

Questions

1. In what ways does our culture pressure Christians to redefine God's design for sexuality? Which pressures do you personally feel most strongly?
2. Why do you think people often swing between the two extremes Paul addressed: treating sexuality casually or treating it shamefully? How does the gospel correct both?
3. How does selfishness distort marriage and intimacy? What are some subtle ways selfishness can show up in a relationship?
4. Read Philippians 2:3-8. What would it practically look like to imitate Christ's self-giving attitude toward your spouse this week?
5. What role do communication, mutual agreement, and honor play in maintaining unity within marriage?
6. The sermon mentioned seasons of illness, exhaustion, suffering, or aging. How can couples continue pursuing covenant love and unity during difficult seasons?

Recommended Books

- *I Still Do: Growing Closer and Stronger Through Life's Defining Moments*, by Dave Harvey
- *Redeeming Sex in Marriage*, by Scott Mehl
- *Sex, Dating, and Relationships*, by Gerald Hiestand and Jay Thomas
- *The Meaning of Marriage*, by Timothy & Kathy Keller

Need prayer? Someone will be up front by the piano to pray with you after the 1st & 2nd services.

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1 Corinthians

MESSY CHURCH MIGHTY CHRIST

God-Honoring Marital Intimacy

1 Corinthians 7:1-6

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In 1 Corinthians 7:1–6, Paul calls married believers to three God-honoring pursuits so they will resist worldly thinking and live faithfully according to God's purposes for marital intimacy.

To understand 1 Corinthians 7:1–6 in context, it is important to begin with chapter 6, verses 12–20.

Pursue Purity with Your Spouse (vv.1-2)

In chapters 6 and 7 there are two distortions of God's design for sex:

- The body was spiritually irrelevant (1 Cor 6:13).
- Denying sexual desire makes one more spiritual (1 Cor 7:1).

Glorifying God with the body (1 Cor 6:19-20) is different for each group:

- For the unmarried, it means don't have sex.
- For the married, it looks like what Paul says in verse 2.

Both the husband and the wife are addressed with dignity and responsibility in verse 2. Paul presents marriage as radically mutual.

Pursue Mutual Self-Giving with Your Spouse (vv.3-4)

Biblical marital intimacy is in part about fulfilling one's covenant duties.

A Biblical Marriage Is to Be Marked By:

- Mutual self-giving
- Mutual service
- Mutual commitment

A God-honoring marriage moves outward in Christ-shaped service focused on your spouse (Phil 2:3-8).

Pursue Wise Unity with Your Spouse (vv.5-6)

Four qualifications to the exception in verse 5:

1. It must be by mutual agreement, "when you agree."
2. The abstinence is only "for a time."
3. The purpose is "to devote yourselves to prayer."

Paul is addressing Corinth's ascetic confusion here, not every circumstance that may affect marital intimacy.

4. The couple is to "then come together again."