrase means that a deserted partner is not bound or enslaved to keep such a marriage together. The believer, in such a circumstance, is exempt from the obligation to preserve the marital union.

This thesis proposes the latter of these interpretations to be correct. As one considers the general tenor of scripture regarding divorce and remarriage, the context of 1 Corinthians 7:15 and the word Paul chose to utilize (δουλοῶ), he is forced to question the validity of the doctrine of Pauline Privilege.

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INTRODUCTION

The Objective of this Study

The objective of this study is to interpret 1 Corinthians 7:15. Primary to this study is the question of whether the doctrine of Pauline Privilege is a legitimate interpretation of this verse in light of the context and general tenor of scripture regarding divorce and remarriage.

The Need for this Study

The 1979 Statistical Abstract of the United States submits the statistic that nearly one out of every two marriages ends in divorce. Final figures in 1978 show 1,130,000 divorces in the United States, an increase of 39,000 over 1977. Indications are that the figures for 1979 will show another gain of 40,000.¹ Needless to say, the Church of Jesus Christ has suffered from the effects. Those who have suffered from this tragedy many times want to know what the Bible has to say about divorce and remarriage. This inquiry indicates the need for such a study.

¹William Lerner, Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979).

Secondly, due to the permissiveness of the day, individuals have fallen into the trap of determining doctrine on the basis of personal experiences or accommodation. The Word of God "rightly divided" is the only adequate foundation for one's doctrinal convictions. Again, a need for study is evident.

The Procedure of this Study

The study will first give an overview of divorce and remarriage as found in the Gospels. Such shall be deductive in approach rather than inductive due to the vast amount of material. The thesis shall consider the various interpretations attempting to harmonize Christ's teachings and choice will be made as to the best of the optional understandings.

Next, the thesis will give an analysis of 1 Corinthians 7 considering both the background to and context of 1 Corinthians 7:1-24. An understanding of the Corinthian culture shall be helpful in determining the circumstances which gave occasion for Paul's response in this passage.

The last part of this study is an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 7:15. Examination will be given to the two key words found in this verse. From all the components of this study a conclusion shall be derived as to the teaching of this verse.

CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

This chapter is an investigation of the teaching of Christ regarding marriage and its dissolution.

Christ's Attitude Regarding Divorce and Remarriage

The most detailed discourse which reflects Christ's attitude and instruction regarding this problem is found in Matthew 19:1-12. Jesus had just left Galilee to begin His Perean ministry. Upon entrance into this region the Lord healed multitudes following Him. Ensuing this miraculous activity, the Pharisees gave occasion for Jesus to reveal His position regarding this problem of divorce and remarriage.

The discourse was the result of the approach of a group of Pharisees who questioned the Lord concerning lawful grounds for divorce, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Having raised this question, the Pharisees intended to entangle the Lord in religious and perhaps political controversy. Herod Antipas, tetrarch of the Perean region had placed John the

Baptist in prison and then executed him because of his position on this very issue (Matt 14:3-5): The Pharisees' entangling intention is indicated by two evidences: (1) The present active participle *πειράζοντες* from *πειράζω* meaning "to test or try." Here it comes to mean, as often in the New Testament, "to solicit to sin."¹ Trench suggests that the word can have the sense of "putting to the proof with the intention and the hope that the 'proved' may not turn out approved, but reprobate."² This undoubtedly was the Pharisees' aim. (2) The prepositional phrase *κατὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν* meaning "according to every reason or cause." This latter phrase is an allusion to the dispute between the two theological schools over the meaning of Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

These Pharisees probably imagined that it would not be a difficult task to demonstrate the distinctions between the teachings of Jesus, Moses and the Rabbis on this particular issue. The controversy stemmed from two Rabbinical interpretations of Moses' instruction found in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Edersheim explains the diverse interpretations:

Taking their departure from the sole ground of divorce mentioned in Deuteronomy 24:1, 'a matter of shame' (literally, nakedness), the school of Shammai applied the expression only to moral transgressions,

¹A. T. Robertson, "Matthew," in vol. I of Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930), p. 153.

²Richard C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), p. 278.

and indeed, exclusively to unchastity. . . . The school of Hillel proceeded on different principles. It took the words 'matter of shame' in the widest possible sense and declared it sufficient grounds for divorce if a woman had spoiled her husband's dinner. Rabbi Akiba thought that the words, 'if she finds no favor in his eyes' implied that it was sufficient if a man found another woman more attractive than his wife.¹

Shammai and his school laid stress on ערלה and saw therein a reference to that which is morally objectionable. Hillel laid accent on דבר (matter) and took it to mean any cause of offense.²

Matthew 19:3 shows that the Pharisees were planning to place Jesus in a predicament by forcing Him to take a stance which would be either too lax or too strict. These Jews anticipated a conflict between Jesus' teaching and the instruction of Moses.

Christ's response to these schemers revealed His attitude regarding the problem (Matt 19:4-6). Rather than aligning Himself with either of the Rabbinical schools, He underscored the divine ideal for marriage as seen in Genesis 1:27 and 2:24. Stott states that Genesis 2:24 gives implication "that the marriage union is exclusive ("a man . . . his wife . . ."), publicly recognized ("leaves his parents"), permanent ("cleaves to his wife") and consummated by sexual intercourse ("become one flesh)."³

¹Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, one-volume edition (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p. 332.

²TDNT, s.v. "πόρνη," by F. Hauck and S. Schulz, 6:579-95.

³John R. W. Stott, Divorce (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1971), pp. 5-6.

The Lord sought to prod the calloused Pharisees back beyond Deuteronomy 24:1-4 to God's marriage ordinance recorded in Genesis. Christ's appeal to the original design--Adam, one man, joined to Eve, one woman--indicates that marriage is to be a lifelong monogamous relationship. Since God's purpose called for man and wife to be one flesh, any disruption of this relationship violates God's will for this relationship.¹

After the Lord had underscored the original standard, He stated, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt 19:6b). By this statement Christ again emphasized the divine ideal for this most basic relationship. Although Jesus did not use the word divorce here, it is implied. "The two expressions 'joined together' and 'put asunder' are in direct antithesis, whatever the one means, the other is the reverse."²

The Lord Jesus reasoned that since God ordained marriage, the consummation of it is to be viewed as a work of God not to be put asunder by man.³ Such a statement discloses the attitude of the Lord Jesus on divorce.

The Pharisees sought to counter the Lord's statements by a question, "Why did Moses then command a writing

¹Homer A. Kent, Jr., "Matthew," The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, ed. Everett F. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), p. 963.

²George Peters, "What God Says About Divorce," Moody Monthly, 78 (June 1978): 41-2.

³Stanley D. Toussaint, Behold the King: A Study of Matthew (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1980), p. 224.

of divorcement, and to put her away (Matt 19:7)?" The word command, ἐνετείλατο, is an aorist middle indicative verb from ἐντέλλω meaning, "to command to be done" or "to order."¹ Their citing of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 in opposition to Jesus manifested their misunderstanding of the Mosaic regulation. This regulation was for the protection of wives from husbands' whimsical notions, not an authorization for husbands to divorce at will.²

Jesus responded by saying that Moses did not command (ἐνετείλατο) but permitted (ἐπέτρεψεν) divorce of wives because of hardheartedness (σκληροκαρδίαν). Plummer suggests that the word σκληροκαρδίαν denotes a rude nature which belongs to a primitive civilization.³ Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce because many Israelites had persisted to send away their wives even against the known will of God. This moved Moses to establish an ordinance which would to some extent regulate the evil of divorce. This ordinance was the bill of divorcement which was an official document stating the reason for dismissal. This had a two-fold design in that it served as protection for the woman and discouraged divorce over trivial matters.⁴

¹Joseph Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, pp. 267-8.

²Kent, "Matthew," p. 963.

³Alfred Plummer, An Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew (Minneapolis: James Family Publishers, reprint, n.d.), p. 259.

⁴Joel S. Pinter, "A Case for Divorce and Remarriage" (Unpublished paper, Dallas Theological Seminary, December 1980), pp. 1-16.

Having stated the reason Moses permitted divorce, Jesus once more indicated that a higher ideal existed, ". . . but from the beginning it was not so (Matt 19:8c)."

From the passage just considered, Christ's attitude concerning divorce and remarriage is evident. The Lord's focus was strictly upon the divine ideal for marriage as seen in Genesis 2:18-25. Furthermore, Christ's position was higher than the school of Shammai for he relativized Deuteronomy 24:1 as having been given due to the hard-heartedness of men.¹

From the Lord's continuous reference to the original design and explanation of the Mosaic concession, it is concluded that marriage is to be a monogamous, lifelong relationship.

The Matthean Exceptions

Jesus concluded His discourse on divorce and remarriage with the controversial exception clause, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt 19:9; cf. Matt 5:32). The phrases "except it be for fornication" (Matt 19:9) and "saving for the cause of fornication" (Matt 5:32) seem to allow fornication as a ground for divorce. It is necessary to give consideration

¹Robert H. Stein, "Is it Lawful for a Man to Divorce His Wife," JETS, 22 (June 1979): 115-21.

to the exceptions because one's understanding of these clauses will undoubtedly affect his understanding of 1 Corinthians 7:15.

Interpretations of the Exceptions

The most radical understanding of the clauses is the view held by critical scholars. Allen suggests that both the clauses are interpolations. He suggests that the clauses were additions of the editor who was influenced by Jewish custom and traditions as well as the pressure of ethical necessity in the early Christian Church.¹

Plummer has also suggested that the exception clauses are not original with the Lord Jesus. He believed that Matthew or whoever inserted them thought that they must have been meant and therefore was justified in doing so.²

Those who have called into question the authenticity of the exceptions have done so without strong manuscript support. Even the alternate reading of Codex Vaticanus does not omit the clause. The one who believes in the verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures cannot entertain this critical viewpoint.

A second understanding of the clauses is that the Matthean exceptions constitute grounds for divorce.

¹Willoughby C. Allen, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew, ICC (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1907), p. 52.

²Alfred Plummer, Matthew, pp. 260-61.

Several conservative scholars¹ and Bible teachers² have held this position. These men understand the word "fornication" as a comprehensive term including adultery, fornication and unnatural vice and therefore come to the obvious conclusion that such activity constitutes a legitimate ground for divorce and remarriage. A major drawback of the view is its incompatibility with Mark 10:11 and Luke 16:18 which do not have the exception clause. Stott's harmonization of this problem is at best an argument from silence.

The silence of Mark and Luke need not be explained as due to their ignorance of the exceptive clause; it may equally well have been due to their taking it for granted.³

Murray's argument is essentially the same:

. . . though there is no allusion to adultery as an exception in Mark 10:11 and Luke 16:18, yet the Old Testament law respecting adultery and the peculiar character of the sin of adultery might well compel us to inquire whether or not, after all, adultery might not have been assumed as a notable exception to the principle affirmed in these two passages.⁴

¹Some recognized scholars who have held this position are: John Murray, Divorce (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980, pp. 17-55; A. T. Robertson, "Matthew," p. 153; William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 717; and Stanley D. Toussaint, Matthew, p. 224.

²A recognized contemporary Bible teacher who holds this view is: Richard W. DeHaan, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage (Grand Rapids: Radio Bible Class, 1979), pp. 9-20.

³Stott, Divorce, p. 17.

⁴Murray, Divorce, p. 33.

Ellisen promotes the idea that Mark and Luke give summary accounts of Jesus' teaching on the subject whereas Matthew gives a detailed account.¹ Ellisen is correct in that Luke gives a summary account; however Mark has devoted an extensive paragraph to the consideration which is unusual considering Mark's terse writing style. Ellisen falls short of adequate explanation as to a harmonization of the synoptics.

A third view has less widespread acceptance than the interpretation just considered. This interpretation, known as the betrothal view, takes the word *porneia* in its usual meaning which refers to unchastity by a committed one during the betrothal period. Kent asserts, "Such a high and restricted view of marriage would account for the disciples' remonstrance (Matt 19:10)."²

Such a view is compatible with Matthew's strong Judaic background but proves to be unsound as one considers the background of Matthew 19:3-12. Murray explains:

It has been maintained that in Matthew 19:9, as also in Matthew 5:32, Jesus is not dealing with the dissolution of the marriage bond but only with the termination of a betrothal contract which had not yet been consummated in marriage. This view is untenable. In the preceding context of both passages (Matt 5:31; 19:7, 8; cf. Mark 10:3-5) explicit reference is made to the provisions of Deuteronomy 24:1-4, where the wife in question cannot be simply a betrothed woman. Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 cannot be different from that

¹ Stanley Ellisen, Divorce and Remarriage in the Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), p. 50.

² Kent, "Matthew," p. 963.

supplied by verses 7 and 8. If we supposed such a difference between the wife of verses 7 and 8 and the wife of verse 9, then the subject of discourse would have been abruptly changed and the contrast between our Lord's provision and the Mosaic permission would be eliminated. The terms of the contrast intimated by the formula, 'But I say to you' require us to regard the relationship expressed by the word 'wife' as the same in both cases.¹

This criticism derived from contextual analysis demonstrates this view to be unacceptable.

A fourth interpretation has been called Prohibition of Kinship View.² Ryrie explains this understanding:

. . . there is the viewpoint that understands fornication to have in these two passages in Matthew (not everywhere) a particular meaning: Namely, marriage of too near relatives as prohibited in Leviticus 18:6-18. In other words, if this be the correct interpretation, the Lord taught that divorce was not permitted unless there has been a marriage of close relatives, in which case it was permitted.³

James Mueller, an advocate of this position, suggests that the temple scroll acquired by Y. Yadin in 1967 may shed some light on the qualifying phrases in Matthew.

In the Damascus Document unchastity is linked with incestuous marital bonds, a topic which also occupied the attention of the author of the Temple Scroll. Throughout the Septuagint, the Hebrew word ZNWT is consistently translated by the Greek word 'porneia'. (32) This lends support for interpreting 'porneia' as an illicit marital arrangement instead of equating it with the term 'moicheia' (adultery).⁴

¹Murray, Divorce, p. 34.

²Gary T. Meadors, "The Exception Clauses in Matthew" (Unpublished post-graduate seminar paper, Grace Theological Seminary, Fall 1976), pp. 8-10.

³Charles Ryrie, You Mean the Bible Teaches That . . . (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), p. 50.

⁴James R. Mueller, "The Temple Scroll and the Gospel Divorce Texts (1)," Revue de Qumran, 38 (May 1980): 247-56.

Adherents of this viewpoint appeal to three New Testament texts in substantiation of their proposal. In Matthew 15:18 the words πορνεία and μοιχεία are placed together in a list of sins, giving indication that πορνεία is to be understood as something other than μοιχεία. In Acts 15:29, 30 and 1 Corinthians 5:1 πορνεία is used to refer to incestuous relationship, not adultery.¹

A fifth view is that of Bruce Vawter entitled the Preteritive View. Vawter claims that the exception applies neither to the right of divorce nor to the privilege of remarriage. He interprets the exceptions in the following way:

5:32: I say to you, however, that everyone who dismisses his wife--setting aside the matter of porneia--makes her become an adulteress . . .

19:9: I say to you, however, that if anyone dismisses his wife--porneia is not involved--and marries another, he commits adultery . . .²

Bryant has noted that Vawter's analysis makes two presuppositions: (a) the exception clauses are exceptions to the proposition itself, best translated 'notwithstanding', and (b) πορνεία specifically refers to the indecency of Deuteronomy 24:1-4.³

¹Ibid., p. 247.

²Bruce Vawter, "The Divorce Clauses in Matthew 5:32 and 19:19," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 16 (1954): 155-67.

³Dale Bryant, "Divorce and its Effect on the Local Church" (Unpublished paper, Grace Theological Seminary, February 1981), pp. 8-9.

Vawter's presuppositions have unsubstantial foundations. Vawter argues that the word except (παρά το in Matt 5:32 and ἢ ἐν in Matt 19:9) must be understood inclusively, but Hauck suggests that this is a linguistic impossibility.¹

Vawter's second presupposition states that πορνεία specifically refers to Deuteronomy 24 has no evidence upon which to stand and is therefore suspect.

Investigation of the Exceptions

The word πορνεία has had a wide span of connotations. Moulton and Milligan maintained that this word, which was rarely used in classical Greek, originally meant prostitution or fornication but generally came to denote unlawful sexual intercourse.² Liddell and Scott have also preferred a general meaning.³

The word has also been used with a limited signification as suggested by Reisser:

In later Jewish Rab. language zenut (porneia) is to be understood as including not only prostitution and any kind of extra-marital sexual intercourse (Pirge Aboth 2:8) but also all marriages between relatives forbidden by Rab. law (cf. S B II 729 f.). Incest (Test Rub. 1, 6; Test, Jud. 13, 6; cf. Lev 18:6-18) and all kinds of unnatural sexual intercourse (e.g., Test. Ben. 9:1) were viewed as fornication.⁴

¹TDNT, s.v. "πορνεύω," by F. Hauck, 4:729-735.

²James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980 reprint), p. 529.

³LSJ, p. 1450.

⁴The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Discipline," by Horst Reisser, 1:497-501.

One thing that is certain is that this word considered in isolation is uncertain. The word itself is not a safe guideline in determining what Jesus meant in the exceptions. Context must determine whether the word is to be understood in either a restricted or broad sense.

It seems that the word πορνεία in Matthew 5:32; 19:9 should be understood in a restricted sense. Geldard has given four substantial reasons why the clauses are to be understood thus:

1. The linguistic consideration--Matthew in 15:19 distinguishes between adultery (moicheia) and porneia. Thus the indication from this verse is that Matthew wants to speak of wider sexual irregularity when he uses not just the expression porneia (as the advocates of the wider meaning suggest) but rather the words porneia and moicheia together.
2. An internal contradiction--Giving porneia the wider meaning introduces an internal contradiction into the teachings of Jesus as we find it in the synoptics (Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; Matt 5:32; 19:3-9), and actually into Matthew 19 itself.
3. The conflict with Moses--Had Jesus allowed divorce on the grounds of general sexual irregularity, including adultery (wider meaning), then He would not have been in conflict with the Mosaic concession at all, but would merely be opting for a particular interpretation if it: an interpretation along similar lines to that of the Shammaites.
4. An impossible exegesis--If Jesus in His teaching on divorce was merely reiterating (repeating, siding with) a contemporary Pharisaic school (the Shammaites) then the astonishment of the disciples at the time of His teaching in verse 10 is not explicable.¹

In order to arrive at a conclusion as to the meaning of the exceptions it seems reasonable to consider the

¹Mark Geldard, "Jesus' Teaching on Divorce," Churchman, 92 (1978): 134-43.

particular Gospel and the setting in which they are found. Matthew's Gospel is one which is cognizant of the law, which has a heavily Jewish readership and an author aware of the Jewish manner in which to explain the law.¹ Considering the previous reasons, with this distinctive of Matthew in mind, it seems that the Prohibition of Kinship View corresponds best of the options considered as to the explanation of the exceptive clauses.

Harmony of the Exceptions with Mark and Luke

Advocates who understand πορνεία as a comprehensive word in Matthew's exceptions have problems in harmonizing Matthew's teaching on divorce and remarriage with that of Mark and Luke. Proposals which have been suggested are at best arguments from silence.² Such argumentation should be subsidiary instead of primary for hermeneutical soundness.

Proponents understanding Matthew's clause in a restricted sense are not faced with this dilemma. Noting that Matthew's Gospel is written to a heavily Jewish readership, Matthew reminds his audience of the prohibitions contained in their Law (Lev 18). When a man who has married within the prohibited degree puts away his wife, he has exercised the one exception to the divine ideal which

¹John J. Kilgallen, "To What are Matthean Exception Texts (5:32 and 19:9) an Exception?" Biblica, 61 (1980): 102-05.

²Stott, Divorce, p. 17; also, Murray, Divorce, p. 33.

is permitted. Such an exception would be predominantly in a Jewish context and not a problem which the authors to the Gentiles considered recording.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 7

This chapter is an investigation of background to and context of 1 Corinthians 7 in relation to the doctrine of Pauline Privilege.

Background to the Instruction of

1 Corinthians 7

One reason which gave occasion for the writing of this epistle was a letter of inquiry from Corinth posing a number of problem-related questions. Problems in part were undoubtedly enhanced by the environment of the city of Corinth.

The City of Corinth

The geographical location of this city determined its attainment of great commercial and economic status. This cosmopolitan center, situated on the narrow isthmus, joined Greece's mainland with the Peloponnesus. In New Testament times it was considered one of the chief commercial cities of the Roman Empire. Such a distinction was inevitable since Corinth had three ports and the short road that carried the trade flowing between the east and west. Instead of going around the southern end of Peloponnesus,

ships either docked at the isthmus and transported goods by land vehicles from one sea to the other or, if ships were small, they were dragged approximately five miles across the isthmus.¹ All overland travel from Athens and northern Greece to the Peloponnesus was also routed through Corinth.

The community of Corinth was inhabited by Romans, Jews, Orientals and adventurers. Greeks were reluctant to settle for a time because of the Roman devastation and dominance by L. Mummius Achaicus, in 146 B.C. The city was reclaimed and given the status of a Roman colony under the leadership of Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. Corinth quickly regained commercial importance as well as population and became within a short time the leading city of Greece. Conservative estimation of 100,000² has been suggested as to the population during New Testament times, however, one suggests the estimate to be 400,000³ and another 500,000 to 700,000.⁴

¹W. Harold Mare, "1 Corinthians," in vol. 10 of The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), p. 175.

²Charles J. Ellicott, St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (Minneapolis: The James Family Publishers, reprint, n.d.), p. xv.

³Charles Lee Feinberg, "First Corinthians Bible Study Outline," New Standard for Living (Sunny Hills, CA: Lockman Bible Ministries, 1979), p. 1.

⁴William Ford Munnerlyn, Jr., "Divorce in 1 Corinthians 7:10-17," (Unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1959), p. 5.

Corinth had two patron deities. Poseidon was the god of the sea. The worship of this god to a great extent gave way to the worship of the second deity. His sanctuary finally was given over to the worship of the Corinthians' Aphrodite. Aphrodite was the goddess of love. This deity was probably more Phoenician than Greek, being related to the Astarte or Astaroth of the Canaanites' old fertility cult. This cult probably had been introduced by Phoenician traders who had come to Corinth. Aphrodite's shrine located on the Acropolis housed 1,000 priestesses whose worship consisted of immoral practices. Robertson and Plummer believe that the ἑρπύδουλοι were not a permanent element in that worship and that this numerical reference applies to Old Corinth. Uncertainty exists if the worship of Aphrodite was revived to this same extent in New Corinth.¹ Even if such practices were reduced the effects were devastating, as indicated in the Corinthians letter.

The city was commercially important, materially prosperous and morally corrupt. The entire city was noted for immorality and had the distinction of giving its name a new word in the Greek language. To Corinthianize (κορινθιάζωμαι) meant to act immorally.² Enjoyment to

¹A. T. Robertson and Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1978 reprint), p. xiii.

²Donald Guthrie, The Apostles (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), p. 154.

the fullest was encouraged in the Corinthian life resulting in moral antinomianism and lewd lifestyle. William Barclay has said, "Aelian the late Greek writer, tells us that if ever a Corinthian was shown upon the stage in a play he was shown drunk."¹ Johnson has suggested that this environment is reflected in Paul's Roman letter:

It is providential that Paul was in Corinth when he was writing the epistle to the Romans. From no other city could he have received more of an incentive to write of the sin of man and from no other city could he have seen more apt illustration of it. A gaze from Gaius' house may well have been the occasion of the great catalogue of man's wicked deeds set forth in Romans 1:18-32.²

Corinth was an important political city. The city's importance was enhanced in 27 B.C. when it became the Roman governor's seat and the administrative capital of the province of Achaia. This included the whole of Greece south of Macedonia. When one considers this background information, it is no wonder why Corinth has been called the Empire in miniature.³

The Ministry of Paul in Corinth

Paul's intention to minister in Corinth was undoubtedly influenced by the importance of this city. Corinth, a hub of both overland and sea commerce, was a

¹William Barclay, The Letters to the Corinthians (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p. 3.

²S. Lewis Johnson, "1 Corinthians," The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, ed. Everett F. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), p. 1227.

³Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. xiii.

strategic station for missionary endeavors. Robertson and Plummer have said that any one who could make his voice heard in Corinth was addressing a cosmopolitan and representative audience, many of whom would be sure to go elsewhere, and might carry with them what they had heard.¹

The account of the founding of the Corinthian Church is given in Acts 18:1-17. Paul arrived in Corinth having come from Athens at the close of his second missionary journey. He was the first to preach the gospel there. While living and working with his converts,² Aquilla and Priscilla, he began his ministry in the synagogue. Johnson has made an observation regarding the apostle's methodology of preaching:

A striking insight into the apostle's method of preaching is afforded by the western text of Acts 18:4, which reads, "and entering into the synagogue every sabbath he discoursed, inserting the name of the Lord Jesus, and tried to persuade not only Jews but also Greeks." Inserting the name of the Lord Jesus must refer to the application of the Old Testament scriptures to Christ.³

Paul's ministry in the synagogue received response, but it was negative and resulted in expulsion from this premise.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. xiv. Robertson and Plummer have suggested that if they were Christians before they reached Corinth Luke would have probably known and mentioned the fact. If they were of the same faith, such would have been a stronger reason for Paul's abode with them than their being of the trade. The latter is indicated as the reason in Acts 18:3.

³ Johnson, "1 Corinthians," p. 1227.

It was ironical that a Gentile sympathizer, Titus Justus, who offered Paul the use of his house, lived next door to the synagogue. Even more ironical was the conversion of Crispus, a synagogue official along with his household.¹ Many others along with these believed and were baptized. Though opposition arose during the Apostle's 18-month stay, a church was established.

The Occasion of Correspondence

After Paul left Corinth the pastoral ministry of the church was carried on by Apollos, a learned man from Alexandria. This man had previously been in Ephesus where he was more thoroughly instructed in theology by Aquilla and Priscilla. Equipped with this new knowledge, Apollos went to Corinth and advanced the progress of the Christian faith. Apollos returned to Ephesus with Paul during his correspondence with Corinth (1 Cor 16:12).²

Serious responses following the visit of Apollos were brought to the Apostle's attention, by two sources (1 Cor 1:11; 16:17). Ellicott explains these consequences:

The substance of the preaching and teaching of Apollos, though beyond all doubt the same as that of St. Paul, was, as certainly, different in form and manner. The speech and preaching of the Apostle were, as he himself tells us, studiously simple and fundamental (ch. ii. 2) and, as befitted such teaching, were set forth neither with excellency of speech nor with persuasive words of merely human wisdom (ver. 4). The preaching of Apollos, on the other hand, was

¹Guthrie, The Apostles, p. 156.

²Ellicott, 1 Corinthians, p. xviii.

marked by eloquence and power, and, as we know, was especially helpful, not only in attracting new converts, but in confirming those that already believed (Acts xviii. 27), and in confuting Jewish opponents. The result might easily have been foreseen. Two parties began silently to show themselves in the church, those who adhered to the founder and his well-remembered plain, spirit-moved form of teaching (ch. ii. 4), and those who were carried away by the energy and persuasiveness of the eloquent Alexandrian.¹

Such news gave occasion for immediate correspondence. Correction was needed. The Apostle had to give practical theological truth to these immature believers (1 Cor 1:10-2:16). Chloe's people also informed the Apostle about a special case of immorality and a problem of lawsuits between believers to which the Apostle had to address.

The second circumstance which gave occasion to this correspondence was a letter of inquiry, carried from Corinth, by three believers of that church (1 Cor 16:17), posing a number of problem related questions which the Apostle was to answer. These questions directed to the Apostle may be discovered in the recurring 1 Corinthians phrase *περὶ δέ* as seen in 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12.²

The third reason for the epistle was that it provided for the Apostle an opportunity to give treatment to a few topics that he considered important in relation to the Corinthians' spiritual welfare.

¹Ibid.

²Johnson, "1 Corinthians," p. 1228.

The Question of Concern

The first problem-related question directed to the Apostle (1 Cor 7:1; περὶ δέ) provides the context of this current study. The context of 1 Corinthians 7 shows that this first question was an inquiry about correct Christian principles relative to sex, marriage and divorce. As one recalls the background of Corinth, it is no wonder why such a question would not arise from Paul's young converts who were constantly subjected to this licentious environment. Some believers' reactions would undoubtedly be too extreme in relation to this subject. Ellicott has aptly explained the response as well as the Apostle's method of reply to such a response:

Some reactionary feeling against the prevalent licentiousness in Corinth may have led many of the more earnest members of the church to advocate an asceticism which required to be discussed with the utmost circumspection and prudence. The Apostle thus enters into many details, leaving apparently no single question unanswered that had been either raised or suggested in the Corinthian letter. In all these details he refers everything to the highest principles, and solves the varied moral problems which the chapter suggests in a manner that must have brought home the truth of the last words of this section to every thoughtful Christian in whose ears this marvellous chapter was read.¹

The Apostle responded to these problems posed. He has shared with his inquirers principles relative to sex, marriage, and divorce in relation to the Christian life.

¹Ellicott, 1 Corinthians, p. xxii.

Investigation of the Instruction of

1 Corinthians 7

For one to understand 1 Corinthians 7:25 he must investigate the context in which it is found. Analysis is given to 7:1-16, while 7:17-24 is summarized.

The Principle of Marriage or Celibacy (7:1-7)

A reason for marriage (7:1-2)

The Apostle begins to answer questions directed to him from the church at Corinth in the opening verse. The recurring phrase $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$ is used 17 times in the New Testament.¹ In all but four instances an obvious change in either topic or time is implied (Matt 22:31; 24:36; Mark 12:26; 13:32). Paul made a change from the topic of moral disorders in the church to the topics which he was requested to address.

Some in Corinth, because of their ascetic tendencies, probably questioned the validity of the marriage relationship. Such a reaction is not unthinkable when one reflects on the prevailing licentiousness of Corinth. Paul upheld both celibacy and marriage as being legitimate. Paul gives a general principle in these two verses as explained by Johnson: "The Apostle sets forth the general principle that while celibacy is a matter of personal

¹Matthew 20:6; 22:31; 24:36; 27:46; Mark 12:26; 13:32; John 16:10; 16:11; Acts 21:25; I Corinthians 7:1; 7:25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 5:1.

preference (vv. 6-7), yet marriage is a duty for those who do not have the gift of continence."¹

Some² have suggested that the Apostle here gives expression to a low view of marriage. One must realize that it is not the Apostle's purpose here to give an exposition on marriage but merely to answer specific questions which were directed to him. Paul has given one of the small number of reasons (διδ with the accusative) for marriage. The Apostle has set forth the fact that marriage is a proper alternative to immorality (πορνείας). Such an alternative is not only permitted but commanded (ἐχέτω). By this assertion, Paul also sanctioned monogamy by insistence of one's own wife or husband (ἑαυτοῦ . . . ἑδύον).

An obligation in marriage (7:3-5)

Paul clarified the problem which those with ascetic tendencies had. The evident problem was that some felt sex was sinful and impure, even for the married. The Apostle, to the contrary, instructed that celibacy is sinful in the marriage union.³

¹Johnson, "1 Corinthians," p. 1239.

²Godet has listed several older critics as examples. Fredrick Louis Godet, Commentary on First Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1977), p. 322.

³James Boyer, For a World Like Ours, Studies in 1 Corinthians (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1971), p. 77.

Paul taught that the husband and wife had mutual conjugal responsibilities to one another (ὀφειλή). The noun ὀφειλή denotes that which is owed and is understood as a moral obligation. Marital intercourse then is not an option but rather a moral obligation based upon one's marital rights (7:4). The present imperative ἀποδιδότω indicates this is a permanent responsibility to be carried on throughout the marriage relationship. Marriage without sexual expression is not only unnatural, it is expressly forbidden according to this verse.¹ Such expression is not to be viewed as the granting of a favor but the payment of a debt.²

In 7:4 the Apostle gives the basis of this mutual, marital obligation. The basis is a proper recognition of the mutual authority in this sphere of the marriage. Each partner is the other's possession (ἡ γυνή . . . ὁ ἀνὴρ . . . οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει . . . τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος). "Each must render the ὀφειλή when the other asks for it."³ Such mutual authority is perpetual extending throughout the lifetime together. Boyer summarizes this verse by saying, "Married folks are not their own masters."⁴

¹Robert G. Gromacki, Called to be Saints, An Exposition of 1 Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 88.

²Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 133.

³Ellicott, 1 Corinthians, p. 111.

⁴Boyer, 1 Corinthians, p. 77.

In 7:5 Paul gives the regulation for this obligation (ὀφειλῇ) in the marriage relationship. The negated present imperative¹ (μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε) indicates that some of the Corinthians had been exercising abstinence and were commanded to stop such an exercise. The Apostle regulated sexual abstinence allowing one exception to regular sexual relations. This regulated exception has three parts to be realized: a. mutual consent; b. temporary duration; c. the aim of securing spiritual meditation.² Paul gave caution that couples should resume sexual relations before they are tempted³ (πειράζῃ) to fulfill their desires outside of their marital union.

An option of marriage or celibacy (7:6-7)

The phrase *τοῦτο δὲ λέγω* is a probable reference to the whole of 7:1-5. Gromacki summarizes that which the Apostle had spoken by concession:

Paul was quick to point out that both the single life and the marital union are permitted, and not commanded. The duties for each commitment are prescribed, but neither institution is obligatory. Marriage is a may, not a must. Nowhere does the Bible state 'Thou shalt marry' or 'Thou shalt not marry'.⁴

¹J. Gresham Machen, New Testament Greek for Beginners (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 180.

²Godet, 1 Corinthians, p. 324.

³The verb *πειράζῃ* is considered in more detail in chapter 1, p. 4.

⁴Gromacki, 1 Corinthians, p. 89.

Paul stated his personal preference as being the unmarried state. His preference was undoubtedly thus because he wanted the freedom to devote himself fully to the cause of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 7:32-34). Paul admitted that one's ultimate decision regarding celibacy or marriage depended upon one's gift. Marriage as well as celibacy is a gift from God.

The Problem of Marriage (7:8-24)

The unmarried (7:8-9)

From 7:8 it is obvious that the Apostle Paul was unmarried. He again viewed it good if both widowers¹ and widows remained unmarried. Perhaps it is for the same reason Paul preferred this state (cf. 1 Cor 7:32-34).

The Apostle is well aware of a potential problem as indicated by the first class conditional sentence.² He knew that, since these had formerly received the gift of marriage, they might not be able to control their desires in the unmarried state. The verb ἐγκρατεύονται literally means to hold themselves in, or to keep self-control over themselves. This word denotes continual control of the sexual desires. If the unmarried widow or

¹By the use of τοῖς ἀγαμέσις, Paul probably refers to widowers. Since he uses the masculine plural substantive in conjunction with ταῖς χήραις this understanding would be a natural one.

²In a first class conditional sentence one seems to assume the reality of his premise. H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual of Grammar of the Greek New Testament (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 289.

widower has a problem of the lack of control, he is commanded to get married.¹ The celibate state is of no advantage if one continues to burn with passion. In this context, therefore, Paul has answered specific problem-related questions and has not given a formal treatise on marriage. This explains the nature of this discussion.

The married (7:10-24)

Paul at this point makes a transition from those of an unmarried status to the married. His next words relate to the maintenance or severance of the marriage bond in the cases of Christian marriages (7:10, 11) and mixed marriages (7:12-16).²

The Christian married to a believer (7:10-11)

In counsel to the married in the Lord,³ the Apostle gives an authoritative command reinforced by the command of the Lord that believers are not to divorce (7:10, 11c). Probably some viewed the marital relationship as disadvantageous to one's Christian life or duty. Such was the ascetic inclination. In spite of such an opinion the Apostle authoritatively states that those already married

¹Robertson has suggested that γαμήτωσεν is a first aorist active imperative classified as ingressive. Robertson, "1 Corinthians," p. 126.

²Johnson, "1 Corinthians," p. 1240.

³As one compares 7:10 with 7:12 it is clear that the reference is between two Christians.

are not to divorce just because a single state might be preferred.¹

Specific charge to the wife (7:10). Paul begins with the charge to the wife perhaps because such an event had actually happened. A wife may have divorced her husband in the Corinthian Church. Such suggestion is speculative. Regardless of his reason it poses no real problem for the order is reversed in 7:12, 13.

The wife is commanded not to depart from or to separate herself from her husband. The aorist passive imperative χωρῖσθῆναι is from χωρίζω which was used as a technical expression for divorce in papyri.² The verb is best understood as a passive form with a reflexive force. Ellicott suggests that this is not unusual and is determined by context.³ Such an understanding denotes that the divorce is her act and that she is not being acted upon.

Specific charge to the separated. Paul was fully aware of the possibility that some had already left their Christian companions. Paul too was fully aware of the danger of remarriage and, rather than tolerating this possibility, he gave two alternatives to the separated

¹H. G. Coiner, "Those Divorce and Remarriage Passages (Matt 5:32; 19:9; I cor 7:10-16) . . . ," CTM, 29 (1968):367-50.

²Adolf Deissmann, Bible Studies (Winona Lake: Alpha Publications, 1979), p. 247.

³Ellicott, 1 Corinthians, pp. 116-17.

believer. The believer who falls into this class must remain unmarried permanently or be reconciled to the deserted partner permanently. The present tense of these two verbs (μενέτω . . . καταλλαγήτω) indicates the permanence of the alternatives were, as their mood (imperative) indicates, the obligation of choice between the two possibilities. No reason for the separation is given; neither is anything said about potential remarriage.

Specific charge to the husband. The coordinate conjunction καὶ establishes a parallelism here. What is true of the woman is to be true also of the man. He has no other options than the ones given to her. Though a different verb is employed here, μὴ ἀφιέναι to state the action of a husband, and μὴ χωρισθῆναι to indicate activity of a wife, the substance of the commands is the same. This is certain because of Paul's reversed usage in 7:13 and 7:15.¹ Paul states here in no uncertain terms that the believer is not to divorce his wife.

Significance of the charges. It is significant to note the authority of these interminable commands. Paul has given what he considered to be the teaching of the Lord Jesus on this subject of divorce. The phrase οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλὰ ὁ κύριος has been taken as a parenthetical

¹R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of 1 and 2 Corinthians (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), p. 286.

afterthought employed for the sake of emphasis.¹ Paul and Jesus held the same position on this issue and Paul thought it to be wise to inform his readers of this fact since the Lord's teaching was yet to be recorded and circulated. Paul apparently derived his knowledge of this saying from the oral tradition which proceeded from the Apostles.²

As the Apostle gave his interpretation of the Lord's position on divorce, he did not include the exception clauses of Matthew 5:32; 19:9. Some suggest that the Apostle has merely taken the clauses for granted.³ Lightfoot has suggested that Paul thought it to be an unnecessary qualification because it would have been understood by itself.⁴ Such argumentations must be rejected since they are at best arguments from silence.

In relation to Paul's omission of the clause, it can be concluded that the Apostle did not intend for the sin of sexual promiscuity to serve as an exception to the marriage relationship as seen here in 7:10-11.⁵ Munnerlyn makes three observations relevant to this conclusion:

¹William Ford Munnerlyn, Jr., "Divorce in 1 Corinthians 7:10-17" (Unpublished Th.M. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1959), p. 11.

²Godet, 1 Corinthians, p. 332.

³Alford, "1 Corinthians," p. 523; Lenski, 1 Corinthians, p. 286; and Godet, 1 Corinthians, p. 333.

⁴J. B. Lightfoot, Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul (Winona Lake: Alpha Publications, 1978), p. 225.

⁵Munnerlyn, "Divorce in 1 Corinthians 7:10-17," p. 28.

1. Paul could easily have mentioned fornication or adultery in 7:11a as sole cause allowing one Christian to ignore the command of 7:10a since the word is fresh in Paul's mind (cf. 1 Cor 5:1, 9, 10, 11; 6:9, 13, 18; 7:2).

2. Paul is answering specific questions (7:1) and in doing so he certainly must desire to give exact, understandable answers, especially when writing to many carnal believers in Corinth. Had Paul intended to convey the idea of one standard, universal exception to the prohibition of 7:10, he certainly would have made it plain with one word. The unquestionable fact is he did not.

3. If fornication, adultery or any other sin is intended as an exception which dissolves the marriage union, then why does the writer command the innocent party . . . to remain unmarried? Would not a universal exception to the marriage bond also carry with it a corresponding universal right of remarriage on the part of the innocent spouse? . . .¹

In light of these previous considerations the writer has at least three impressions that point to the permanence of the marriage relationship: (1) the perfect active participle γεγαμηκόσιν,² (2) the two options given to the divorced believer, (3) Paul's interpretations of Christ's teaching on this subject which excludes the exception clause.

The Christian married to an unbeliever (7:12-16)

Paul again makes a transition. His instruction is now directed to the believer who is married to the unbeliever (τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς). He gives instruction with respect to the sustenance and severance of the mixed marriage relationship. Paul reserves the more complex to this point.

¹Ibid., pp. 28-29.

²The perfect tense may indicate a past action with effects that continue to exist. Machen, New Testament Greek for Beginners, pp. 187-88.

An unbeliever who desires to remain married
(7:12-14). Probably some in Corinth, strapped by their religious compunctions, considered marriage to an unbeliever as inconsistent to God's standards. The natural course of action would have been divorce. Since the Lord did not give any teaching concerning the mixed marriage situation, choice would have been made by the individual. The first class conditional structure (εἰ . . . ἔχει) indicates that the Apostle assumed that there were mixed marriages in Corinth. Undoubtedly, believers within these marital relationships were in need of his counsel.

The Apostle addressed this group by the phrase λέγω ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος. This is not to suggest that Paul disclaimed inspiration, but rather is an evidence that the Lord Jesus did not give any specific instruction concerning mixed marriages (1 Cor 7:40).

Paul instructed believers that if the unbelieving partner agrees (συνευδοκεῖ) with the Christian partner to continue the marriage the Christian is not to divorce the unbelieving partner. These instructions, directed to both Christian husbands and wives, not to divorce, are actual commands (μὴ ἀφίετω),¹ which permanently restrict the believing party from initiating divorce procedures.

¹Arndt, Gingrich and Robertson suggest that this word in use here is in a legal sense of divorce. BAG, p. 125; also, Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 141.

In 7:14 Paul gives the Christian reason for continuance of the marriage as indicated by the casual $\gamma\alpha\rho$.¹ The reason is two-fold. First, the unbelieving partner is sanctified through the believing partner. Second, the children are affected by the believing partner's presence in the home. Questions have raised regarding the thoughts of an unbeliever being sanctified and children holy. Due to the scope of both this problem and thesis an accurate summary statement is given by Gromacki:

In the spiritual realm, uncleanness adversely affects that which is clean, and not vice versa (Hag 2:11-13). However, the unsaved partner does receive spiritual benefits or advantages now that his partner has become a Christian. The unsaved husband or wife has become "sanctified" (hegiastai) in the salvation of the other partner. This does not mean that the person is saved, because his salvation is still viewed as a future possibility (7:16). Rather, since God in His sovereignty has saved one partner in a marriage, the unsaved partner has now been set apart for a special work of conviction by the Holy Spirit through the testimony and the changed behavior of the Christian partner. . . . The same principle applies to the children. . . . The salvation of the unsaved partner and children is more likely if the one member of the family who has become saved remains in the home.²

Paul has expressly explained that a believer is never to take initiative in a divorce. Again, the rule is no divorce.

An unbeliever who desires to separate (7:15-16).

In 7:15 Paul gives instruction regarding the believer's

¹John A. Sproule, Intermediate Greek Notes (Winona Lake: Grace Theological Seminary, 1979), p. 59.

²Gromacki, 1 Corinthians, pp. 91-92.

reaction if the unbeliever should be unwilling to continue the marriage. If the unbeliever takes the initiative in this way the believing partner is not under bondage to keep the marriage together. This instruction from the Apostle would free the believer from any self-imposed blame for the separation.¹ Paul suggests that the believing partner needs to realize that God has called him to peace and not to conflict (7:15c). Clinging to a marriage for evangelistic purposes is no guarantee of a spiritual transaction (7:16). A detailed exegetical treatment shall be given to 7:15 in the following chapter.

The principle involved (7:17-24)

The principle of remaining in one's marital relationship is a part of the more general principle of remaining in God's calling. Paul explicitly states this three times (7:17, 20, 24), while having illustrated it in the religious and secular realms.² Again, permanence of the marriage bond is supported.

¹Boyer, 1 Corinthians, p. 80.

²Johnson, "1 Corinthians," p. 1240.

CHAPTER III

AN EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 7:15

The Problem

At the base of the entire Pauline Privilege controversy is the meaning of $\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\acute{o}\omega$. Many conservative scholars have held that desertion of the believer by an unbelieving partner constitutes a ground for divorce and remarriage.¹ Their position is based upon their understanding of the word just mentioned. This position is referred to as Pauline Privilege.

Other scholars have argued that the doctrine of Pauline Privilege is exegetically unsound.² The argument is that since nothing is said concerning a subsequent marriage, one must not presume a freedom which he may not have.

The Solution

A consideration of the context and an examination of the verse, which will include an investigation of the

¹Charles Hodge, 1 and 2 Corinthians (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1978), p. 118; Lenski, 1 Corinthians, pp. 299-300; Murray, Divorce, p. 76; Morris, 1 Corinthians, p. 111.

²Henry Alford, "1 Corinthians," p. 525; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 143; Godet, 1 Corinthians, p. 350; Johnson, "1 Corinthians," p. 1240.

two key words, should help unlock the interpretation of this verse.

The Message of the Context

The message of the context has been clear. The Apostle has maintained a consistent standard throughout the entire context. He has taken extreme caution throughout the passage in explanation of his instructions lest he be misunderstood. There is not a word concerning re-marriage within the sphere of this context.

Paul held to the lifelong monogamous ideal for marriage. This is indicated by his interpretation of Christ's teaching on the subject. It is also indicated by the options given to the one who separates (7:11) and by the insistence that the believer is to continue in his marriage with the unbeliever (7:12-13).

Not only do the verses preceding 7:15 suggest permanence of the marital bond, but also the verses succeeding indicate the same as suggested in the previous chapter of this thesis. One must conclude that it is unlikely that 7:15 is to be understood as a total antithesis to the consistent complexion of the passage. One must not presume on that which is not plain.

An Examination of the Text

Paul has again made a transition as indicated by the strong adversative $\delta\epsilon$. Paul now moves to the case where the unbelieving partner desires to dissolve the marital bond.

The bond broken by the unbeliever (7:15a)

This activity described by the heading above is indicated by the present middle indicative verb, χωρίζεται from χωρίζω which is used four times in this context with reference to the marriage relationship. This word literally means to divide or separate and is used in all three voices.¹ Roberts has traced this word's historical usage and has substantiated his finding by a lexical entry:

Originally the word seems to have been used as a reference to a mere separation or division of any sort, but by the fourth century B.C. it had come to be used also of a marital separation or divorce. The Greek orator Isaeus (8, 36) (420-350 B.C.) and Polybius (31:26) in the sense of divorce. Arndt and Gingrich state that χωρίζω is found often in marriage contracts in the papyri and cite one reference of this use in a second century B.C. papyrus (PSI 166, 11) and three references to first century B.C. papyri (BGU 1101, 5; 1102, 8; 1103, 6) where the same use occurs.²

Adolf Deissman stated that χωρίζω is used as a technical expression for divorce:

χωρίζομαι is, as in 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11, 15, a technical expression for divorce also found in the Fayyum Papyri. In the marriage contracts there are usually stated conditions, for the possibility of separation; These are introduced by the formula, ἐὰν δέ (οἱ γαμουντες) χωρίζωνται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων.³

In light of these evidences, one concludes that, when χωρίζω is used in the context of marriage, it refers

¹BAGD, p. 71.

²R. L. Roberts, Jr., "The Meaning of Chorizo and Douloo in 1 Corinthians 7:10-17," Restoration Quarterly, 8:3 (1965): 179-84.

³Deissman, Bible Studies, p. 247.

to divorce. The Apostle therefore could have had both the thoughts of physical separation and divorce in mind here.

When the Apostle speaks of the unbeliever departing, he employs the present middle indicative form of this verb to designate the state of mind of the unbelieving partner. The act of separating is the act solely of the unbeliever as indicated by the emphatic position of ὁ ἄπιστος. If a believer has an unbelieving partner who has this state of mind, the Christian is to have a particular understanding and response.

The permission granted to the believer (7:15b)

The response permitted to the believer is expressed by the present middle imperative of χωρίζω. This imperative is classified as a permissive imperative¹ and signifies that the believer is permitted to allow the unbeliever to separate. The believer may consent to the unbeliever's desire and still be in accordance with the standards of Christian living.

Next, Paul explains that if the unbeliever takes this initiative, then the believer is not under bondage (δεδούλωται). The word δουλῶ is the hinge word upon which the whole controversy rests. Various forms of this word are used eight times in the New Testament. Seven of these occurrences are used by Paul himself.² The lexical

¹Dana and Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, p. 176.

²Romans 6:18, 22; 1 Corinthians 7:15, 9:19; Galatians 4:3; Titus 2:3; 2 Peter 2:19 is the other occurrence.

definition of the word is to enslave or to subject.¹

Robertson has said that the perfect passive indicative form of δουλῶ with the negative means: "not remain a slave or is not in a state of slavery."²

The Apostle employs another word in this very chapter when commenting on the bond of the marital union (7:39). In this verse he has used the perfect indicative of the verb δέω which is quite frequently used to mean marriage. Since δέω is used in 7:39 which is a verse specifically concerning dissolution of the marital bond, it is likely that Paul has reference to something else by his usage of δουλῶ in 7:15.

One observes this same phenomenon in Romans 7:2. Here, the context is again the dissolution of the marriage bond and Paul utilizes the word δέω to explain this bond. Again, one is forced to conclude that the Apostle must have meant to convey some other meaning than of complete dissolution with the right of remarriage.

In these two passages where δέω is used, the Apostle gives explicit instructions regarding remarriage. No mention of remarriage exists in 1 Corinthians 7:15 or in its near context. If Paul had been wanting to express permission to remarry he could have easily used a more

¹Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 158.

²Robertson, "1 Corinthians," p. 128.

full and natural expression such as that which he did use in 7:39 (ἐλευθέρα γαμηθῆναι).¹

Coburn has done extensive investigation in the classical writings and found that the word δουλῶ is used in expressing slavery, foreign domination, mental oppression but not marital dissolution.² He has also made a comparison of opposites which indicates a definite distinction between δουλῶ and δέω:

The respective antonyms of δουλῶ and δέω show that the Greeks would never apply the word δουλῶ to contractual obligation. The opposite of δέω 'bind' (7:39), is λύω 'loose'. Δέω may refer to contract. The woman whose husband has died (1 Cor 7:39) is no longer bound or tied by contract to her husband. She is loosed from the contract. But the opposite of the substantive form of δουλῶ, namely δουλῶσις 'enslavement', is τρυφή, meaning delight or softness in a figurative sense. Plato uses the word and its antonym to contrast a hard life with an easy one (Laws 791D). 'Not bound' in the sense of δέω (7:19) would be 'loose', but 'not bound' in the sense of δουλῶ (7:15) would be idiomatically, taking it easy, having it soft.³

In view of the previous considerations one can conclude that the word δουλῶ in 7:15 is not used to mean marriage or marital bond. If this was to be the Apostle's implication, he would have used a form of δέω, which is frequently used to mean marriage. One must then conclude

¹R. L. Roberts, "The Meaning of Chorizo and Douloo in 1 Corinthians," p. 183.

²Rolland Coburn, "Mental Oppression or Contractual Obligation" (Unpublished paper, Salvation/Christian Life, Grace Theological Seminary, January 1976), pp. 3-10.

³Ibid., pp. 15-16.

that the doctrine of Pauline Privilege is wrong. One cannot find a basis for remarriage here as indicated earlier.

It seems reasonable that the word δουλῶ in 1 Corinthians 7:15 is to be understood in its most natural sense. Robertson and Plummer have said, "All that οὐ δεδούλωται clearly means is that he or she need not feel so bound by Christ's prohibition of divorce as to be afraid to depart when the heathen partner insists on separation."¹ All that the Apostle is saying is that the believer is exempt from the obligation of preserving a marriage which the unbeliever wants to terminate. The freedom to remarry only comes at the death of one's mate (1 Cor 7:39; Rom 7:2).

¹Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 143.

CONCLUSION

This writer has come to the conclusion that neither the exception clauses nor the Pauline Privilege are grounds for divorce and remarriage.

In Matthew 19:3-12 the Lord Jesus continued to insist on the divine ideal. Matthew records an exception that neither Mark nor Luke have. A harmony between the three must be established. Proponents who understand πορνεία as a comprehensive term cannot do this. The betrothal view breaks down as one considers the context of Matthew 19. Therefore, the Prohibition of Kinship as seen in Leviticus 18 seems to be the best of the options presented. Such prohibitions are labeled as πορνεία in Acts 15:20, 29; 1 Corinthians 5:1. Matthew makes a distinction between πορνεία and μοιχεία in 15:19 indicating that the prior word is to be understood as something different from the latter. This view is compatible with Matthew's strong Judaic background and readership. This view also harmonizes with Mark and Luke who wrote to predominantly Gentile audiences. This view also accounts for the remonstrance of the disciples in Matthew 19.

Paul does permit the believer to experience divorce as long as he is not the initiator of it. He does not

allow remarriage. The broken bondage of 7:15 is best understood as referring to simple divorce which does not include the freedom to remarry while one's spouse lives (1 Cor 7:39; Rom 7:2). Paul's use of δουλόω instead of δέω forces one to this position. Paul, by use of δουλόω, instructs a person not to feel so bound by Christ's prohibition of divorce as to be afraid when the unbelieving partner insists on separation.¹ The believer is exempt from the obligation to preserve the marital union. This is the most natural sense of this word. Paul was not at a loss for words (7:39). He did not express explicitly permission for remarriage. One must therefore disagree with the premise of those of the Pauline Privilege position.

¹Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 143.

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