Grace Baptist Church/Crossroads Int’l Church/CIC again Dr. Rick Griffith

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NIV 40 Minutes

**Straight Talk on Contentment**

Title

***1 Corinthians 7:1-24***

**Topic:** Contentment

**Subject:** Be content with your marital state, body, and job

**Complement:** because each situation has its advantages.

**Purpose:** The listeners will commit to be content with their lot in life in terms of marriage (single or married or divorced), physical characteristics, or socio-economic status.

# Introduction

### Four-year-old Suzie had just been told the story of “Snow White” for the first time in her life. After arriving home from nursery school, with wide-eyed excitement, she retold the fairy tale to her Mommy. After relating how Prince Charming arrived on his beautiful white horse and kissed Snow White back to life, Suzie asked loudly, “And do you know what happened next?” “Yes,” her mother replied, “they lived happily ever after.” “No,” Suzie said, “they got married.” MARRIAGE not a guarnatee for contentment

Snow White

### Reminds me of what a friend told me once—“You never know true happiness until you’re married—and then it’s too late!” Of course, that was just his opinion!

Lockett

### So which relationship do you think brings more contentment—marriage? or singleness?

Black

### One of the challenges of our day is *contentment*—especially relating to marriage.

#### Discontentment has always been with us, but it seems tougher now. A hundred years ago most men were farmers who, all day long, looked at the south end of a northbound mule. When they got back to the house, nearly any wife looked great!

#### But now advertisers try to make us discontent with our physical body, our singleness, our year-old computer, our income, and especially our spouse.

#### Millions have counseled friends to be discontent with their spouse! “Oh, you shouldn’t put up with that from your wife! You need an upgrade!”

### Need: What about you? Are you known as a content person? What does it take for you to be happy? Would the people who know you best say, “Blank (your name) is *really satisfied* with life”? Especially content with your marital state?

Content?

### Subject: Do you think God wants you to be content in life? I do! Jesus said in John 10:10 that he came for us to have abundant life. We know God wants us to be content with our lot in life. But *why* should you be content—let’s say with your marital state, body, or job? Here’s the issue I’m asking in your bulletin.

Why be content?

### Context: Paul addresses this issue of contentment in 1 Corinthians 7. Here he gives straight talk about marriage and contentment. His main idea appears three times in the central section of the chapter—and this controls what he says in the whole chapter.

Overview

#### In essence, he says that marriage, a new physical appearance or work status won’t make you happy—but being content with the state God placed you will! (MI)

• MI

#### Notice this in verses 17, 20, and 24.

• Remain

#### One scholar summarized Paul as saying, “Do not be in a hurry to change the external circumstances of your life simply because you have become a Christian.”

### The Corinthians were divided on many issues, and how to be content was one of them. Among them were celibates—those who felt people were happier without sex. They even discouraged sex for married people!

Black

### But what does Paul say? He doesn’t deny sex altogether, but he does limit it to marriage. And he gives many reasons we can be content, no matter what our state in life. Notice in verses 1-7 where he says that those married can be content as…

# I. Those married can have their sexual needs legitimately met (1-7).

MP

[Those married had the advantage of sexual rights, so the celibates were wrong to recommend abstinence for those married.]

## Singleness is better for ministry than marriage (1).

Black

### The NASB and Greek text says literally, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” Some of you are saying, “Wow, talk about restrictive! I’ve already broken this one many times this week as I have shaken hands with many women!” What’s wrong with touching a woman?

### Well, this is simply another way to say what the NIV says: “It is good for a man not to marry.” Why not? What’s wrong with getting married? Didn’t God create marriage and wasn’t He the one that said, “Be fruitful and multiply?”

### No, marriage is great. But Paul is introducing his key idea for the entire chapter, as he has done in other chapters of this book. He says later in this chapter that there are many advantages to singleness—which we’ll cover next week. Or “remain in the state in which you are” as I noted earlier.

(What Paul means is clarified in verses 2-6 where he notes that…)

## Marriage brings contentment by enabling us to please our partner sexually (2-6).

### Marriage is God’s solution to immorality (2). However…

### Husbands and wives have both sexual *duties* and *rights* regarding their spouse (3-6).

#### Each spouse has a *duty* to meet the other’s sexual needs (3).

##### *Newsweek* magazine once retorted that “marriage is the only war where you sleep with the enemy!” That’s rather dismal—God has a better plan!

##### He says that sex is something that each partner “owes” the other.

#### Each spouse has *rights* over the other spouse’s body (4).

##### Marriage is a commitment that is exclusive concerning sex. As someone said, “The wedding ring is that small piece of jewelry placed on the finger that cuts off your circulation.” MARRIAGE fidelity in

Wedding ring

##### It also means that sex in marriage should never be given as a reward or bribe—nor withheld as a threat or punishment!

Black

#### Rather, marital abstinence should only be mutual, temporary, and for prayer (5).

##### Mutual! Both husband and wife agree. And temporary—not long-term.

##### Notice also that it’s for prayer. Is prayer the only reason for marital abstinence? Well, strictly speaking, yes. While some would use it for birth control, this certainly is not God’s method over any sustained period of time.

#### Note also that marital abstinence is not commanded but only allowed (6).

##### No couple *has* to abstain—this is only allowed by Paul for prayer.

##### In fact, God commands the opposite—to have sexual relations in marriage.

##### A recent report here in Singapore says that the most common reason given for non-Muslim divorces was living apart or separation of three years or more. How sad—people living together who aren’t married and then married couples who don’t live together! Couples must live together as couples.

(Sounds complicated, doesn’t it? I think that’s why Paul said in verse 7 that…)

## Life is simpler as a single but singleness and marriage are both God’s gifts (7)

(So Paul says to be content with your marital state—married or single. In particular, one advantage of marriage is that it allows for sexual needs to be legitimately met. But what about those who have been previously married but their spouse died? Some Corinthians said they shouldn’t remarry, but Paul says in verses 8-9 that…)

# II. Widowers and widows can remarry if they have unmet sexual needs (8-9).

MP

[Those whose spouses had died are allowed remarriage if they can’t handle abstinence.]

## Paul advised widowers and widows to seriously consider staying single like him (8).

Black

### Paul probably was a widower as he formerly was a Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin—and almost all of them were married.

### I believe by “unmarried” Paul means men formerly married whose wife died. This is because they are paired with widows and because later in the chapter he addresses those never married.

## But if they have an uncontrolled sexual desire, they should get married (9).

### Some of you know my good friend and former SBC colleague, Walter McConnell. His wife Karen suddenly died in December 2006 and Walt had a very tough time taking care of his teenage daughters. However, in God’s mysterious way, 15 months later Walt married another Irishwoman! In fact, he married Claire in March 2008 even though he couldn’t move from the USA to Ireland for three more months!

Walt

### Why didn’t Walt just wait until June to marry his new wife Claire? Verse 9! They kept their marriage alive via the Internet for three months. In fact, they will move to Singapore this summer!

Cartoon

Walt & Claire

(So far Paul has said to be content with your marital state—married or single or widowed. But what about the case of those divorced? Here’s where Paul doesn’t recommend remarriage because in verses 10-11 he notes the advantage to remaining unmarried. He says…)

Black

# III. Divorcees should remain unmarried to enable reconciliation with their spouse (10-11).

MP

[Those divorced should try to remarry their former spouse who hadn’t remarried.]

## He starts his argument by saying that God prohibits divorce (10).

### Today we make distinctions between divorce and separation, but don’t read that into these verses. The words are used interchangeably here, both meaning divorce.

### Marriage is tougher now, as seen in the many cross-cultural marriages and short marriages like Pamela Anderson’s that ended in divorce after just a few months. Now I know divorce and remarriage is an extremely difficult subject.

Pamela Anderson

#### It strikes at our core—the most intimate relationship in our lives.

Black

#### It is becoming an increasing problem in Singapore. *The Straits Times* reported in 1998 that about 20% of marriages ended in divorce.

#### Divorce is at an all-time high here, which is making people hesitant to get married. “The total number of marriages fell five percent from 2002 to 2003 and Singaporeans were marrying at a later age -- 32 years for men and 27 for women”[[1]](#endnote-1)

#### There are also widely different views taught by godly leaders who can’t agree on divorce. Here is a 1990 book called *Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian Views.* Here’s the four views advocated by different authors—all with a ThD from Dallas Seminary–but with very different perspectives on divorce and remarriage:

• Neither

4 Views Divorce

##### Neither divorce nor remarriage is allowed.

##### Divorce is allowed but not remarriage.

• Divorce

##### Both divorce and remarriage are allowed in cases of adultery or desertion.

• 2 ways

##### Both divorce and remarriage are allowed under a variety of circumstances.

• Many

#### This is a difficult subject for me personally. My mother has been married 3 times and my father 5 times. If you add all the divorces of those whom my parents have married, it amounts to the heartaches of 12 divorces!

### Where do I stand on divorce?

#### Verse 10 says that divorce should not be pursued among believers—and remarriage should not be pursued either. I used to consider this absolute, in every situation. However, now I think Matthew 19:9 allows for divorce and remarriage in cases of adultery and 1 Corinthians 7:15 allows for it in cases of desertion. I have an 8-page study that contrasts these four views on the NT Survey link on my website. Look under the 1 Corinthians section.

#### To date I have conducted only a few marriages, and none including divorcees.

#### However, as a church we do not prohibit divorcees from membership or any office in the church.

Black

(So what should a believer do who has experienced divorce? Verse 11 says…)

## If divorce does occur, God says to remain unmarried so reconciliation can happen (11).

### Years ago Susan and I had friends named Mike and Teri. He was my best friend who served as a pastor at our church but committed adultery, divorced Teri, left the ministry, and went to live with his new girlfriend.

### The beautiful thing about this story is that Teri remained unmarried and prayed for their reconciliation. After nearly two years God answered, and they were remarried.

### Pastor Stan, who preached here in 2009, has remarried couples THREE times in his ministry! God is a restoring God!

Yoke

(What a blessing to have a Christian marriage! That’s why the Bible prohibits believers from marrying unbelievers—as one said, “God and Satan never sing duets!” The Corinthians knew this, but in some cases one spouse had become a Christian. So the church asked, “Paul, you say God wants us to have a Christian marriage. Well, some of our spouses refuse to become Christians, so shouldn’t we divorce them to marry Christians?” Paul’s answer is in verses 12-16…)

# IV. Those in mixed marriages should stay married to be a godly influence in the family (12-16).

MP

# [If an unbelieving partner wants to stay married, stay married! This is your mission field!]

Black

## Believing spouses should not divorce their unbelieving spouses (12-13). Why?

## The believer can have a godly influence on the unbelieving spouse and children (14).

### Don’t read too much into this “sanctified” stuff—it doesn’t mean that the unbeliever is saved through the believer’s faith. Salvation has always been an individual decision.

### But there is a sense in which both spouse and children are exposed to a clean and holy influence through even one godly parent.

## Of course, if the unbeliever insists on the divorce, one has no choice but to let him or her leave since this is an individual choice (15-16).

(Up to this point in the chapter Paul has focused on the marriage issue—why we should be content with our marital state. In the last section we’ll deal with today he broadens contentment to include contentment with one’s body and strata in society too. Verses 17-24 apply to all of us…)

# V. All of us: Be content with your body and job (17-24).

MP

[Are you happy with your appearance and job status now—or what’s it gonna take?]

## Be content with your *physical appearance* (17-19)—Don’t try to look like others in their physical characteristics—be content with your bodily appearance.

Black

### The circumcised, of course, refer to Jewish men—and the uncircumcised as Gentiles.

#### You would think that circumcision was more-or-less a permanent state, but not so. First century Roman public baths were very common. In fact, men would go there daily and many business transactions between men were conducted in the nude! But some Jews wanted to conceal that they were Jews, so they had an operation to look like they were uncircumcised. Paul is aware of this current practice and says not to do this—accept who you are at the time you come to Christ.

Public bath

#### Likewise, uncircumcised Gentiles shouldn’t be circumcised either, because obedience is what’s most important!

(Now circumcision isn’t that big of a deal for us today but…)

### Some of us are unhappy with other aspects of our physical appearance.

Body for God

#### I’m amazed how many of these slimming salons that have popped up in recent years. How can they all stay in business? I don’t see enough overweight people around for them to make a profit! In fact, it seems to me that every jogger I see looks like he doesn’t need to jog, and every biker is skinny. The people in the health clubs look like they don’t need to be there!

#### No, I think what’s happening here is what has afflicted the US for many years—people are becoming very dissatisfied with how they look. Otherwise, how can all these exercise bike manufacturers stay in business? Susan’s parents bought one of those springy small trampolines for exercise. It got so little use that they finally put a plant on it. Each time I entered their house I’d say, “Oh, I see that you are still exercising your plant!”

Bouncing

#### Don’t get me wrong—if you need to lose weight, then do it. But some of this relates to metabolism and body frame that we just need to accept from God.

Black

#### Are you content with how God made you physically?

##### Do you secretly wish you were taller, shorter, skinnier, fatter, more athletic, or do you wish some physical aspect of yours was different?

##### God makes no mistakes. Accept how He made you and remember what verse 19 says: “Keeping God’s commands is what counts.”

(Perhaps you struggle not with physical appearance but social standing or money. Paul says…)

## Be content with your low *socio-economic position* (20-23).

20-23

### First century slavery was no picnic, but Paul commands the Christian slave to live contentedly since he is free in Christ.

Social Classes

### Now if *slaves* can be content with their lot, why can’t *we* be with ours? We have far more rights! When will we be content with what we have?

Black

### This isn’t unique to Singapore. The average American changes profession (that’s occupation—not job relocation) seven times in his lifetime! CONTENTMENT lack of

### Of course, the opposite danger of *“kiasu*-ism” is passivity. Verse 21 encourages us to try to improve our lot in this world as long as we don’t do it at the expense of others or with the thought that it’s necessary to be happy.

### Do you envy others here at church or at work with a higher position and more money?

#### Let me ask you a question: Have you ever seen a correlation between happiness and social standing?

#### Is the boss at your company the happiest person?

#### Is the least paid worker at your job the least happy?

#### If there’s any correlation that I’ve observed, it’s the more money, the more misery!

(Does that mean that we don’t try to better ourselves? Does it mean that poverty is next to godliness? No—just that God is saying to…)

## Be content with the marital, physical, or socio-economic state God placed you (24).

24

• But   
Why?

(But *why* be content like this? I think what Paul is telling us overall in today’s text is…)

# Conclusion

### Be content with your marital state, body, and job because each situation has its advantages (M.I.).

Main Idea

### Marriage won’t make you happy—nor will your appearance or work—so just thank God for the *benefits* you do enjoy whatever situation you’re in (MI restated)!

### Each situation has its desirable elements:

Advantages

#### Each *marital state* has advantages…

##### Marriage meets sexual needs.

• Marriage

##### Singleness provides more ministry opportunities—more on this next week.

• Single

##### Those in mixed marriages have a mission field right under their own roof.

• Mixed

##### Even divorcees may see God change their mates’ heart.

• Divorce

#### Undesirable *physical appearances* have their advantages…

##### They cause us to ask ourselves whether changing our appearance will really change our contentment level.

• Body

##### Even the things we don’t like about how we look can remind us that what really counts is obedience.

#### Even a low *socio-economic state* has the advantage of reminding us of our freedom in Christ.

• Money

### I think that covers everyone here!

### So are you content? What will it take for you to be content? Can you take some time now to thank Him for your lot in life?

Content?

### “Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want, but the realization of how much you already have.”

### OPTIONAL if time available (HAPPINESS matter of choice):

Black

#### Two seriously ill men shared a small hospital room. One man had to lie flat on his back all the time. The other was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room’s only window.

#### Each afternoon the second man would look out the window and describe in detail what he saw. “Oh, there’s the little boy who was there yesterday, playing on the swing… Now the two lovers in the park are walking away hand in hand…” and other descriptions.

#### As days passed by, the man on his back began to feel indignant. “Why should he have all the pleasure of seeing everything while I never get to see anything?” he thought. His envy eroded into resentment and soon turned him sour.

#### Late one night the man by the window coughed—and then coughed again. He was choking on the fluid in his lungs. His roommate watched in the dimly lit room as the struggling man groped for the call button to get the nurse. Listening across the room, the resentful man never moved—never pushed his own button to bring the nurse running. In less than five minutes the coughing and choking stopped, along with the sound of breathing.

#### The following morning the nurse discovered the lifeless body of the man by the window. Silently it was taken away and the other man requested to move near the window. His request was granted, everyone left the room, and he… slowly, painstakingly… propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look out the window. Finally he would have the joy of seeing it all himself. He strained to look out the window and discovered that it faced a blank wall.

#### Circumstances will not make us happy. The pursuit of contentment is a matter of choice—with our marital state, physical limitations, and economic situation.

**Preliminary Questions**

**Verses Questions**

Context What did the author record just prior to this passage? Paul has just finished the first two sections of his letter. Chapters 1–4 addressed the subject of divisions and chapters 5–6 gave straight talk on disorders in the church reported to Paul (see 5:1).

Beginning with today’s text he begins to answer doctrine questions posed by the church in their letter. Notice how he begins 7:1 with “Now for the matters you wrote about.” He repeats this phrase “Now about…” (or the NASB has “Now concerning…”) four more times in the letter to introduce new topics requested in the church’s letter (8:1; 12:1; 15:1; 16:1). In fact, the same phrase (peri de) appears in verse 25 to mark a new section, so today we’ll cover only this unit in verses 1-24.

Purpose Why is this passage in the Bible? It’s a plea for contentment.

Context

#### Paul has just finished the first two sections of his letter. Chapters 1–4 addressed the subject of divisions and chapters 5–6 gave straight talk on disorders in the church reported to Paul (see 5:1).

#### Beginning with today’s text he begins to answer doctrine questions posed by the church in their letter. Notice how he begins 7:1 with “Now for the matters you wrote about.” He repeats this phrase “Now about…” (or the NASB has “Now concerning…”) four more times in the letter to introduce new topics requested in the church’s letter (7:25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1).

Background What background helps us understand this passage? I wish we had the Corinthians’ letter to Paul, but God saw fit for it not to survive, so we have to guess the contents from chapter 7 itself. Apparently the church requested Paul’s advice on various issues relating to marriage. One Corinthian question was, “Paul, you say God wants us to have a Christian marriage. Well, some of our spouses refuse to become Christians, so shouldn’t we divorce them to marry Christians?”

### The Corinthians were divided on many issues, and how to be content was one of them. As a Greek city, Corinth had the typical philosophy of its day that too deeply divided the material and the spiritual worlds. Greek (Gnostic) philosophy said that what was spiritual was good but what was material was evil. Blomberg, 24-25

#### We’ve already seen one outworking of this at Corinth called hedonism today. These people said that if religion was only a matter of the spirit, then why not live it up in the body? Many sexual deviations resulted that Paul counteracted in chapters 5–6: incest, prostitution, even lawsuits against other believers.

#### But Corinth also had the other group too that said that since spirit is good, we should avoid bodily things. This pro-celibacy faction discouraged sexual intercourse even for married people! Perhaps they even thought that Paul, as a single, would support their side.

### As we will see in chapter 7, Paul walks the delicate tightrope between these opposing views. He doesn’t deny sex altogether, but he does limit sex to marriage. Notice in verses 1-7 where he says that those married can be content as…

1 The NASB says, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” Some of you are saying, “Wow, talk about restrictive! I’ve already broken this one several times this week as I have shaken hands with many women!” What in the world is wrong with touching a woman?

Well, this is simply another way to say what the NIV text note says: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” Now that helps a lot, doesn’t it? If I understand this right, most men here have broken this command as most are married.

In fact, the NIV regular text still raises questions, for it says, “It is good for a man not to marry.” Why not? What’s wrong with getting married? Didn’t God create marriage and wasn’t He the one that said, “Be fruitful and multiply?” Only until recent years with artificial insemination has this been possible without touching a woman!

No, what Paul says later in the chapter is that there are many advantages to singleness.

2 Is marriage really a solution against immorality?

3 What is meant by “marital duty”?

##### In a society that favored men, Paul emphasized throughout the chapter the mutuality of marriage: husbands and wives have mutual privileges and responsibilities (vv. 3-5, 8-9, 10-11, 12-16, 28, 32-34).

5 Does this mean it’s a sin for a couple not to have normal sexual relations?

Is prayer the only reason for marital abstinence?

How does marital abstinence open a possible door for temptation?

6 What’s the “this” in his statement, “I say this as a concession, not as a command”? Does it refer to marital abstinence in verse 5 or does it refer back to his opening statement in verse 1 not to marry?

What’s the difference between a concession and a command? It means that Paul is not laying a rule down for all time and all situations. He’s only conceding that in the present difficulties at Corinth it’s better not to marry, referring back to verse 1.

7 Was Paul single? Always?

8 Who are these “unmarried”? It is masculine plural, just as “widows” is feminine plural. “Given that verse 25-38 will address those who have never married, and given that the more explicit Greek word for ‘widower’ was falling into disuse in the first century, we should probably understand the unmarried here to refer to men whose wives had died” (Bloomberg, 133-34).

Why did Paul say it was good to be single?

10 Is the Lord’s command noted here one of the gospel texts where Christ prohibits divorce and remarriage?

Is Paul making a distinction between separation and divorce?

11 Does this prohibition of remarriage still apply even if the other spouse has remarried, making remarriage to the original spouse impossible?

14 What does it mean that an unbelieving spouse and children are sanctified when a believing spouse remains in the marriage?

15 What is the “not bound” refer to? Not bound to the marriage or not bound to Christ’s prohibition against divorce?

How does this affect possible remarriage?

What breaks the marriage bond anyway—adultery? divorce? death? any of these?

17-24 What practically does it mean to remain in the same situation as one was when called?

Does this mean we shouldn’t get married after becoming a Christian?

**Tentative Subject/Complement Statements**

Remain in the same marital state as when you became a Christian!?

“Do not be in a hurry to change the external circumstances of your life simply because you have become a Christian” (Blomberg, 145).

Be content with the marital, economic, or social state God placed you.

Be content with your state concerning marriage, money, and work.

Marriage won’t make you happy—but being content with the marital, economic, or social state God placed you will!

Marriage won’t make you happy—but being content with the marital, ethnic, and socio-economic state God placed you will!

**Possible Illustrations**

“See?” The husbands say, “I have the right to have sex! God says so!”

“OK,” the wife responds, “But I have the right not to have sex! At least for a time!”

GBC Divorce and Remarriage Policy

*Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian Views*

*The Straits Times* reported this week, “Divorces Rise over 100% in 10 Years.” Singapore has over 25,000 marriages each year now and nearly 5,000 divorces. That means nearly one divorce for every 5 marriages, or about 20% of marriages ending in divorce. This is becoming an increasing problem here in the country and also in the church.

Teri wrote an email last week:

We are doing well. Homeschool keeps me busy but I am so blessed to have the opportunity! Mike enjoys his job as much as he can enjoy working and he still has time left over for us, which is a blessing. He is a great dad—very hands-on. He still struggles with the way we "do" church and a lot of the old ghosts from CCBC still haunt him. I just continue to pray for peace and healing for him. We spend a lot of time together as a family, which is fun.

Where does Grace Baptist stand on divorce? To prepare for this message I read the GBC Official Statement Concerning Divorce and Remarriage.

It is consistent with verse 10—that divorce and remarriage should not be pursued in any situation—even adultery.

However, it also says, “If a person was divorced before conversion, that sin, like all others, is under the blood of Christ. Such a person may be received into full participating membership of the Church, if there is evidence of true repentance.”

##### My own parents divorced when I was only 4 years old. My mother remarried when I was 8 and divorced again when I was 10. Then her third marriage began when I was 14, which has now lasted 26 years.

##### My father went on to marry 5 times! Fortunately, he’s been married to his present wife for 13 years, but if you add all those whom just my parents have married, it amounts to the heartaches of 12 divorces!

**Straight Talk on Marriage**

***1 Corinthians 7:1-24***

**Exegetical Outline**

***Exegetical Idea:* The purpose the Corinthians should be content with the marital, ethnic, and socio-economic state God placed them is that each situation has its advantages.**

# I. The purpose Those married should stay married is so their sexual needs can be legitimately met (1-7).

## Singleness is better for ministry than marriage (1).

## Marriage brings contentment by enabling us to please our partner sexually (2-5).

### Marriage is God’s solution to immorality (2).

### Husbands and wives have both sexual rights and duties towards one another (3-6).

#### Each spouse has responsibilities to meet the other’s sexual needs (3).

#### Each spouse has rights over the other spouse’s body (4).

#### Marital abstinence should only be mutual, temporary, and for prayer (5).

#### Marital abstinence is not commanded but only allowed (6).

## Life is simpler as a single but singleness and marriage are both God’s gifts (7)

# II. The concession for widowers and widows to remarry is allowed if they have unmet sexual needs (8-9).

## Widowers and widows should stay single like Paul (8).

## But if they have an uncontrolled sexual desire, they should get married (9).

# III. The purpose divorcees should remain unmarried is to enable reconciliation with their spouse (10-11).

## God prohibits divorce (10).

## If divorce does occur, God says to remain unmarried for the possibility of reconciliation (11).

# IV. The purpose those in mixed marriages should remain married is to be a godly influence on the family (12-16).

## Believing spouses should not divorce their unbelieving spouses (12-13).

## The believer can have a godly influence on the unbelieving spouse and children (14).

## If the unbeliever insists on the divorce, one has no choice but to let him or her leave since this is an individual choice (15-16).

# V. The main idea of Paul is that everyone should remain in their present marital, physical, and socio-economic state (17-24).

## Jews and Gentiles shouldn’t try to look like the other group physically (17-19).

## Slaves should be willing to stay in their low socio-economic position as slaves (20-23).

## Everyone should be content with the marital, physical, and socio-economic state God placed them (24).

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Which relationship brings more contentment? Marriage? Singleness?

### Subject: Why should you be content with your marital state, body, and job?

# I. Those married can have their sexual needs legitimately met (1-7).

## Singleness is better for ministry than marriage (1).

## Marriage brings contentment by enabling us to please our partner sexually (2-5).

### Marriage is God’s solution to immorality (2).

### Husbands and wives have both sexual duties and rights regarding their spouse (3-6).

#### Each spouse has a duty to meet the other’s sexual needs (3).

#### Each spouse has rights over the other spouse’s body (4).

#### Marital abstinence should only be mutual, temporary, and for prayer (5).

#### Marital abstinence is not commanded but only allowed (6).

## Life is simpler as a single but singleness and marriage are both God’s gifts (7)

# II. Widowers and widows can remarry if they have unmet sexual needs (8-9).

## Widowers and widows should stay single like Paul (8).

## But if they have an uncontrolled sexual desire, they should get married (9).

# III. Divorcees should remain unmarried to enable reconciliation with their spouse (10-11).

## God prohibits divorce (10).

## If divorce does occur, God says to remain unmarried for the possibility of reconciliation (11).

# IV. Those in mixed marriages should stay married to be a godly influence in the family (12-16).

## Believing spouses should not divorce their unbelieving spouses (12-13).

## The believer can have a godly influence on the unbelieving spouse and children (14).

## If the unbeliever insists on divorce, one has no choice but to let him or her leave since this is an individual choice (15-16).

# V. All of us: Be content with your body and job (17-24).

## Be satisfied with your *physical appearance* (17-19).

## Be willing to stay in your low *socio-economic position* (20-23).

## Be content with the marital, physical, and socio-economic state God placed you (24).

# Conclusion

### Be content with your marital, physical, and socio-economic state because each situation has its advantages (M.I.).

### (MI restated)

### Each state has its benefits:

#### Each marital state has advantages…

##### Marriage meets sexual needs.

##### Singleness provides more ministry opportunities.

##### Those in mixed marriages have ministry opportunities under their own roof.

##### Even divorcees may see God change their mates’ heart.

#### Each physical state has advantages…

#### Each socio-economic state has advantages…

### I think that covers everyone here!

 **Rick Griffith**

6 January 2013

*Message 9 of 24 in “Becoming Who We Are” Series on 1 Corinthians*

**Straight Talk on Contentment**

***1 Corinthians 7:1-24***

**Introduction**

Why should you be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with your marital state, body, and job?

**I. Those** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **can have their sexual needs legitimately met (1-7).**

A. Singleness is better for ministry than marriage (1).

B. Marriage brings contentment by enabling us to please our partner sexually (2-6).

C. Life is simpler as a single but singleness and marriage are both God’s gifts (7).

**II.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **can remarry** **if they have unmet sexual needs (8-9).**

A. Widowers and widows should stay single like Paul (8).

B. But if they have an uncontrolled sexual desire, they should get married (9).

**III.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **should remain unmarried to enable reconciliation with their spouse (10-11).**

A. God prohibits divorce (10).

B. If divorce does occur, God says to remain unmarried for the possibility of reconciliation (11).

**IV. Those in** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **should stay married to be a godly influence in the family (12-16).**

A. Believing spouses should not divorce their unbelieving spouses (12-13).

B. The believer can have a godly influence on the unbelieving spouse and children (14).

C. If the unbeliever insists on divorce, one has no choice but to let him or her leave since this is an individual choice (15-16).

**V.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**: Be content with your body and job (17-24).**

A. Be satisfied with your physical appearance (17-19).

B. Be satisfied with your low socio-economic position (20-23).

C. Be content with the marital, physical, and socio-economic state God placed you (24).

**Conclusion**

Be content with your marital state, body, and job because each situation has its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Main Idea).

**Thought Questions:**

1. Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-24 aloud, then list as many universal truths you can find about contentment and marriage.
2. What do you typically think will make you content rather than trusting Christ? Bow in prayer and commit this to the Lord.

Text

Text

**Introduction**

*Subject*: Why should you be content with your marital state, body and job?

**I. Those married can have their sexual needs legitimately met (1-7).**

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B. Marriage brings contentment by enabling us to please our partner sexually (2-6).

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**Conclusion**

Be content with your marital state, body, and job because each situation has its advantages (Main Idea).

1. http://www.singapore-window.org/sw04/040623a2.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-1)