

**1. What happens when a person responds to God's call to salvation, seeks God's forgiveness of sin and becomes a follower of Jesus?**

**a. Perspective**

- i. We often talk about what God DOES in saving and redeeming a person (Elects, calls, justifies, sanctifies, glorifies)
- ii. But, what happens to us?
- iii. What happens to ordinary people, who, having heard the gospel, accept the gospel and believe?
- iv. What is the effect of the saving grace of God on the life and experience of a believer?

**b. Four NT Answers**

- i. A New Creation
  - (1) **2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*
  - (2) Old passes away; new comes
- ii. Born Again
  - (1) **John 3:3 (ESV)** *Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
  - (2) A whole new set of rules:
    - (a) born once under the rules of nature and flesh
    - (b) born again under the rules of the supernatural and spirit
- iii. Made Alive
  - (1) **Ephesians 2:4-6 (ESV)** *<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*
  - (2) Made alive, raised, seated
- iv. Enriched
  - (1) **1 Corinthians 1:4-8 (ESV)** *<sup>4</sup> I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—<sup>6</sup> even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—<sup>7</sup> so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**c. The Corinthian Christians understand the nature of God's redeeming grace.**

- i. Theological - They know that redemption is not just a change of position relative to God's holiness (justification)
- ii. Personal - They know that redemption is a change of heart, a spiritual

- transformation that affects the spirit, mind, and heart (affections)
- iii. Whole life transformation - They know that redemption through faith in Jesus Christ is more than just accepting a body of facts,
  - (1) it is to be changed to the core of our being by the power of those facts
  - (2) in such a way that even the smallest desire of the heart is realigned to love Christ and become like Him in His love.

## 2. **Corinthian question: what can I do to avoid defiling or corrupting the new state of heart God has created in me?**

- a. **An amazing question given that many Christians today are looking for ways to hold on to as much of this world as they can?**
  - i. Embrace the way the world thinks
  - ii. Indulge in the pleasures the world seeks
  - iii. Relate to others the way the world relates: pride, jealousy, anger
- b. **The Corinthians are pointing the way for the rest of us and asking how much of the world can we divest for the sake of Christ?**
  - i. Sexual relations in marriage?
  - ii. Marriage altogether?
  - iii. What if a Christian is married to an unbeliever?
    - (1) If the spiritual condition of our spouse threatens our standing with God, then perhaps, for the sake of God, we should jettison our spouse?
    - (2) If there is a chance the sinful nature and practice of our spouse can defile or corrupt our hearts and our walk with Jesus, in other words, wreck our love for and walk with Jesus, then perhaps we should terminate the marriage in favor of Christ?

## 3. **Paul's Four Responses**

- a. **"I say . . ." (v. 12)**
  - i. First, while the teaching against divorce came directly from Jesus, this teaching comes from the sanctified mind and heart of the apostle,
  - ii. therefore, the Spirit is using the education, the experience, and the submission of Paul as tools for instructing the church.
- b. **If a brother or sister in Lord has an unbelieving spouse and that spouse is content to remain in the marriage, the Christian should not divorce the unbelieving spouse. (vv. 12-13)**
  - i. Maintains the integrity of God's creation intent for marriage.
  - ii. There is no advanced holiness in trashing what God has approved
    - (1) **Romans 6:1-2 (ESV) <sup>1</sup>What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup>By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?**
    - (2) **1 John 2:1 (ESV) My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**

(3) **Sin never advances the cause of Christ in the world, in the church, or in the Christian!**

**c. The unbelieving spouse is made holy because of the believing spouse. (vv. 14)**

- i. Key issue: Who defiles who?
  - (1) Clean/Unclean in the Bible
    - (a) Clean/Unclean in the OT
      - (i) Something can be made holy to God by removing it from exposure and influence of anything unholy
      - (ii) When something clean/holy comes in contact with something unclean/unholy the effect is always the holy is defiled.
        - 1) So Israel, God's holy people, become unholy through their interactions with the unholy people around them
        - 2) So temple implements were destroyed rather than put to casual use what would have made them unholy
      - (iii) Isaiah 6: what comes from God can make the unclean clean
    - (b) Clean/Unclean in the NT (by Jesus)
      - (i) Parable of the Good Samaritan: the priest and Levite hold to the principle of defilement: that which is unclean corrupts/defiles that which is clean, so they remain separate from the nearly dead man in the ditch
      - (ii) Jesus and the Leper (**Matthew 8:1-4**)
        - 1) That which is clean makes clean that which is unclean
        - 2) How, except that that which is clean is come from God!

ii. **The potential for an unbelieving spouse and/or children to come to faith in Jesus and the resulting transformation of heart from unholy to holy, from unclean to clean, from death to life, is greater because when the one stays who is living in the grace of Jesus Christ, the One Who is clean and makes all things new.**

- (1) The potential for the saving grace of Christ to impact the marriage and family is greater than the risk the marriage will be defiled by the presence of the unbelieving spouse.
- (2) Don't leave!

**d. But if the unbelieving partner separates, (v. 15)**

- i. let it be so.
  - (1) The word "separate" here is not the word for divorce.
    - (a) If they decide to leave ("separate"), that is one thing
    - (b) But if you decide to send them away ("divorce"), that is another.

- (2) The key here is what the Christian has control over.
  - ii. The brother or sister is not enslaved
    - (a) A slave has lost autonomy over their own decisions
    - (b) A person not enslaved retains power over their own decisions, even if not over the decisions of others.
    - (c) Therefore, the believer retains the power to reject divorce as a means for dealing with conflict
    - (d) The believer is not enslaved
      - (i) to seek divorce in order to keep the faith in regards to an unbelieving spouse
        - 1) Either as a pre-emptive move
        - 2) Or as a reactive move
      - (ii) to abandon the faith in order to retain the marriage
      - (iii) to bear the emotional responsibility for marriage failure when the unbelieving partner chooses to depart
  - iii. God has called you to peace
    - (1) With himself
    - (2) With yourself
    - (3) With others
- e. **How do you know whether you will save your spouse?**
  - i. Be at peace
    - (1) with God, committed to living according to His ways and see what may happen
    - (2) Be at peace with yourself, that your obedience and trust on God's sovereign grace is the measure of the Spirit of Christ within you.
    - (3) Be at peace with your spouse, not rejecting them nor forcing them to remain, and see what may happen for eternity in their lives on account of your faithfulness.
  - ii. It could be that your faithfulness to Christ becomes the means by which God gets their attention and draws them into faith of their own.

#### 4. Conclusion of the matter (v. 17)

##### a. Don't leave. Lead!

- i. **1 Corinthians 7:17 (ESV) Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.**
- ii. Don't leave, lead!
  - (1) Two weeks:
    - (a) Next week: How to Influence Spouses and Families for Christ
    - (b) Two weeks: "Don't Leave, Lead!"

##### b. Don't leave.

- i. Bring the full measure of faithfulness to bear
- ii. Live such holy lives with one another and before the world that people may see your good lives and good heart and give praise to God