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**MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY IN 1 CORINTHIANS 7**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Acts	Acts of the Apostles
AD	<i>Anno Domini</i>
BDAG	A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature
BDF	A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature
BGT	<i>Bijbel in Gewone Taal</i> / Bible in Plain Language
BS	Bibliotheca Sacra
BT	Bible Today
c.; cc	Chapter; Chapters
CBQ	The Catholic Biblical Quarterly
Cf.	Confer
Col	Colossians
Cor	Corinthians
Deut	Deuteronomy
e.g.	<i>Exempli gratia</i> / for example
ed.; eds.	Edited; Editors
Eph	Ephesians
et al.	And others
etc.	<i>Et cetera</i>
EThL	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
Gal	Galatians
Gen	Genesis
i.e.	That is
Jn	John
JR	Journal of Religion
KJV	King James Version
Lk	Luke
LSJ	A Greek-English Lexicon

LXX	Septuagint
MSS	Manuscript
Mt	Matthew
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NT	New Testament
NTS	New Testament Studies
OT	Old Testament
Phil	Philippians
ptc.	Participle
RefR	Reformed Review
RestQ	Restoration Quarterly
rev.	Revised
Rom	Romans
RPM	Reformed Perspective Magazine
RSV	Revised Standard Version
Si	Ecclesiasticus/Ben Sira
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of New Testament
TEV	Today's English Version
Thess	Thessalonians
Tim	Timothy
Tit	Titus
TZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
v.; vv.	Verse; Verses
vb.	Verb
Vol.	Volume

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Catholic Church defends the dignity and value of marriage as much important among her concerns. In the first two centuries of Christianity as we came to know, marriage was attacked from a variety of stances as incompatible with full Christian commitment. Richard M. Price says, “the best documented attack came from the Encratite movement which held that all Christians are called to a life of sexual abstinence”<sup>1</sup>.

In the early two centuries, Christian life was seen more attached to the way of celibacy than marriage mainly because of the radical character of the challenge of the gospel of Jesus and with the inferences of Pauline message originated from the letter to Corinthians. Many questions remained unanswered like, what did Paul mean when he wrote ‘I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord’ (1 Cor 7, 35)? In what way marriage becomes a distraction? Is celibacy a guarantee for a life of perfection? Can all lead a life of abstinence? There was a long debate that Paul was influenced by the notions of ritual purity found in both in the OT and in the Graeco-Roman culture.

1 Cor 7 is to be measured as the one of the most mysterious NT passages for debate on Christian marriage and celibacy. Thus our study on the celibacy and marriage may enlighten us with the light from Pauline views. At First, it should be noted unambiguously in 7, 1a ‘Now concerning the matters about which you wrote’ where Paul is intending to answer some of the questions raised by the Corinthian community. He is not planning to make a theological exploration on the theme but takes the role of a practical pastor who misses no theological foundation. He addresses

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<sup>1</sup> R. M. PRICE, “Celibacy and Free Love in Early Christianity” in *Theology & Sexuality*, Vol. 12/2, Sage Publications, London/New Delhi, 2006, 121.

both married and unmarried believers which again subdivided with married believing couple, married with unbelieving partner, unmarried believers, believers who are intending to marry, and widows. According to M. M. Mitchell,<sup>2</sup> Paul here employs the deliberative rhetorical method which will be studied in the first chapter. Paul wants to wipe away all misinterpretation of his gospel on the Christian life to expose a correct way of life to the true believers in Christ that accords with one's state of life.

In the first chapter of this study, we will spend much time to realize the historical and literary contexts of the letter to settle our topic as 'marriage and celibacy'. This will be made easy by differentiating the rhetorical tools employed by Paul. It should be remembered that he is not following every aspects of the classical rhetoric but adapts them to his own fashion. The *propositio* is stated in 7, 1b-2 will takes the audience directly to the discussion. The geographical position of Corinth with its socio-cultural contexts demands an analysis that makes clear the significance of the theme to be discussed. Roman occupied city under Greek cultural background has variant thinking systems on the matter which led the audience to two extremes. In this chapter we will deal with the authorship, audience, purpose and a final outline of the whole letter. Then we progress towards with philological study on *propositio* that helps to find out real head of the arguments in Pauline persuasion.

In the second chapter we make an exegetical study patterned by different arguments on the topic. Paul starts with marriage with four argumentations. Two important principles of marriage are stated here as: mutuality and indissolubility. In between, Pauline concerns for practical problems are specially noted. He is stated as an optimist whose idea got a clear expression in saying;

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. M. M. MITCHELL, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, Paul Siebeck, Tübingen 1991, 65f.

‘Wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife? (7, 16).

The apt positioning of *digressio* in Pauline rhetoric is special in the exegetical study. Paul states his principle on the ways of life in the *digressio* as, ‘So, brethren, in whatever state each was called, there let him remain with God’ (7, 24). Pauline statement occurs thrice in the *digressio* with two clear examples from the Jewish background and Pagan background. Soon after the *digressio* Paul passes to celibacy where he proposes five arguments. We could sense an eschatological tone in all the arguments which touches the Pauline preference to engage in the affairs of the Lord rather than the worldly experiences.

In the third chapter is dedicated for theological implications of the topic. Three important questions such as marriage as a way to avoid fornication, can celibacy avoid worldly distress and is celibacy superior to marriage, are treated here. Thus these detailed studies on the questions may help us to reach the real mind of Paul on the topic of our study which is counted specifically in the general conclusion of this thesis.

# CHAPTER 1

## PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF TEXT

### INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter we will deal with some preliminary analysis of 1 Cor 7, 1- 40 that helps us to situate our theme. It should be noted here that Paul, the founder of Corinthian Church is not making a theological tract on marriage and celibacy. He speaks to his own children in faith, knowing their abilities and disabilities, strengths and temptations to guide them to a true life in Christ. The first chapter is divided mainly into four sections; introductory analysis, literary analysis, philological analysis and structural analysis. The introductory analysis starts with a wider contextual analysis which includes authorship, historical background, its significance and ends with a whole outline of the letter. The second part is the literary analysis used to trace the immediate context of chapter 7, which ends with a textual criticism of the *propositio*. In the philological analysis we will work on four important words such as *ἄνθρωπος*, *ἄπτω*, *γυνή*, *πορνεία* to examine its special usage in our context. The last part of our study is set apart for a structural analysis which will be dealt in detail in the second chapter of our study.

### 1.1. INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS

In order to listen shrewdly to Paul's conversation with the Corinthians, firstly we must know a few things about the letter's settings and occasion. There are numerous details of the background which are unknown to us. In reading 1 Corinthians we can sketch out some information which may help us in this study.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. B. HAYS, "First Corinthians" in *Interpretation; A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, John Knox Press, Louisville 1997, 2.

### 1.1.1. AUTHORSHIP

First Corinthians is one of the books in the NT which is taken for granted and undisputed on the basis of authorship. Very few scholars have made doubts on its authenticity.<sup>4</sup> This epistle has proved by both internal and external credentials as being Pauline. Internally speaking, in the very first verse Paul identifies himself as the author of the letter and Sosthenes as his secretary. This evidence along with different Pauline claims in 1, 17; 2, 1; 3, 4; 4, 7; 4, 19; 11, 1; 16, 21 are enough to convince its authenticity.<sup>5</sup> The salutation, address, blessing and thanksgiving at the beginning and the greetings, and doxology at the conclusion of the letter are similar to other Pauline epistles. A cross-reference to Acts and the Pauline epistles in several places correspond with names and topics that are discussed in this letter. The cross-references to parallel passages in other Pauline epistles are also numerous to be mentioned.<sup>6</sup>

Externally speaking, Pauline authorship of this book is attested by Clement of Rome<sup>7</sup>, who wrote a letter to Corinth in A. D. 95 or 96 which explicitly calls upon its readers to;

[t]ake up the epistle of the blessed Paul the apostle...with true inspiration he charged you concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos, because even then you had made yourselves partisans (I Clement 47, 1- 3).

Furthermore, the Epistle of Barnabas has verbal resemblances to 3, 1.16.18. Justin Martyr one among church fathers, quotes directly from 11, 19 in the chapter 35 of his *Dialogue with Trypho*. Marcion has incorporated this letter into his canon.<sup>8</sup> Muratorian canon<sup>9</sup> accredits the Corinthian

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. M. O'CONNOR, *1 Corinthians*, Michael Glazier Inc, Wilmington 1979, 26.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. B. B. BARTON - G. R. OSBORNE, "1 and 2 Corinthians," in *Life Application Bible Commentary*, Tyndale House, Wheaton 1999, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Vol. 18, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 2001, 22.

<sup>7</sup> J. D. G. DUNN, *1 Corinthians*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1995, 13.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 23.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. F. F. BRUCE, *The Canon of Scripture*, Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove 1988, 158.

letters to Paul and places them first in the list of Pauline epistles. Thus Pauline authorship of this letter has never been doubted, even by modern critical scholarship.<sup>10</sup>

### **1.1.2. DATE AND PLACE**

The first letter to Corinthians was probably written about A. D 54-56 from Ephesus (1 Cor 16, 8) during Paul's third missionary journey.<sup>11</sup> Acts of the Apostles gives a good reference to the period of Corinthian mission of Paul. The founding of the Corinthian Church was documented in Acts 18, 1-18. Paul was alone during his second missionary journey when entered Corinth (Acts 18, 1). His arrival in Corinth has been set with some exactness at about A.D. 50. The edict of expulsion<sup>12</sup> was passed by Claudius (Acts 18, 2) against the Jews was in A. D. 49. Gallio (Acts 18, 12) was proconsul<sup>13</sup> when the Jewish leaders took Paul to court which was in Corinth beginning in the summer of A. D. 51. When Paul left Corinth, he went first to Antioch and then eventually to Ephesus, where stayed for about three years. If Paul wrote the letter close to the end of his stay in Ephesus it would have been written in between A. D. 54 and 56.<sup>14</sup>

### **1.1.3. THE CITY**

Geographically saying, Corinth was located on a narrow strip of land, called an isthmus, connecting the Peloponnesus to Northern Greece. Corinth was considered as the capital of this

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. R. J. D. UTLEY, "Paul's Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians" in *Study Guide Commentary Series*, Vol. 6, Bible Lessons International, Texas 2002, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. R. L. PRATT, "I and II Corinthians" in *Holman New Testament Commentary*, Vol. 7, Broadman and Holman Publishers, Nashville 2000, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. P. OROSIUS, *The Seven Books of History against the Pagans, Fathers of the Church Series*, R. J. DEFERRARI (trans.), Catholic University Press, Washington D. C 1964, 297.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. K. L. CHAFIN, - L. J. OGILVIE "1 and 2 Corinthians" in *The Preacher's Commentary Series*, Vol. 30: *Formerly The Communicator's Commentary*, Thomas Nelson Inc., Nashville 1985, 17.

southern province called Achaia<sup>15</sup>. In 146 B.C. Corinth was said to be involved in a revolt against Rome and was destroyed by the Roman General Lucius Mummius and the population was dispersed. Because of its economic and military importance, the city was rebuilt in either 46 or 48 B. C. by Julius Caesar. Then it became a Roman colony where Roman soldiers retired. It was a miniature of Rome in architecture and culture and the administrative center of the Roman province of Achaia in 27 B. C. Thus the city became an Imperial Province in A. D. 15.<sup>16</sup> Corinth had many crossroads for travel and commerce, both north and south for the Greek peninsula and east and west from Rome to the Near East. Corinth became a city of wealth and pleasure by trade. All kinds of people settled there due to the facility of market system like Romans, Greeks, and Jews. Corinth thus speedily became a cosmopolitan city with all of the attending vices attached to that type of society.<sup>17</sup> It was on the highest point in the city stood the pagan temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, full of religious prostitutes to serve the wishes of its devotees. In the ancient world, Corinth was known for its moral decadence. It is stated that Plato used the term ‘Corinthian girl’ to refer to a prostitute; and Aristophanes used the verb ‘to act like a Corinthian’ to refer to fornication.<sup>18</sup> Corinth was a major cultural center of the Greco-Roman world because it hosted the bi-annual Isthmian Games which began in 581 B. C like that of Athens.<sup>19</sup> Thus Corinth is to be qualified as a Roman city with all the thinking patterns sprouted from the Greek culture which paved way for a loose social structure, this resulted in unending freedom in personal affairs that reflected in loose ideas on social institutions.

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. R. GROMACKI, *Called to Be Saints: An Exposition of I Corinthians*, Kress Christian Publications, The Woodlands, TX: 2002, ix.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. R. J. D. UTLEY, “Paul's Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians” in *Study Guide Commentary Series*, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. R. GROMACKI, *Called to Be Saints: An Exposition of I Corinthians*, x.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. B. B. BARTON - G. R. OSBORNE, “1 and 2 Corinthians,” in *Life Application Bible Commentary*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. R. J. D. UTLEY, “Paul's Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians” in *Study Guide Commentary Series*, 1.

#### 1.1.4. THE AUDIENCE

The original audience in Corinth included members from all levels of society<sup>20</sup> which consisted of mostly people who were neither rich, wise, nor of noble birth (1 Cor 1, 26). The recipients of the letter were the members of the inexperienced Church made up mostly of Gentiles. The people who lived in Corinth were racially and culturally mixed. Archaeology and Scripture (Acts 18, 4-8) give proof for the existence of a synagogue in Corinth. Thus we could trace mainly four groups of the people from the letter:

- Intellectual Greeks, who were still very proud of their philosophical traditions who were trying to tie Christian revelation to their old customs and intellectual traditions.
- Roman patrons who were the socially elite.
- A believing Jewish contingent made up mostly of “god-fearing” Gentiles, who attended the synagogue.
- A large number of converted slaves.<sup>21</sup>

#### 1.1.5. PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

This letter was written to answer some questions about Church order and to teach the believers how to live a genuine Christian life in a corrupt society.<sup>22</sup> Paul got information on the problems that had developed at Corinth from four sources: Chloe’s people (1, 11), a letter from the Church asking questions (7, 1.25; 8, 1; 12, 1; 16, 1.12), a report from others in the congregation and a personal visit from Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16, 17). The Church had become

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. R. GROMACKI, *Called to Be Saints: An Exposition of I Corinthians*, x.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. R. J. D. UTLEY, “Paul’s Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians” in *Study Guide Commentary Series*, 2. See also S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 12; A. SOUTER, ‘Corinth’ in *Dictionary of the Bible*, J. HASTINGS (ed.) T & T Clark, London 1910, 155.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. B. B. BARTON - G. R. OSBORNE, “1 and 2 Corinthians,” in *Life Application Bible Commentary*, 5.

divisive, advocating different leaders; Paul, Apollos, Peter, and possibly a Christ party (1, 12). There were also many moral issues and issues on the use of spiritual gifts.<sup>23</sup>

Summarizing the content of the epistle, the purpose of the letter can be listed into four:

- Paul sought to develop and promote a spirit of unity in the local Church along with teaching them that they were part of the universal Church.
- The apostle tried to correct a number of incorrect tendencies in the Corinthian community.
- Paul answered many questions that were submitted to him by letter (7, 1) and delegation (16, 17).
- Paul's epistle is intended to instruct the believers in Corinth to collect funds to aid the needy saints in Jerusalem.<sup>24</sup>

### **1.1.6. IMPORTANCE OF THE LETTER**

Paul the founder of the Corinthian Church continued in the closest relation to it. It is clear from the letter which reveals more of the personal character of the apostle than any of his other letters. We could trace him as a man, as a pastor, as a counselor, as in conflict not only with heretics but also with personal adversaries. Pauline wisdom, his zeal, his forbearance, his liberality of principle and practice in all matters not affecting salvation, his strictness in all matters of right and wrong, his humility, and perhaps above all his unwearied activity and wonderful endurance are explicit in the verses of this letter. This epistle shows more clearly the Christianity in conflict. We could find what method Paul adopted in founding the Church in the midst of a refined and corrupt people, and how he answered questions of conscience arising out of the relationships of Christians to the society around them. Principles relating to Church discipline, social relations, public worship, and nature of the Church and of the sacraments are unfolded in their

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. R. J. D. UTLEY, "Paul's Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians" in *Study Guide Commentary Series*, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 26.

application.<sup>25</sup> It is quoted more often than any other Pauline writings, and shows its importance and usefulness. Paul clearly makes a distinction in this practical letter between his personal opinion and the Lord's commands. He believed that his opinions were also inspired and authoritative (7, 25. 40b). This letter thus gives us an early look into the New Testament Church, its structure, methods, and message. Moreover, it must also be remembered that this was a problematic, non-typical flock.<sup>26</sup> In this letter we find Paul as a good pastor who is dealing with the problems of the Church with his practical and useful knowledge. The veracities treated in the letter must be read in contrast to the cultural background to achieve its deep theology.<sup>27</sup>

### 1.1.7. OUTLINE OF THE LETTER

S. K. Stowers says: "The letter fictionalizes personal presence."<sup>28</sup> Again when he speaks on the body of a letter says:

[i]s not mere information to be communicated but rather a medium through which a person performs an action or social transaction with someone from whom he or she is physically separated.<sup>29</sup>

Thus a deep understanding of the literary structure and its units in 1 Corinthians is the heart of our study. The opening and closing units clearly expresses the linguistic and semantic limits on the thoughts of Paul.<sup>30</sup> A good knowledge on the rhetorical arguments used by Paul also enriches our understanding on the inner heart of each units of the letter.

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. C. HODGE, "1 and 2 Corinthians", in *The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, Crossway Books, Wheaton 1995, 11.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. R. J. D. UTLEY, "Paul's Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians" in *Study Guide Commentary Series*, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE - D. STUART, *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth; A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan <sup>2</sup>1993, 65-76.

<sup>28</sup> S. K. STOWERS, "Social Typification and Classification of Ancient Letters," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism*, J. NEUSNER - H.C. KEE (eds.), Fortress, Philadelphia 1988, 79.

<sup>29</sup> S. K. STOWERS, "Social Typification and Classification of Ancient Letters," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism*, 85.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. W. M. KLEIN (et. al), *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Word, Dallas 1993, 156-171.

D. Aune observes;

By the first century B.C. rhetoric had come to exert a strong influence on the composition of letters, particularly among the educated. Their letters functioned not only as means of communication but also as sophisticated instruments of persuasion ...<sup>31</sup>

We shall say that 1 Corinthians is an occasional letter, written both in response to reports Paul received about the conditions in the Corinthian Church and in response to a letter that Paul received from the Corinthian Church. He wrote the letter in order to correct the problems in the Church.<sup>32</sup> The information and problems treated in 1 Cor 1-6 came from the house of Chloe (1, 11; 5, 1). Second major source comes from the questions sent from the community itself which is attested by the phrase '*now concerning about*' employed in 7, 1; 8, 1; 12, 1 and 16, 1.<sup>33</sup>

Many scholars have given alternative outline on the letter to Corinthians. Since we are employing rhetorical method, we depend mainly on Margaret M. Mitchell who provides a rather good outline.<sup>34</sup> Fitzmyer<sup>35</sup> also accepts the structure proposed by Mitchell. Before proceeding further we should spend some time on the classical rhetorical method and its few components.

Classical rhetoric is entirely debited to Aristotle who divided it into three kinds according to three types of audiences<sup>36</sup>.

1. Forensic: The most complicated one among the three rhetorical methods is forensic which is mostly used in the judicial level. Forensic rhetoric is based on legal controversy

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<sup>31</sup> D. AUNE, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*, Library of Early Christianity, Philadelphia/Westminster 1987, 160.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. R. L. PRATT, "I and II Corinthians" in *Holman New Testament Commentary*, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. J. C. HURD, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, Seabury Press, New York 1965, 46. See also G. D. FEE, "First Epistle to the Corinthians", in *The New International Commentary on the NT*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids/ Michigan 1988, 266-267.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. M. M. MITCHELL, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, Paul Siebeck, Tubingen 1991, 65f.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. J. A. FITZMYER, "First Corinthians; A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary" in *The Anchor Yale Bible*, Yale University Press, New Haven/London 2008, 55.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15: An Analysis Utilizing the Theories of Classical Rhetoric*, Mellen Biblical Press, Lewiston 1995, 83. See also B. WITHERINGTON III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids/Michigan 1994, 43.

that comprises criminal prosecution or civil defense<sup>37</sup>. The temporal dimension of forensic rhetoric is past, because the forensic speakers accuse or defense always in reference to the things that already happened.

2. Deliberative: In deliberative rhetoric the speaker gives advice in public or in an assembly invariably that exhorts them. The temporal dimension of deliberative rhetoric is future.<sup>38</sup>  
The subjects of deliberative rhetoric include the ways and means of religious ritual, legislation, alliances and treaties with other states, war, peace or finance etc. Instances are used in every rhetorical form but in particular, in deliberative it is used to achieve the goal of the orator.<sup>39</sup>
3. Epideictic or Ceremonial: This kind of rhetoric is used to praise or denounce of some person. The temporal dimension of epideictic rhetoric is present.

These are the types of persuasive discourse in the classical theory. But these are not absolute in themselves; they rely on mutual assistance with one another.<sup>40</sup>

There are mainly five canons of rhetoric which are: Invention (*inventio*), Arrangement (*dispositio*), Style (*elocutio*), Memory (*memoria*) and Delivery (*pronuntiatio*). In an epistolary framework, the arrangement (*dispositio*) takes the important role. So here we must go through different steps of arrangement of the matter in an epistle or rhetorical letter. Judicious arrangement of the arguments helps the orator to build a bridge between him and his audience.<sup>41</sup>

Thus we could trace five parts of discourse as listed below:

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15: An Analysis Utilizing the Theories of Classical Rhetoric*, 85.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. M. M. MITCHELL, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, 24.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15: An Analysis Utilizing the Theories of Classical Rhetoric*, 88.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15: An Analysis Utilizing the Theories of Classical Rhetoric*, 90.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. I. SAW, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15: An Analysis Utilizing the Theories of Classical Rhetoric*, 91-175.

1. Introduction (*Exordium*): The introduction or *exordium* has two purposes. Firstly it is used to inform the audience on the subject of the discourse and secondly to render the audience agreeable to the speaker's argument.<sup>42</sup> The speaker's ethos is predominantly important in this space. There are diverse types of introduction such as, inquisitive, paradoxical, corrective, preparatory and narrative.<sup>43</sup>
2. Statement of Fact (*Narratio or Propositio*): The *narratio* in a discourse has a function of stating those facts which generate discourse. It is a must that the facts be stated before arguments or *probatio* are made. This section informs the audience on the circumstances that must be known before formal argument is presented. It is presented as lucid, brief and plausible.<sup>44</sup>
3. Confirmation (*Confirmatio or Probatio*): It is considered as the core of a discourse.<sup>45</sup> The *probatio* is the heart of a rhetorical speech or letter which includes the principal arguments used to persuade the audience. In a deliberative discourse these arguments are arranged according to certain topics, in Greek called "heads" (*kephalia*). In this letter Paul uses *περὶ δέ* several times in the *probatio* of 1 Corinthians to introduce his different topics.<sup>46</sup> The proper listing of arguments depends on the particular disposition of the audience, the subject, the occasion and the subjective tastes of the speaker. In a deliberative speech or letter the proofs or arguments seek not to prove something true or

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. B. WITHERINGTON III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 88.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. H. CONZELMAN, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, J. W. LEITCH (trans.), Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1975, 7.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. B. WITHERINGTON III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 98.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. M. M. MITCHELL, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, 202.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. B. WITHERINGTON III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 75.

false, as in forensic speech, but to provide reasons to the audience to take up the course of action that is being advised.<sup>47</sup>

4. Refutation (*Refutatio*): Refutation on the arguments can be achieved in a variety of ways including logical appeal, emotional appeal, ethical appeal, joke, humor, sarcasm etc. It must be noted that at times it will be appropriate to present a refutation before orator's confirmation.
5. Conclusion (*Peroratio*): It is the recapitulation of all arguments expressed by the orator in the rhetoric. Here the orator can enumerate the most important points from his argumentation. Similar to the *exordium* orator makes once again an appeal to emotions and to a moral character provoking the audience to show annoyance against the opponents and winning their sympathy for him.<sup>48</sup>

Now considering our interest of study 1 Corinthians, accepting the opinion of Mitchell, falls into the deliberative rhetoric style. She says: "Deliberative rhetoric is compatible with the letter genre and is fully appropriate to both the epistolary and rhetorical elements which combine this letter".<sup>49</sup> Mitchell provides four points that helps us to distinguish this letter as deliberative, they are;<sup>50</sup>

- An attention on future time as the subject of deliberation.
- Employment of strong-minded set of demands or ends, the most distinctive one is profitable.
- Proof by example.

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. B. WITHERINGTON III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 108.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. B. WITHERINGTON III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 318-324.

<sup>49</sup> M. M. MITCHELL, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, 20.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. M. M. MITCHELL, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, 23.

- Fitting subjects for deliberation of which factionalism and harmony are common.

Using these points along with the opinions of Witherington<sup>51</sup> and Fitzmyer<sup>52</sup> we could draw an outline of the 1 Corinthians as follows;

<i>Prescript</i>	1, 1-3	
<i>Exordium</i>	1, 4-9	
<i>Propositio</i>	1, 10	
<i>Narratio</i>	1, 11-17	
<i>Probatio</i>	1, 18- 15, 57	
Argument I:	Pauline Gospel of Cross	1, 18- 4
Argument II:	The Sexual and Social Problems	5- 6
Argument III:	Marriage and Celibacy	7
Argument IV:	Problem of <i>eidolothyta</i> and Eucharist	8- 11
Argument V:	The Problem of Spiritual Gifts	12- 14
Argument VI:	Pauline Gospel of Resurrection	15
<i>Peroratio</i>	15, 58- 16, 24	

Many scholars wrote that in between chapters 4 -15 there is a series of problems that Paul answers. This point of view is being shared among others by Conzelman who entitles the chapters 7-15 as answers to questions spotting their variegated and pragmatic character.<sup>53</sup> The so far carried exploration shows that Paul develops his thought proceeding by smaller argumentative units organized around the single *propositio* and corroborated by the multiple *sub-propositiones*.

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. B. WITHERINGTON III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 76.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. J. A. FITZMYER, "First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary" in *The Anchor Yale Bible*, 55.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. H. CONZELMAN, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 114.

## 1.2. LITERARY CONTEXT

Now, having a good general contextual analysis of the letter, we pass on to our theme of interest quickly with some literary study. Literary analysis of a text by comparing with its historicity and significance is necessary to understand the innermost meaning of a text. Different usages of Paul in contrast to the social circumstances are necessary to know the real spirit of the letter. After discussing the disorders in the Church, Paul moves to the list of questions that the Corinthians had sent to him. Chapter 7 thus takes the problem of marriage or singleness (celibacy).

### 1.2.1. THE USAGE OF *περὶ δέ*

The words *περὶ δέ* (now concerning) refer to specific questions that the Church at Corinth sent to Paul. We could find repetition of it in 7, 25; 8, 1; 12, 1; 16, 1; 16, 12 when a change in the subject matter takes place.<sup>54</sup> Mitchell says that *περὶ δέ* refers to a new topic of interest.<sup>55</sup> David J. Lull says on the usage of the phrase in this chapter as used to change the theme. He adds;

[a] common theme, sexual behavior connects this chapter with chapters 5 and 6. Paul had to counsel against both lax standards (5, 1 - 6, 20) and highly ascetic standards of sexual behavior in chapter 7. One group in the Corinthian community believed that, since they had become spiritual, it was of little importance what they did with their bodies. Paul responded to this question in chapters 5 and 6. Another group to whom Paul wrote in the chapter 7, held that, since the body is a lower physical reality, its needs and desires, especially sex were to be avoided as much as possible.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. R. J. D. UTLEY, "Paul's Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians" in *Study Guide Commentary Series*, 80.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. M. M. MITCHELL "Concerning *peri. de*, in 1 Corinthians" in *Novum Testamentum*, Vol. 31, 3/1989, 229 - 256. See also M. PARSONS - M. M. CULY, *A Handbook on the Greek Text: Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament*, Baylor University Press, Waco/ Texas 2003, 3; A. T. ROBERTSON, *A Grammar of the New Testament in the light of Historical Research*, Broadman/Nashville 1934, 567; J. M. O'CONNOR, *1 Corinthians*, 57.

<sup>56</sup> D. J. LULL, "1 Corinthians" in *Chalice Commentaries for Today*, Chalice Press, Missouri 2007, 64.

Thus, the usage of *περὶ δέ* here and in the proceeding passages can be viewed as an object marker to change from one subject to the other. It functions as an indication of transition. According to Robertson and Plummer;

The *δέ* is perhaps merely transitional, but it may intimate that the subject now to be discussed is in opposition to the one which has just been dismissed. He is passing from what is wrong to what is generally lawful.<sup>57</sup>

The view of Nicoll also to be noted;

*δέ* leads to a new topic, in orderly transition from the last. 'Now I proceed to deal with the matters of your letter to me' the questions proposed about marriage are discussed on the ground prepared by the teaching of chapters. 5-6.<sup>58</sup>

### 1.2.2. COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

There are many scholars<sup>59</sup> who tried to bind chapter 7 with chapters 5 and 6 referring to the similarity of used vocabulary. We could find a whole constellation of vocabulary and topics that appear also in the preceding chapters such as;

- *porneia/pornoι* (5,1; 5,9.10.11; 6,9; 6,13; 6,15; 6,18) → 7,2
- *gyne* (5,1) → 7,1.2.3.4.10.11.12.14.16.27.29.33.34.39
- *soma* (5,3; 6,13; 6,15; 6,16; 6,18; 6,19; 6,20) → 7,4.34
- *pneuma* (5,3.4.5; 6,11.17.19) → 7,34.40
- *krino* (5,3.12.13; 6,1.2.3.6) → 7,37
- *satanas* (5,5) → 7,5
- *sodzo* (5,5) → 7,16
- *kalon* (5,6) → 7,1.8.26
- *kosmos* (5,10; 6,2) → 7,31.33.34

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. A. T. ROBERTSON - A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1911, 132.

<sup>58</sup> W. R. NICOLL (ed.), *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. 2, Hodder and Stouhton, London, <sup>3</sup>1904, 822.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. W. J. BARTLING, "Sexuality, Marriage and Divorce in 1 Corinthians 6, 12-7, 16", in *Concordia Theological Monthly* 39/6 (1968) 355-366. See also R. E. DAVIES, *Studies in I Corinthians*, Wipf & Stock, Eugene, OR: 2009, 70-94; O. L. YARBROUGH, *Not like the Gentiles: Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul*, Scholars Press, Missoula, MT: 1985, 93-125.

- *adelphos* (5,11; 6,5.6.8) → 7,12.14.15.24.29
- *hagios/hagiadzo* (6,1.2; 6,11; 6,19) → 7,14.34
- *ekklesia* (6,4) → 7,17
- *apistos* (6,6) → 7,12.13.14.15.
- *eksousiadzo* (6,12) → 7,4
- *hamartano* (6,18) → 7,28.36
- *agoradzo* (6,20) → 7,23.30

A short comment on the use of vocabulary may help to distinguish the unity of chapter 7.

1. A great concern of the apostle in 1 Cor 5-6 is the sin of *porneia* that takes scandalous forms in the Corinthian community. Paul clearly condemns those having the physical relations with father's wife and scolds the Corinthians for frequenting prostitutes. Being one body with Christ excludes bonds with prostitutes, for the body of the believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit. A similar preoccupation with *porneia* reappears also in 7, 2, where Paul advises that everyone should have their own wife. The topic is the same, but the occurrence of the vocabulary shows clearly that the stress is different. More than with *porneia*, in 1 Cor 7 Paul deals with the union between man (*aner, adelphos*) and woman (*gyne*). The vocabulary itself doesn't testify to the unity of thought between 1 Cor 5-6 and 1 Cor 7.
2. The same phenomenon can be observed with regard to the theme of body (*soma*) which in 1 Cor 5-6 is holy and belongs to the Lord, while in 1 Cor 7 it belongs to husband and wife. 1 Cor 5-7 one can find basically the same notion of Spirit, Satan, sin and salvation.
3. The concept of judgment which bears eschatological tones in 1 Cor 5-6, while in 1 Cor 7 it points on a human discernment.

4. The idea of world which in chapters 5-6 is corrupt and judged by God (5, 10; 6, 2), while in chapter 7 it is presented as transitory (7, 31.33.34).
5. The meaning of *adelphos* which in 1 Cor 7 denotes more a husband than a Christian brother as in the foregoing chapters.
6. The word *apistos* which in 1 Cor 7 is pagan husband not just a pagan as in the preceding chapters.

Thus, 1 Cor 7, though having the vocabulary connections with the preceding the chapters, differs from them significantly. The topics of *soma* and *porneia* are clearly subordinated to the themes of marriage and celibacy that receive here a systematic treatment from the part of the apostle.

### **1.2.3. SUBJECT MATTER OF THE CHAPTER**

The inner unity of chapter 7 can be easily traced with the usage of *περὶ δέ* phrase as discussed above. It is used in 7, 1 and in 8, 1 where a clear transition of the subject is clearly detectable. Chapter 8 starts with “*now concerning food sacrificed to idols...*” which clearly shows a transition of the subject matter. In 7, 25 we also find the same usage but it easily connects with the theme discussed up to 7, 16 just giving sufficient space for two analogies which are stated as the rhetorical technique in the whole structure of the chapter. Paul begins (7, 1-16) and concludes (7, 25-40) with a discussion of problems that are basically sexual.<sup>60</sup>

Marriage, sexual relations in marriage, divorce, second marriage and celibacy (singleness) are the subject matter in this chapter. This chapter becomes unique by stating basic guidelines for those who are married, those who wish to be married or once were married, and those who want

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. J. M. O’CONNOR, *1 Corinthians*, 58.

to remain single.<sup>61</sup> The Corinthians had some false notions about marriage, as well as about sex (Cf. cc. 5-6). There were some people in the Corinthian Church who had become so sensitive to the issue of sexual immorality that they doubted whether sex was appropriate even in marriage.<sup>62</sup> According to Fee, ‘*stay as you are*’ serves as the underlying principle of the whole chapter.<sup>63</sup> It is also good to remember here four types of marriage practiced in Corinth under the Roman law and customs which are;<sup>64</sup>

- *Confarreatio*.
- *Coemptio in manum*.
- *Usus*.
- *Contubernium*.

This background will help our reading of the chapter realistically. The Apostle takes the matter with a realistic mind to solve the difficulties which he confronted with the Church of Corinth.<sup>65</sup>

#### **1.2.4. THE *PROPOSITIO* TO THE ARGUMENTATION**

The above analysis has proved the unity of c. 7. Now when we look for a right beginning of an argumentation with the clear identification of *peri de*, we find first two verses as the introduction and proposition (*exordium* and *propositio*). In the chapter 7 we are in midst of the full-fledged rhetorical discourse and need not to make any appeal to the emotions of the audience for which has Paul already fulfilled in the first chapter itself. Paul jumps to another issue of interest by using another brief introduction. The argument Paul presents in this *pericope* is comprised of two sentences in 7, 1b -2. 1b states ‘it is good for man not to touch a woman’ which is clear statement

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 208.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. C. TOPPE, “1 Corinthians” in *The People's Bible*, Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee 1987, 64.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the NT*, 269.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, Moody Press, Chicago: 1996, 154.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. A. T. ROBERTSON - A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 131.

for observing celibacy. But instantly he refutes the statement as ‘but because of *porneia* each man should have his own wife and each woman should have her own husband’.

In short, Paul endorses the view that celibacy is the best, most beneficial way of living. But, it’s not the way for everybody. The majority should pursue the way of marriage which Paul perceives as a natural remedy against the *porneia* troubling the Corinthian community. It doesn’t mean that Paul devalues marriage. In the words of Conzelmann, “only as a venereal safety valve for incontinent, non-charismatic people, providing them a lawful outlet for expressing their sexual urges”.<sup>66</sup> On the contrary, he perceives it as a good a natural way for everybody. Further on he will express his practical and eschatological reasons for relativizing marriage and choosing rather celibacy. The Pauline thesis will be developed in the course of his argumentation. The following outline may help us more to see the Pauline development of argumentation on the thesis of marriage and celibacy.

To address the problems we have to see the structure of the chapter firstly. Different scholars have structured this slight differently. According to Fee;<sup>67</sup>

- vv. 1- 7           to the married: stay married with full conjugal rights
- vv. 8- 9           to the “unmarried” and widows: it is good to remain unmarried
- vv. 10- 11       to the married (both partners believers): remain married
- vv. 12- 16       to those with an unbelieving spouse: remain married
- vv. 17- 24       remain in the place you were at the time of your call.
- vv. 25- 38       to “virgins”: it is good to remain unmarried
- vv. 39- 40       to married women (and widows): the married are bound to the marriage; when widowed it is good to remain that way.

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. H. CONZELMANN, *I Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 114.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 268.

Hodge gives a general structure without attempting the inner diachronic themes explicated by dividing it into three sub divisions. That is;

- 7, 1-17      Instructions concerning marriage
- 7, 18- 24    The Gospel was not designed to interfere with people’s ordinary relationships
- 7, 25- 40    Concerning virgins and widows.<sup>68</sup>

After having analyzed different delimiting factors, we came to consider c. 7 as one rhetorical unit. It should be noted that Pauline approach displays many elements of Greco-Roman rhetorical structure<sup>69</sup> but with some uniqueness. Paul wants to present the Christ event to build up the future Church for that he does not polarize rhetoric against tradition but instead appeals to scripture. Thus we could find the elements of deliberative rhetoric style in this passage.<sup>70</sup>

### 1.2.5. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

It is apt now to have a look at the textual variations of the *propositio* of our unit of study. The differences in the translations represent the translator’s decision of what the original text actually being said. Textual criticism of the NT is the study of biblical texts in ancient manuscripts in order to determine as closely as possible the exact text of the original writings before the copyists made changes and errors as they copied them.<sup>71</sup> Textual criticism thus helps us to establish the

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<sup>68</sup> Cf. C. HODGE, “1 and 2 Corinthians”, in *The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, 46.

<sup>69</sup> By Greco-Roman rhetorical style we mean a cleverly devised presentation designed to emotionally move people to rhetor’s point of view and ultimately to praise him as a high status rhetor. Three types of rhetoric are already briefly narrated. For more on the subject see Cf. G. A. KENNEDY, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1984. On the insertion of epideictic material in judicial or deliberative speeches in order to win the audience’s goodwill or to discredit an opponent see A. J. MALHERBE, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, Scholars Press, Atlanta/Georgia 1988, 66f.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. A. F. JOHNSON, “1 Corinthians” in *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*, Vol. 7, Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove 2004, 26.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. L. R. OMANSON, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart 2006, 11\*.

most reliable reading of the text; it is the process of searching through the various sources of the biblical texts to determine the most accurate reading of a particular passage.<sup>72</sup>

There exist two kinds of criteria for evaluating the relative worth of variant readings. These are external evidence, having to do with the manuscripts themselves, and internal evidence, having to do with two kinds of considerations,

- Those concerned with transcriptional probabilities (that relating to the copying habits of copyists)
- Those concerned with intrinsic probabilities (that relating to the style of the author).<sup>73</sup>

Now we will work on the textual criticism of 1 Corinthians 7, 1-2.

## 7, 1

Περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε<sup>†</sup>, καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἅπτεσθαι· (BGT)

Now concerning the things whereof you wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. (KJV)

Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. (NAS)

Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. (NIV)

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote. It is well for a man not to touch a woman. (RSV)

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. P. D. WEGNER, *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods & Results*, IVP Academic, Downers Grove 2006, 24.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. L. R. OMANSON, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators*, 29-30.

In v. 1 we find only one critical apparatus that is the sign of ‘τ’. This sign marks the location where one or more words, sometimes a whole verse are inserted by witnesses cited.<sup>74</sup> The given critical apparatus is as follows:

μολ A D F G K L PΨ 104. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505 ℞ ar b vg<sup>cl</sup> sy co; Ambst Pel | txt ϣ<sup>46</sup> B C 33. 81. 1739. 1881. 2464 r vg<sup>st</sup>

μολ is the insertion to the text which has the meaning ‘to me’. This insertion is attested by the following codexes. ‘A’ refers to Codex Alexandrinus which is an uncial from the fifth century from the Alexandrian family that belongs to the category I.<sup>75</sup> ‘D’ refers to Codex Claromontanus, an uncial from the sixth century from the Western family that belongs to category IV.<sup>76</sup> ‘F’ refers to an uncial from ninth century from the Western family which belongs to category II. ‘G’ refers to another uncial from the ninth century from the Western family which belongs to category V. ‘K’ refers to an uncial from ninth century. ‘L’ refers to an uncial from Leningrad. ‘P’ is another uncial from the ninth century belongs to category III. ‘Ψ’ is the uncial from the ninth to tenth centuries from the Alexandrian family belongs to category V.<sup>77</sup> 104 (minuscule from 1087). 365 (minuscule from twelfth century). 630 (minuscule from twelfth or thirteenth century). 1175 (minuscule from tenth century). 1241 (minuscule from twelfth century). 1505 (minuscule from twelfth century). ‘℞’ this sign indicates that the above reading is supported by the majority of all manuscripts. The supporting manuscripts are listed as follows. ‘ar’ points to the manuscript Aramaic number 61 from the ninth century. ‘b’ points to one of the individual Old Latin manuscripts has the number 89 from the eighth or ninth century. ‘vg<sup>cl</sup>’ is Latin manuscript edited

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<sup>74</sup> For textual criticism we mainly refer to NESTLE-ALAND, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 2012, 46\*-94\*, 791-890, otherwise will be stated.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. P. D. WEGNER, *A Student’s Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods & Results*, 252.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. P. D. WEGNER, *A Student’s Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods & Results*, 250.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. P. D. WEGNER, *A Student’s Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods & Results*, 252.

by Clement in 1592. ‘sy’ refers to all Syriac versions. ‘co’ refers to all Coptic versions. ‘Ambst’ refers to Ambrosiaster from 366- 384. ‘Pel’ refers to Pelagius probably from 418. ‘|’ this sign means that separates different variants referring to the same variation unit. ‘txt’ this sign introduces the list of witnesses supporting the text of this edition. According to this the following are the texts supporting the given reading. P<sup>46</sup>(Papyrus 46, from circa 200)<sup>78</sup> x (Codex Sinaiticus, uncial from the fourth century), B (Codex Vaticanus, uncial from fourth century), C (Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, uncial from the fifth century) 33 (minuscule from the ninth century), 81 (minuscule from 1044; Alexandrian family, category II), 1739 (minuscule from the tenth century), 1881 (minuscule from the fourteenth century), 2464 (minuscule of the ninth century), ‘r’ refers to revelation ‘vg<sup>st</sup>’ refers to Stuttgart Vulgate edited by Gryson in 2007.

## 7, 2

διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἔχέτω <sup>□</sup> καὶ ἕκαστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἔχέτω. (BGT)

Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. (KJV)

But because of immoralities let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. (NAS)

But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. (NIV)

But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. (RSV)

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. L. R. OMANSON, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators*, 13\*.

In verse 2 we find two critical apparatus. First one with (τὰς πορνείας), second is the ρ which ends with \.

The given critical apparatus is as follows:

(την πορνειαν F G latt sy | ρ F G

( \) this signs says that the words enclosed between them in the text are transmitted with variants.

Here the variant is marked with την πορνειαν. In the text the word is used in the accusative feminine plural which means *all kinds of fornications* more precisely *all immoral sexual activities* but the variation is presented in the accusative feminine singular means *fornication* or *immorality*. This variation is attested by the following texts; ‘F’ refers to an uncial from ninth century from the Western family which belongs to category II. ‘G’ refers to another uncial from the ninth century from the Western family which belongs to category V.<sup>79</sup> ‘latt’ represents the entire Latin tradition in support of the same Greek reading. ‘sy’ represents the entire Syriac tradition supports the variant cited. ‘|’ this solid vertical line marks the limit of notes related to a single verse within the apparatus in the outer margin. ρ ... \ the words enclosed between these signs are omitted that is, καὶ ἑκάστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἐχέτω (and each woman her own husband) in the following texts. ‘F’ refers to an uncial from ninth century from the Western family which belongs to category II and ‘G’ refers to another uncial from the ninth century from the Western family which belongs to category V.

### 1.3. PHILOLOGICAL STUDY OF IMPORTANT WORDS

In this section we will examine closely four important words used in vv. 1-2. These four words are of frequent usage and form the basis for the whole argumentation in the chapter.

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. P. D. WEGNER, *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods & Results*, 252.

### 1.3.1. ἄνθρωπος

The word literally means *a human being male or female* without reference to either sex.<sup>80</sup> In our unit of study we find it is used in the Dative case with masculine singular which clear reference to man, particularly male. This form is used 113 times in the Bible of which only 26 times in the NT. We could trace 5 times it used in Pauline corpus; Rom 14, 20; 1 Cor 7, 1. 26; 2 Cor 12, 4; Gal 5, 3 among them only in Rom 14, 20 we find the presence of definite article (τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ). The usage of ἄνθρωπος seems to be peculiar here by Paul. He has also used the word in general sense in 1 Cor 3, 3; Gal 1, 11; Rom 3, 5; Gal 3, 15; 1 Cor 9, 8; 1 Cor 4, 6 and 1 Cor 15, 32.

It should be noted that Paul did not use the word ἀνὴρ which clearly means *man*, normally an adult male which has also specialized senses as: *husband* (Mk 10, 2.12) *bridegroom* (Rv 21, 2).<sup>81</sup> We could trace 611 occurrence of this word in the LXX. But the former usage seems to be special in our unit which has a second same appearance in 7, 26 in the same unit. Reading Wolff in this regard he suggests that ἄνθρωπος is used in place of ἀνὴρ to include the unmarried as well as the married.<sup>82</sup> This is stated by a shift of usage from ἄνθρωπος to ἀνὴρ which indicates that he starts to talk on marriage specifically. Thus Paul starts with a general statement that encompasses all humanity then suddenly pass to his topic specifically.

### 1.3.2. γυνή

Literally this word means *woman* which can have two meanings; at first *an adult female* and secondly as a *wife*. In v. 1, it is used in the Genitive case feminine singular. We could trace it in 23 times in NT. In 1 Pt 3, 7 the adjective form γυναικός is used as noun having the meaning

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. W. E. VINE, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meanings for English Readers, Lo-Ser*, Vol. 3, Oliphants Ltd, London 1948, 32.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. W. E. VINE, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meanings for English Readers*, 240.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. C. WOLFF, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther: Zweiter Teil: Auslegung der Kapitel 8-16*, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin 1982, 134.

womanly. The same root form of the word is used to refer to a woman of unmarried or married (Mt 11, 11; 14, 21), of a widow (Lk 4, 26) and in the Vocative case to address a woman (Rom 7, 2).<sup>83</sup>

### 1.3.3. ἄπτω

The verb is used in its infinitive in the present middle form that is, ἄπτεσθαι. ἄπτω has two meanings; one is to *light or kindle* (Lk 8,16; Acts 28, 2) and when used in the middle voice it means *touch, take hold of, or hold* (2 Cor 6, 17; Col 2, 21). This same verb is used in infinitive case only again can see in Lk 6, 19 (and the people all tried to touch him). But the verb has been used in 16 forms in 40 times in the NT.

Though the verb ἄπτω in the middle voice which literally means ‘*to touch, take a hold of*’ in this context it means ‘*to have sexual relations with*’. Since Paul has been arguing illicit sexual relations in chapter 5 onwards he obviously is referring here to legitimate marriage relations. This expression is an euphemism for such relations (Cf. Gen 20, 6; Prov 6, 29).<sup>84</sup> The idiom “*to touch a woman*” occurs nine times in Greek Antiquity, ranging across six centuries and a variety of writers, and without ambiguity it refers to having sexual intercourse.<sup>85</sup> Scripture does not use a verb which means clearly “*to have sexual intercourse*” but employs euphemistic language instead. This saying, as the Corinthians used, casts all sexual relations in a negative light, even sexual relations within marriage.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. W. E. VINE, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meanings for English Readers*, 227.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. F. E. GAEBELEIN (ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version of the Holy Bible*, Vol.10, The Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids/ Michigan, 1976, 231. See also J. C. HURD, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, Seabury Press, New York 1965, 158-163; C. K. BARRETT, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black, London, <sup>2</sup>1971, 158.

<sup>85</sup> See PLATO, *Leges* 8.840a; ARISTOTLE, *Politica*. 7.14.12; Gen 20, 6 (LXX); Ruth 2, 9 (LXX); Prov 6, 29 (LXX); PLUTARCH, *Alexander* 21.4; JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities* 1.163; MARCUS AURELIUS, *Antiquities* 1.17.6. These are given in English translation in G. D. FEE, “1 Corinthians” 308.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. J. C. HURD, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 165.

### 1.3.4. πορνεία

*πορνείας* is the Accusative form of the noun *πορνεία* in feminine plural form. In literal sense it means; *unchastity, prostitution, fornication, of various kinds of unlawful sexual intercourse* (Cf. Mt 5, 32; 19, 9; Mk 7, 21; Jn 8, 41; Acts 15, 20; 1 Cor 6, 13. 18; 2 Cor 12, 21; Gal 5, 19; Col 3, 5) and in the figurative sense it means *of idolatry immorality* (Rv 2, 21; 14, 8; 17, 2. 4; 19, 2). According to Robertson, *διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας* is an unusual plural indicating the variety and extent of profligacy.<sup>87</sup> The occurrence of the plural form in Mt 15, 19 and Mk 7, 21 can be compared with the notoriously frequent cases at Corinth.<sup>88</sup>

Lietzmann<sup>89</sup> states that Paul regarded marriage as a necessary evil due to the weakness of the flesh. Leenhardt<sup>90</sup> wrote it as “lawful concubinage”, Phipps<sup>91</sup> “a venereal safety valve”, and D. Martin<sup>92</sup> a “prophylaxis against *porneia*” and “against satanic testing” for those who are “weak.” Bornkamm<sup>93</sup> disapproves the lack of “any positive appreciation of the love between the sexes or of the richness of human experience in marriage and family”; and Conzelmann<sup>94</sup> asserts “this definition of the aim of marriage is unfashionable, but realistic.” Cartlidge<sup>95</sup> claims that it is “hardly a smashing blow in favor of marital bliss.” These comments seem to be an unfair caricature of Paul’s view of marriage. Here, Paul is not arguing why marriage is advisable but why it is inadvisable for married partners to withdraw from conjugal relations.

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<sup>87</sup> Cf. W. R. NICOLL, (ed.), *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, 822.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. A. T. ROBERTSON - A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 132-133.

<sup>89</sup> H. LIETZMANN, “Die Briefe des Apostels Paulus: An die Korinther I, II” in W. G. KÜMMEL (ed.), *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament* 9, Mohr, Tübingen<sup>5</sup>1949, 29.

<sup>90</sup> F. LEENHARDT, *Le Mariage Chrétien*, Delachaux & Niestlé, Neuchâtel 1946, 22.

<sup>91</sup> W. E. PHIPPS, “Is Paul’s Attitude toward Sexual Relations Contained in 1 Cor 7, 1?” in *NTS* 28/1982, 129.

<sup>92</sup> D. B. MARTIN, *The Corinthian Body*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1995, 209.

<sup>93</sup> G. BORNKAMM, *Paul: Paulus*, D. M. G. STALKER (trans.), Hodder & Stoughton, London 1975, 208.

<sup>94</sup> H. CONZELMANN, “1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians”, 116.

<sup>95</sup> D. CARTLIDGE, “1 Corinthians 7 as a Foundation for the Christian Sex Ethic” in *JR* 55/1975, 224.

## 1.4. THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENTS

The *propositio*, ‘celibacy and marriage’ is supported by the following arguments in the chapter. We could gather two different opinions regarding v.1 from many scholars; as a quotation from Corinthian Church and a Pauline statement. Here it is noteworthy that the Greek text has no copula to prove it as a quotation and also the earliest manuscripts had no punctuation.<sup>96</sup> The pattern of citing a catchphrase and then suddenly rebutting it appears in 6, 12-13; 8, 1- 4; and 10, 23. Pauline strategy in this chapter, as in chapter 8, seems to be to start his argument by quoting a Corinthian position ‘as if he agrees with it’ and then to add ‘strong qualifications to its use’.<sup>97</sup> In v. 2 we get a negative aim for marriage that is the avoidance of *πορνεία*. This passage is always criticized as a very low view on marriage. But we must remember that Paul was not creating a thesis on marriage but answering a social problem from the background of old Corinth. He had a much higher view of marriage (Cf. Eph 5, 22-23). In the Corinthian letter, Paul stresses the reality of the sexual temptations of singleness and to acknowledge that they have a legitimate way in marriage.<sup>98</sup> Yarbrough<sup>99</sup> records;

Paul argues not only that those who are unmarried (whether single, widowed, or divorced) should remain unmarried, but also that those who are married should remain married.

Paul literally says, ‘because of fornications’. This plural illustrates the frequent occurrences of relations with prostitutes. Paul here goes straight to the heart of the problem that existed in the Corinthian community<sup>100</sup> that in v. 2, Paul states that each man should have his own wife

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. W. F. ORR- J. A. WALTHER, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation, Introduction, with a Study of the Life of Paul, Notes and Commentary*, Yale University Press, New Haven/ London 2008, 205.

<sup>97</sup> O. L. YARBROUGH, *Not Like the Gentiles: Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul*, Scholars Press, Missoula, MT: 1985, 93.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 155.

<sup>99</sup> O. L. YARBROUGH, *Not Like the Gentiles: Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul*, 94.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 208.

sexually and each wife should have her own husband likewise. This verse creates the platform for the further arguments in the Pauline discourse.<sup>101</sup>

In 7, 2 Paul gives his basic command as his first reaction to the maxim in 7, 1b. It reveals that Paul is not a misogynist and that he has also a realistic appraisal of human beings as sexual creatures. Thus these two verses should be seen as the *propositio* (proposition) of the rhetorical unit. This *propositio* is illustrated by posing different arguments. Pauline thesis will be developed in the form of *reversio*.<sup>102</sup> Following structure is stated to distinguish the style of Pauline argumentation in chapter 7.

<i>Propositio</i>	1-2	Celibacy and Marriage
<b>Part 1</b>	<b>3-24</b>	<b>Marriage as a natural way for everybody</b>
Argument I	3-5	Marriage as a communion of bodies
Argument II	6-9	Marriage as a natural way to satisfy carnal desires
Argument III	10-11	Marriage as a life-long union
Argument IV	12-16	Durability of mixed marriages
<i>Transitio</i>	17-24	Christian vocation
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>25-40</b>	<b>Superiority of Celibacy</b>
<i>Sub-propositio</i>	25-26	Because of the present distress it is better to remain as Celibate
Argument I	27-28	Celibacy spares worldly distress
Argument II	29-31	Celibacy is better for the brevity of time
Argument III	32-34	Celibacy as a better way to serve the Lord
Argument IV	35-38	Practical instructions for finances
Argument V	39	Practical instructions for widows
<i>Epilogue</i>	40	Endowed with the Spirit of God

<sup>101</sup> Cf. J. C. HURD, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 162.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. J. A. FISCHER, "1 Cor 7, 8-24: Marriage and Divorce" in *Biblical Research* 23/1978, 26-36. Also see J. D. HARVEY, *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI: 1998, 50-58.

This structure with repetitive- progressive texture<sup>103</sup> gives us a few thoughts;

- The main topic of the chapter is the character and nature of the two complementary paths of Christian vocation that is celibacy and marriage.
- Paul gives adequate respect to marriage but makes a preference for celibacy.
- Divine call is presented as the basis of each path.

## CONCLUSION

Thus in the first chapter we have got sufficient space to trace the inner literary and philological significance of our passage. This epistle, studying in contrast to the historical situations of the Pauline Corinth expresses the struggles of a newly formed Church which wants to be united fully to Christ. The pastoral mind of the author can be traced clearly. Reading between the lines helped us to situate the argumentative criteria of the letter. At the end of the preliminary analysis of the chapter we came to realize that the chapter 7 is one of the major arguments of the whole letter. Paul uses classical deliberative rhetorical method here as suggested by Margaret M. Mitchell, with few adaptations to present his view on the problems aroused in the Church. Paul starts his instruction rooted on the topic celibacy and marriage which he considers as the two pillars of argumentation.

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<sup>103</sup> Cf. V. K. ROBBINS, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation*, Trinity Press, Valley Forge, PA: 1996, 8-9.

## CHAPTER 2

### EXEGESIS OF THE PASSAGE

#### INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter we have spent apt time to discuss on the historical situations which backed the letter to Corinthians. By using the rhetorical analysis which is employed by Paul in the letter we came to the delimitation of the passage which serves our *pericope*. Now, in this chapter we will spend proper time on exegetical study on the basis of nine arguments presented by Paul to present his views on marriage and celibacy. The usage of *digressio* by Paul is a highlight in this section which is used to make clarity on the topic of our study. We will follow the structure that we have already presented at the end of the previous chapter.

#### 2.1. *PROPOSITIO*: CELIBACY AND MARRIAGE

As we have already stated in the first chapter the *propositio* of Pauline rhetorical argumentation consists of two topics: celibacy and marriage. In v. 1 the question whether it is a quotation from Corinth or Pauline statement never matters because the topic is very clear, that is celibacy. The initial statement clearly makes an opinion that celibacy is the best way for Christian life. This viewpoint is added with immediate second statement on marriage as the way to avoid fornication. But the matter is not so that will be clear by a closer study on the arguments proposed by Paul in the discourse.

In these two verses Paul is stating his topic of persuasion. He starts with the Corinthian extremist view and posts its contrast to begin his arguments. The usage of *καλός* can be translated as ‘well’, ‘advantageous’, ‘better’ etc. that means the life of celibacy is stated as advantageous than the married life.

Marion says: “Pauline thinking is very clear in v. 2 where he uses imperative so that it becomes a declaration that ‘each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband’”.<sup>104</sup> Paul is promoting mutuality in marriage, one of the points which will be elaborated in the arguments for marriage.

The usage of *πορνεία* is to be studied with Corinthian background which we have already presented in detail in the philological study in the previous chapter. Paul is a real practical minded apostle who knows that human beings are not angels but have sexual desires, which seek a partner. Thus he considers marriage as the natural way for everyone but celibacy is a different gift which needs special call from God. The following four arguments for marriage and five arguments for celibacy will clarify Pauline view where he post celibacy as the more preferred way of life but also marriage is not a low level mode of life.

## **2.2. MARRIAGE AS A NATURAL WAY FOR EVERYBODY (vv. 3-24)**

Having laid foundation for the persuasion Paul takes the second topic at first in his rhetorical method which is presented by the technique of *reversio*. He wants to state the uniqueness of Christian marriage with four arguments such as; marriage as the communion of bodies, the natural way to satisfy carnal desires, as a life-long union and by pointing on the durability of mixed marriages. The four argumentations can be placed with the following pattern;

- A : Statement (communion of bodies)
- B : Concession (as a way to satisfy carnal desires)
- A<sup>1</sup> : Statement (life-long union)
- B<sup>1</sup> : Concession (possibility of divorce)

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<sup>104</sup> Cf. S. L. MARION, *New International Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody MA: 1999, 138.

### 2.2.1. ARGUMENT I: MARRIAGE AS A COMMUNION OF BODIES (vv. 3-5)

Paul after having stated the topic of discussion he directly passes on to marriage. He starts his persuasion by instructing the husband and wife who are united in marriage.<sup>105</sup> Paul believes that the value of marriage is high because it allows the divinely approved expression of sexual desire which is the core of creation. The relationship in marriage between husband and wife is raised from simple self-gratification to the moral sensitivity with the expression of ‘due’.<sup>106</sup>

In the Mediterranean culture at the time of Paul, there existed the ascetic practices propagated by the Cynic-Stoic schools of philosophy. Virginité and sexual purity were always associated with religion. For example as suggested by Hays; the priestly services during Delphi oracles suggested purity in body from sexual acts. This social context highly influenced the primitive Christian community in Corinth.<sup>107</sup> According to Margaret Y. MacDonald, women among the Christians were its most fervent proponents. She says;

When married women became attracted to the new teaching, they may sought to dissolve unions with their husbands on the basis of the fact that sex desecrated their holiness. Abstinence from sex within marriage would not be enough if the husband did not share his wife’s passion for celibacy and found the temptation of living with her too great. He may have been tempted to seek sexual fulfillment elsewhere, falling captive to the sexual immorality that Paul feared.<sup>108</sup>

This background helps to understand Pauline arguments for marriage. Firstly Paul the orator states that marriage as the communion of bodies. He clarifies it by posing three radical views on marriage as expounded below.

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<sup>105</sup> Cf. S. L. MARION, *New International Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 138.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. A. J. CLIFTON (ed.) *The Broadman Bible Commentary: Acts-1 Corinthians*, Vol. 10, Broadman Press, Nashville/Tennessee 1970, 328.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. R. B. HAYS, *1 Corinzi*, Claudiana, Torino 2013, 142.

<sup>108</sup> M. Y. MACDONALD, “Virgins, Widows and Wives: The Women of 1 Corinthians” in *A Feminist Companion to Paul*, AMY-JILL LEVINE (ed.) T & T Clark International, London 2004, 149.

### 2.2.1.1. Equality and Reciprocity

In v. 3 by coining ‘conjugal rights’ Paul stressed the equality and reciprocity of the husband and the wife.<sup>109</sup> Married people are asked to live as each of them has the same obligations and rights.<sup>110</sup> According to David Prior, “the usage of definite article is noteworthy for it refers to monogamy in contrast to the existed polygamy in the Corinthian society”.<sup>111</sup>

### 2.2.1.2. Mutual Authority

Second radical exposition of marital life comes with the restating the mutual authority which lies with the foundation of marriage (Gen 2, 24). Paul attributes the authority over each spouse’s body to the other marital partner that is mutual and novel. The verb used is ἐξουσιάζω means ‘to exercise authority over’ but NIV gives a better translation that is ‘belong to’ which gives more clarity to the Pauline expression. It points that Paul is not interested with ownership or property rights but with relationship and relatedness.<sup>112</sup> The exact words used in reference to man and women also expresses the mutuality of this authority without any limits or supremacy from any side.

### 2.2.1.3. Allowance of Abstinence in Marriage

According to Fabris, v. 5 starts with a new imperative by the verb ἀποστερέω which means ‘steal’, ‘rob’, ‘defraud’ or ‘deprive’.<sup>113</sup> This verb has a negative implication of cheating or defrauding another.<sup>114</sup> It means that sexual union is highly esteemed in the marriage and its

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<sup>109</sup> Cf. F. W. JOHN - B. Z. ROY, (eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty New Testament Edition*, SP Publications, Wheaton 1983, 517.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. F. W. GROSHEIDE, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd. London 1954, 156.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. P. DAVID, *The Message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the Local Church*, Inter Varsity Press, Leicester 1985, 115.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. S. L. MARION, *New International Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 139.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. R. FABRIS, *Prima Lettera ai Corinzi*, Paoline, Milano 1999, 97.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. S. L. MARION, *New International Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 142.

deprivation is equivalent to stealing the authority of another. Paul wants to state that refraining from sexual union in a marriage is not a necessary track to spirituality although he does allow for limited abstinence for a short period of time. Paul allows abstinence in marriage with two conditions; mutual consent and for a little period.<sup>115</sup> This short time is clearly stated again as the time for special prayer. According to many manuscripts and translations the presence of definite article points to private devotions.<sup>116</sup> Critical apparatus here states that some manuscripts read it as *the fasting and the prayer*.<sup>117</sup>

The usage of verb *σχολεύω* means ‘have time or leisure and devote oneself to’ or ‘give one’s time to’ is a *hapax* in Pauline writings. But its equivalent noun frequently appears in Cynic-Stoic discussion on marriage where it figures in the debate about the legitimacy of marriage when ‘free time’ is needed for the quest of philosophy.<sup>118</sup>

The first argument of Paul is clear and healthy by moral thinking with practical commonsense.<sup>119</sup> He tactically negates the Corinthian extremism by positioning the sexual relation at the rightful place in marriage. Thus Paul stress clearly on the indispensability of sexual intercourse for the success of a Christian marriage. It is also noteworthy that he gives no mention on procreation as the end of sexual union but as the ‘due’ of couples.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Cf. F. W. JOHN - B. Z. ROY, (eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty New Testament Edition*, 517.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. A. T. ROBERTSON, *Word Pictures in the New Testament: The Epistles of Paul*, Vol. 4, Broadman Press, Nashville/Tennessee 1931, 125.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. ⲚⲔⲐ 365. 1241. 1505 Ⲱⲥⲩ and also see translations like VUL, BYZ, KJV.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. R. F. COLLINS, “First Corinthians” in *Sacra Pagina*, Vol. 7, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville/ Minnesota 1999, 257.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. W. G. H. SIMON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: Creed and Conduct*, SCM Press Ltd., London 1959, 89.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. P. DAVID, *The Message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the Local Church*, 117.

## 2.2.2. ARGUMENT II: THE NATURAL WAY TO SATISFY CARNAL DESIRES

### (vv. 6-9)

The second argument is stated to establish marriage as the natural way for everybody which clings to the themes of ‘gifts’, ‘concession’ and ‘carnal desires’ that are explained in verses 6-9. The question of delimiting 6-9 as an argument makes a better sense of the context. Here Paul goes back to the view of Corinthian community on the preference of celibacy for the unmarried (v.1b) but he disagrees on celibacy is the way for all. Celibacy is presented as a gift from God. Marriage is the best choice for those who do not have the gift of celibacy.<sup>121</sup>

The meaning of demonstrative pronoun *τοῦτο* has problem. Many scholars disputed it refers backward. Robertson and Plummer shares the view that this points to vv. 2-5. Witherington, Wolff and few others hold the view that it refers to v. 5 only.<sup>122</sup> According to Fee, the exegetical and linguistic difficulties make this to be considered as pointing forwardly.<sup>123</sup> Here we opt to the latter position which is consistent with the ‘concession’ point on celibacy.

#### 2.2.2.1. The Gift from God

Paul uses the term *χάρισμα* (gift) and exhibits that he does not limit God’s gifts to liturgical expressions and spiritualistic experiences. Since he states *ἕκαστος ἴδιον ἔχει χάρισμα ἐκ θεοῦ* (each one has his own gift from God), it should mean to one’s own calling from God to either marriage or to a life of celibacy. Since self-control is a *charisma*, it is not to be practiced as a

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<sup>121</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, “1 Corinthians” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI: 2003, 267.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. A. C. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI: 2000, 510.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 283.

virtue. It is not a standard that has to be achieved by all but it is an individual gift which cannot be acquired by imitation. That is why it is possible both to make the concession *γαμησάτωσαν* (let them marry) and to pass the considered judgment, *καλόν* (it is well) or *κρείττον* (it is better).<sup>124</sup> Now arises the confusing Pauline position of Paul by stating his wish that ‘I wish that all were as I myself am’ (v. 7).

Was Paul a celibate or a widower? This is the question that has been much debated. Three possibilities can be stated; Jewish leaders hold the position that Paul was married since he was an orthodox Jew, due to the Jewish obligation to marry<sup>125</sup> but exceptions also can be stated clearly.<sup>126</sup> Second possibility is stated that Paul certainly had no spouse during the period of his Christian activity. He is not married when he is writing. The third possibility is that Paul could have been divorced before his conversion.<sup>127</sup> The second possibility is more appropriate with the words of Paul in this context.

Marriage, accepting the creation theology, has been ordained by God for the procreation of mankind and for the personal fulfillment of the marriage partners. When God removes one person’s need for marriage, he will bestow such a person with the gift of continence. Paul has received this gift from the Lord and thus he could rejoice in his condition. Paul thus upholds marriage and encourages people to enter matrimony also teaches that marriage fulfills human needs that God has created. Yet he asks people who have the ability to exercise restraint to remain single as he is.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Cf. H. CONZELMANN, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 118.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. W. F. ORR - J. A. WALTHER, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation, Introduction, with a Study of the Life of Paul, Notes and Commentary*, 206.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. H. MACARTHUR, “Celibacy in Judaism at the Time of Christian Beginnings” in *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Summer 25/1987, 163-181.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. W. F. ORR - J. A. WALTHER, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation, Introduction, with a Study of the Life of Paul, Notes and Commentary*, 206.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 210.

### 2.2.2.2. Burning Desires

Quoting v. 9b (for it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion), K. C. Russell uses as a title for a short research article on it: ‘the embarrassing verse in first Corinthians.’<sup>129</sup> Russell recreates the situation in which a group at Corinth exerts pressure for celibacy in all situations. Paul wants them to consider the realistic implications of this for the probability of irregular relationships and concludes with a shock tactic as a punch line: it is better to marry than to burn in hell!

By *πυροῦσθαι* (to burn), Paul mentions to being aflame with passion. The unanswered state of *eros* is most characteristically described as fire that can be quenched only by its fulfillment. The word ‘burning’ is one of a range of metaphors (wounding, captivity, drowning) used in the novels to describe the irresistible force of passion. Since it was a familiar metaphor in the days, Paul did not need to add that they burn with sexual passion.<sup>130</sup> Fee gives a better exposition by saying “Paul intended that those who are committing sexual sins should rather marry than be consumed by the passions of their sins.”<sup>131</sup>

Paul is a realist who knows it is beyond the ability of most men and women to remain single and to remain chaste at the same time. Thus he proposes that most should get married to avoid sexual immorality. This is not the only reason for marriage but it is a true one.<sup>132</sup> Paul exhibits his profound insight into human nature. He wholly understands the sexual characteristics that God has created in the male and the female. Therefore Paul counsels his readers to accept God’s

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<sup>129</sup> Cf. K. C. RUSSELL, “That Embarrassing Verse in First Corinthians,” in *BT* 18/1980, 338-41.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, “1 Corinthians” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 265.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 283.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. C. TOPPE, “1 Corinthians” in *The People’s Bible*, 64.

provision of marriage. When sexual needs are met in marriage as God recommends, a person usually lives a balanced life in full of joy and happiness and is free from guilt or remorse over sexual sins. As a conclusion Paul endorses matrimony and instructs people who lack self-restraint to enjoy the sexual satisfaction that married life affords.<sup>133</sup> Thus he explains marriage as the natural way that prescribed by God for everyone.

### **2.2.3. ARGUMENT III: MARRIAGE AS A LIFE-LONG UNION (vv. 10-11)**

In this third argument Paul addresses those who are married and instructs them that the Lord forbids them to divorce. The addressees in this section are identified by the use of the dative plural perfect active participle *γεγαμηκόσιν* to those who are married. The verses 10-11 must be taken together or else we lose the mutuality of Paul's categories 'a wife ... a husband'. Again, the middle clause is placed as a parenthesis.<sup>134</sup>

Paul's rhetorical tone dramatically changes in this section. He does not 'say' (7, 6, 8), 'wish' (7, 7) or 'offer' a concession but issues a harsh command: 'I order (*παραγγέλλω*) the married.' Paul declares here that it is not he but the Lord who is doing the commanding.<sup>135</sup> The maxim by which Paul opens his discussion in this chapter is 'it is good for a man not to touch a woman' has stimulated the marital tension. His fervent refutation of divorce that some at Corinth were arguing in favor of it. According to this view Fee states that the divorces resulted from their misguided determination to reach a higher spiritual plateau via celibacy.<sup>136</sup> Paul reverses the order of male and female found in his other rulings in the chapter (vv. 2-3, 4, 12-13, 14-15, 27-28, 32-34) and addresses the wives firstly and the husbands almost as an afterthought in 7, 11b

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<sup>133</sup> Cf. S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 214.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. A. C. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 518.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, "1 Corinthians" in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 279.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, "First Epistle to the Corinthians" in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 296.

that hints, that wives were the ones behind the problem. Collins says that Paul might have become aware of a circumstance in which a woman in the church initiated a divorce against her husband or was about to do so.<sup>137</sup>

The use of *κύριος* in the context of obedience and worship has been discussed much. Collins here refers this ‘charge’ to the risen Lord rather than to a saying of Jesus.<sup>138</sup> Davies says; “it was the words of Jesus himself that formed Paul’s primary source in his work as ethical *didaskalos*”.<sup>139</sup> The importance of the words of Jesus for Paul is also commented by many authors.<sup>140</sup> Quoting Hodge who says;

Christ had already taught that the marriage bond could not be dissolved at the option of the parties. The wife has no right to leave her husband, nor has the husband the right to repudiate his wife. The marriage bond cannot be dissolved by any human authority, because it is, in virtue of the law of God, a covenant for life between one man and one woman.<sup>141</sup>

Paul’s careful distinction between his own command and that of the Lord is also noteworthy as commented by Fee.<sup>142</sup> He did not announce his own commands to be the Lord’s words. Paul cites the authority of the Lord in the argument because it disagrees with the teaching found in the OT makes sense.

The verb in the phrase *μὴ χωρισθῆναι* (not to be separated) is passive but has a middle sense. In the context of Greco-Roman culture, the verb means to divorce and is synonymous with the verb *ἀφιέναι* (divorce or leave) in 7, 11b, which Paul uses to command the husband. The verb

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<sup>137</sup> Cf. R. F. COLLINS, “First Corinthians” in *Sacra Pagina*, 269.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. R. F. COLLINS, “First Corinthians” in *Sacra Pagina*, 264-65.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. W. D. DAVIES, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, SPCK, London 1965, 138-39.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. F. F. BRUCE, “Paul and the Historical Jesus” in *BJRL* 56/1974, 317-35. Also see D. WENHAM, “Paul’s Use of the Jesus Tradition: Three Samples,” in D. WENHAM (ed.), *The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels, Gospel Perspectives*, Vol. 5, JSOT Press, Sheffield 1985, 7-37.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. C. HODGE, “1 and 2 Corinthians”, in *The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, 115.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 296.

*χωρίζετω* appears in the word of the Lord documented in Mark 10, 9; ‘what God has yoked together, let man not separate’ which also may have influenced Pauline usage.<sup>143</sup> Collins says; “if there is any distinction to be made between *χωρισθῆναι* and *ἀφιέναι*, it may be attributable to Paul’s Jewish tradition that tends to use active verbs for men and passive verbs for women (cf. 7, 13)”.<sup>144</sup> Hodge states;

The law of Christ is that the wife should not depart; but if in violation of that law or if from necessity she is obliged to depart, she has only two things to choose between - she must remain unmarried, or she must be reconciled to her husband. This is not intended as an exception to the law, but it contemplates a case that may occur in spite of the law. ‘In case a woman has actually left, with or without just cause, and then she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.’ The apostle teaches, however, that in such cases of separation the parties must remain unmarried.<sup>145</sup>

This enlightens the life-long union between husband and wife in married life. In the Jewish tradition at the time of Paul, a wife who has been divorced and has married another is forbidden to marry her former husband (Deut 24, 4; 2 Sam 16, 21-22). If there was to be a possibility of reconciliation, she must remain unmarried. The hypothesis behind this instruction is the same as in the teaching of the Lord: the marriage bonds remain intact regardless of what steps spouses might take to end the marriage.<sup>146</sup>

Paul’s distinction between what he commands as the Lord’s apostle and what the Lord explicitly commanded (cf. 7, 12. 25) points on an awareness of the content of the teaching of the Lord. He wants the Lord’s teaching to be the norm for all Christian ethics, though he exercises the freedom to apply it to new situations. Paul is not trying to overturn all their past actions but is instructing them that Christians may not end their marriage at personal will. In 7, 10-11, he only

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<sup>143</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, “1 Corinthians” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 280.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. R. F. COLLINS, “First Corinthians” in *Sacra Pagina*, 269.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. C. HODGE, “1 and 2 Corinthians”, in *The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, 116.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, “1 Corinthians” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 280.

lays the foundation stone for Pauline argument in what follows: the Lord forbids Christians to divorce. Thus marriage is a life-long union of man and woman.

#### **2.2.4. ARGUMENT IV: DURABILITY OF MIXED MARRIAGES (vv. 12-16)**

‘The rest’ (τοῖς λοιποῖς) in v. 12 Paul points a transition in the argumentation which denotes the Christians married to unbelievers, either Pagans or Jews. The phrase ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος (not I but the Lord) is also significant. In the previous argument marriage is stated as the lifelong union which emphasized with the command of the Lord. But now Paul addresses on the question of what should be the attitude of a person when one of a married couple comes to faith and the other does not, was not a state addressed in the teachings of Jesus. Jesus had not taught directly on the problem, and so Paul says, to the rest say I, not the Lord. It is not a denial of inspiration or an indication that Paul is only giving his own human opinion. This is only to say that God had not given any previous revelation on the subject, but Paul was making a new teaching based on divine will apt for the particular situation.<sup>147</sup> Hurd says that this argumentation rises from the fourth question recognized by him, which is on those married to unbelievers asked for pastoral advice on how to handle their condition.<sup>148</sup> Pauline answer can be stated by his exposition of the question in connection with two situations.

##### **2.2.4.1. No Divorce**

In 7, 12-14, Paul faces those who may be uneasy about their marriage to an unbeliever but ready to stay with the believing partner. In this condition Paul instructs them that the marriage relationship is legitimate and should be continued. Three points are to be explained here to understand the real implications;

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<sup>147</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 164.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. J. C. HURD, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 157-169.

#### **2.2.4.1.1. Equality**

Paul is always attentive in insisting the equality between man and woman in every phase of argumentation. The parallel usage of *εἴ τις ἀδελφὸς γυναῖκα ἔχει ἄπιστον* (if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever) and *γυνὴ εἴ τις ἔχει ἄνδρα ἄπιστον* (if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever) clearly refers to the Pauline view on equality of both gender in marriage. He does not limit the privilege to one party rather always upholds the equality in the marriage. (cf. vv. 3-4)

#### **2.2.4.1.2. Sanctification**

In v. 14 Paul upholds the question of sanctification in marriage in the case of mixed marriages. How is this sanctification effected? Paul is not indicating to any magical process but his idea hinges on the two becoming one flesh (Gen 2, 24). He considers marriage as a divine institution that restates God's will for man and woman.<sup>149</sup> Guthrie says, "Paul is not arguing for sanctification by proxy but making an argument against divorce".<sup>150</sup> Hays explain it in another way saying that mixed marriages have the same status as Christian marriages and should not be abandoned. Continuing the marriage harmonies with God's design for marriage, and it should be sanctified as a sphere in which God's holiness and transforming power operate.<sup>151</sup>

#### **2.2.4.1.3. Holiness of Children**

The third point is on the status of children born of mixed marriages are put forward by Paul. The children in the argument are too young to be held responsible for their own behavior. They are to

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<sup>149</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, "1 Corinthians" in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 280.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. D. GUTHRIE, *New Testament Theology*, Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove 1981, 671.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. R. B. HAYS, "First Corinthians" in *Interpretation; A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, 122.

be assumed as unbaptized.<sup>152</sup> The community never thought of expelling children who were born of mixed marriages. Deming says; “what determines that a husband or wife who is not a believer is made holy is the willingness of the unbeliever to continue the relationship which has had a decisive influence on his or her behavior”.<sup>153</sup> The lifestyle of the Christian partner affects the ethos to some extent the values and lifestyle of the home, whether this be the husband or the wife. The believing spouse’s example, witness, prayer, and living out of the gospel make the spouse (and the children) in this sense holy. Thus ‘holy’ is always a dynamic concept not static. Thus the marriage union leads to communion which is the product of holiness that shared by the partners and thus also their children.

#### **2.2.4.2. Divorce Permitted**

7, 15-16 forms the second situation on the durability of mixed marriages in which Paul addresses those who are in a relationship with an unbelieving partner who wants to separate. Two points are noteworthy;

##### **2.2.4.2.1. Peace**

The pastoral mind of Paul makes him to consider the difficult situation may exist in some families. He uses the word ἐν εἰρήνῃ (in peace) with specific intention. The word defines an objective condition of harmony or reconciliation. Thiselton describes here, “God has called the Christian with continuing effect to a life in which peace holds dominance”.<sup>154</sup> Since marriages in the ancient world usually were arranged and not stimulated by love between two individuals, harmony or peace is considered as the basic principle that upholds marriage. If peace is to be

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<sup>152</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, “1 Corinthians” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 281.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. W. DEMING, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7*, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids MI: 2004, 134.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. A. C. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 513.

understood as something bestowed by God, and if a Christian, prior to conversion, knew peace in his or her marriage to an unbeliever, God's purpose in calling them is not to dive them into marital havoc.<sup>155</sup> But if the unbelieving partner not ready to adjust with the new life situation, there arises disharmony which may endanger the inner unity of marriage. At this juncture Paul allows divorce initiated only by the unbelieving partner.

#### **2.2.4.2.2. Optimistic or Pessimistic Question**

7, 16 is principally noted with its dual possible meaning; optimistic or pessimistic. Pauline open point concerns the limits of human knowledge, which finds precise expression in the Greek construction *τί γὰρ οἶδας, γύναι, εἰ* (wife, how do you know) and *τί γὰρ οἶδας, ἄνερ, εἰ* (husband, how do you know) refers to the latter meaning. When we take Paul with a missionary concern we admit that everything is in the hands of God. With God everything that even seeming negative can still redeemed: the partner may change his or her mind, or the Christian's words and lifestyle hitherto may yet take influence. This view goes along with the optimistic view on the statement in v. 16. According to Moltmann "pessimism" presumes un-Christian despair, and 'optimism' un-Christian presumption. The right attitude, Paul urges, whatever occurs, is to leave it with God in peace".<sup>156</sup>

Christians married to unbelievers according to Paul were not to worry that they themselves, their marriage, or their children would be defiled by the unbelieving spouse. On the other hand, the very opposite was the case. Both the children and the unbelieving spouse in the marriage would be sanctified through the believing wife or husband. The evangelism is not cause which is enough to maintain a marriage, especially if the unbelieving partner wants to leave. MacArthur

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<sup>155</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, "1 Corinthians" in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 282.

<sup>156</sup> J. MOLTMANN, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* SCM, London 1967, 23.

says that the believers should allow God to follow that spouse's soul with the message of salvation, and use whomever He will to take up the call to faith.<sup>157</sup> If the partner wishes to continue in the marriage, a reasonable possibility exists that he or she eventually will be saved. Thus the Pauline conclusion can be stated on the durability of the mixed marriage as that do not abandon the marriage. In his view, there is always a possibility that you will win your marriage partner.<sup>158</sup>

### **2.3. DIGRESSIO: CHRISTIAN VOCATION (vv. 17-24)**

This passage appears to be a *digressio* that means it does not go away from the main topic but magnifies or illustrates the main topic. This *digressio* supports Pauline instructions in 7, 2-16 to the married and prepares for instructions in 7, 25-40 to the unmarried.<sup>159</sup> Bartchy states that *digressio* identifies as the central part of an ABA<sup>1</sup> pattern or a ring composition.<sup>160</sup> According to Garland, it is like the *digressio* on love in chapter 13, sandwiched between the discussion of the use of spiritual gifts in chapters 12 and 14, it lays out the theological foundation upon which he bases his counsel.<sup>161</sup>

Paul cleverly uses two examples in this *digressio*, first example which is religio-historical and the second one, which is socio-ethical. The first example is espoused from the Jewish background which has a deep reference to Corinthian community which includes of both Jewish and pagan converts. In the words of Deissmann, “the second example of Paul can be explained in

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<sup>157</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 166.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, “1 Corinthians” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 283.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. R. F. COLLINS, “First Corinthians” in *Sacra Pagina*, 274.

<sup>160</sup> Here ABA<sup>1</sup> pattern refers to the whole structure of the chapter 7 where A is the issues of marriage and celibacy. B is the analogy supplied to support the whole argumentation and A<sup>1</sup> takes again the issues of marriage and celibacy. See more for S. S. BARTCHY, “*Μᾶλλον Χρῆσαι*: First Century Slavery and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7” in *Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 11*, Society of Biblical Literature, Missoula 1973, 161-162.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, “1 Corinthians” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 296.

the light of the sacral emancipation of slaves as practiced in Delphi that the slave is liberated by being feignedly sold to Apollo”.<sup>162</sup>

The verb *καλεῖν* (to call) is the key term in this unit which occurs eight times. The same verb appears only four other times in the letter (1, 9; 7, 15; 10, 27; 15, 9), as the noun once (1, 26), and as the adjective *κλητός* in three times (1, 1.2.24). Pauline usage suggests here that he has in mind God’s call to salvation.

The philological evidence for the meaning of *καλεῖν* (to call) and *κλησις* (calling, 7, 20) is crucial in determining what Paul intends. BDAG offers as an alternative meaning for *κλησις* ‘station in life,’ ‘position’ ‘vocation’.<sup>163</sup> LSJ is different and does not offer this meaning as an option but suggests ‘religious calling’ for its meaning in 7, 20.<sup>164</sup> Paul could have re-coined the meaning of the word to denote it to one’s station in life. But his normal usage refers to God’s summoning of persons to salvation (Rom 11, 29; Eph 1, 18; 4, 1.4; Phil 3, 14; 2 Thess 1, 11; 2 Tim 1, 9). It surpasses and alters all external circumstances, and the perfect tense, *κέκληκεν* hints at the continuing effects of that call. As a result, Paul insists that they are not to make unnecessary changes in their life situations that their conversion and response to God’s call do not require.

Paul insists three times in this paragraph (7, 17. 20. 24) that the audience must remain in the situation in which they are called ‘live accordingly’ (*οὕτως περιπατεῖτω* 7, 17), ‘in this remain’ (*ἐν ταύτῃ μενέτω* 7, 20), ‘in this remain before God’ (*ἐν τούτῳ μενέτω παρὰ θεῶν* 7, 24). This restatement of principle offers the theological underpinning guiding his counsel on the practical matters of marriage and celibacy.

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<sup>162</sup> Cf. A. DEISSMANN, *Light From the Ancient East*, L. R. M. STRACHAN (trans.), Hodder & Stoughton, New York/London, <sup>2</sup>1911, 322-330.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. W. BAUER (et. al), *BDAG: A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago <sup>3</sup>2000, 549.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. H. G. LIDDELL (et. al), *LSJ: A Greek-English Lexicon*, Clarendon, Oxford <sup>9</sup>1968, 960.

‘Each one’ (*ἐκάστω*) is placed with an emphatic position in the Greek. It underscores that each is an individual and that God’s call reaches the lives of those who come from different situations, backgrounds, that niches in society. It sharpens Paul’s point that, since the divine call came to each individual without regard to his or her social environment, God does not esteem one particular state to be more valuable or more beneficial than another.

Thus by informing them Paul has ordered the same thing in all the churches which does three things;

- First, it reminds them of his authoritative instruction as an apostle.
- Second, it makes clear that he is not giving them ad hoc advice.
- Third, by appealing to the practices of other churches, Paul notifies them that deviating from this principle makes them strange.

Here, Paul is not concerned about slavery or circumcision but chooses these topics to undergird the force of his practical instructions about marriage and celibacy with theological reasoning. Tomson<sup>165</sup> labels this *digressio* as ‘the theological intermezzo’ in a chapter filled with advice and instruction. Pauline use of *digressio* in his rhetorical method has the following structure:

Statement: As the Lord has assigned and God has called, live your life (7,17)

Example: Circumcision and uncircumcision (7, 18)

Rationale: Circumcision and uncircumcision are nothing (7, 19)

Restatement: Remain in the calling in which you were called (7, 20)

Example: Slavery (7, 21ab)

Exception: If you can gain your freedom, make use of it (7, 21cd)

Rationale: The slave is the Lord’s freedman, and the free person is the Lord’s slave (7, 22-23)

Restatement: Remain before God in the calling in which you were called (7, 24)

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<sup>165</sup> Cf. P. J. TOMSON, “Paul and the Jewish Law: *Halakha* in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles” in *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum* 3/1, Fortress Press, Van Gorcum /Minneapolis 1990, 104.

Paul uses circumcision as the first example to reinforce the principle that he has just laid down that is they have to remain in the condition in which they were called. According to him Jews who responded to God's call remained Jews, and Gentiles who converted to the Christian faith remained Gentiles. They need not become Jewish proselytes by submitting to circumcision by way of changing life situation. Paul shifts from ethnic status to social status in his second allegory on slavery. Again, this example would strike a chord with his readers. Historicity states that one third of Corinth's populations were slaves and another third were freedmen. If they were slaves when God's call reached them, Paul does not say them, 'do not seek freedom' but 'do not let it bother you'. Slaves were not considered as legally persons and consequently they had no legal or human rights that were classified as things and counted as living pieces of property. Paul did not confront obviously the problem raised by slavery. He might have at least three ways to deal with it;

- Firstly, he insisted that the slave *not let it bother* him.
- Secondly, the slave could *make use* of his status, undoubtedly for Christian witness.
- Thirdly, Paul worked within the fellowship of the churches to eliminate the relationships which were incompatible with Christian brotherhood.<sup>166</sup>

Being a slave is not an obstacle to be a Christian, but if the opportunity for freedom comes forward, a slave should grab it. This example reveals that Paul recognizes that life is always complex. There are advantages to being free, just as Paul accepts there are advantages to being celibate. But these benefits have nothing whatever to do with one's worth or standing with God in any manner.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Cf. W. F. ORR - J. A. WALTHER, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation, Introduction, with a Study of the Life of Paul, Notes and Commentary*, 216.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, "1 Corinthians" in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 295.

Therefore, the Christian partner must do nothing to bring about dissolution of marriage, any more than the Christian slave must claim emancipation. But if the non-christian party insists on dissolution, or grants emancipation, then the Christian may accept the freedom from such annoying ties.<sup>168</sup>

Both belong to Christ and their social status has no inner spiritual significance. Whether a Christian is circumcised or uncircumcised, slave or free, married or single is inconsequential to divine will. We dare to say that one condition is not bad and the other good, nor is one condition less good and the other better. No condition presents as an obstacle to be a Christian, since a Christian life is now defined by God's call (1, 9) and nothing else.

## **2.4. SUPERIORITY OF CELIBACY (vv. 25-40)**

Paul have successfully defended his view on the specialty of Christian marriage with the above four arguments. Now, using the transition marker *περὶ δέ* he pass on to celibacy, the favored mode of life for Paul. He uses following five arguments to state his preference of celibacy than marriage which are celibacy spares the worldly distress, celibacy is better for the brevity of time, celibacy as a better way to serve the Lord and two from practical advices to fiancés and widows. This unit on celibacy starts with a *sub-propositio* which restates his topic in v.1b.

### **2.4.1. SUB-PROPOSITIO**

In this unit of persuasion, Paul deliberately changes his addresses from married people to virgins after the *digressio*. This is a pure indication on the change of topic from marriage to celibacy. The usage of 'I give my opinion' and 'I think' exposes that the life of celibacy is stated as a special case but not for everyone. It is an opinion not a command as he stated in the case of

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<sup>168</sup> Cf. A. T. ROBERTSON - A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 142.

marriage. In the tongues of Marion, “Paul clearly states that he is offering his own opinion, not a word from the Lord, but he suggests that his opinion is informed and valuable”.<sup>169</sup>

Paul is very particular in stating the basic reason for his opinion that is *ἀνάγκη* which means compulsion, pressure, distress etc. Paul is advising the Corinthian community concerning what seems necessary under the conditions. So he asks the unmarried to remain celibate which may help them to avoid day to day struggles.

#### **2.4.2. ARGUMENT I: CELIBACY SPARES WORLDLY DISTRESS (vv. 27-28)**

As we have noted in the *sub-propositio*, Paul changes to the topic of celibacy by addressing the unmarried (v. 25). He advises them to ‘remain as they are’ echoing the cardinal principal in the *digressio*. v. 27-28 makes a unit by Paul in view of the parties in engagement and outside engagement in which v. 28b ends with special attention by Paul on celibacy that initiates the first argument in favor of celibacy. In this argument, two words are important from the viewpoint of exegetical study; *λύσις* and *θλίψις*.

*λύσις* means ‘the dissolution of the obligation’ or ‘to loose the tie’ other than *divorce* (NIV). NT points this occurrence as the only reference in connection with marriage. In all other places different words are employed to denote divorce.<sup>170</sup> Thus *λύσις* means ‘discharge of bonds’ or ‘discharge of debts’ as pointing on the bond of betrothal rather than of marriage. Here it is clear from the breaking of Pauline pattern of male-female addressing in this passage. Now the subject addressed is explicitly male, with no mirror commands to females. As commented by Garland, this change in pattern is attributable to the cultural ethics, which assume that males take the

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<sup>169</sup> S. L. MARION, *New International Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 160.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. W. F. MOULTON - A. S. GEDEN, “Concordance to the Greek Testament” in *Concordance to the Greek New Testament*, T & T Clark, London<sup>6</sup>2002, 607.

initiative in betrothal arrangements.<sup>171</sup> By using the words ‘good’ and ‘not sin’, Paul wants to establish the legitimacy of marriage which was questioned by the Corinthian community.

The second term used by Paul *θλιψις* is a vague expression, which in some translations occurs in the plural as ‘troubles.’<sup>172</sup> The literal translation of the word as, ‘affliction in the flesh’ instead of a free version, ‘affliction in this life’ strengthens the view that Greece experienced a famine.<sup>173</sup>

The explanation given by MacArthur to the word is quotable;

Trouble (*thlipsis*) literally means ‘pressed together, or under pressure.’ Marriage presses two people together in the closest possible ways. The two become one, but they are still two personalities, two distinct people with their own likes and dislikes, their own characteristics, emotions, temperaments, and wills. Each partner has some degree of anger, selfishness, dishonesty, pride, forgetfulness, and thoughtlessness. That is true even of the best marriages. When one partner is an unbeliever, or is immature, self-centered, temperamental, or domineering, every conflict is magnified. Marriage involves conflicts, demands, hardships, sacrifices, and adjustments that singleness does not. Marriage is ordained of God, good, holy, and fulfilling; but it does not solve all problems.<sup>174</sup>

In the words of Schweitzer, “for Paul, marriage is not the best option, because it brings ‘affliction in the flesh.’ ‘Flesh’ has a neutral meaning in this context and does not connote something hostile to God but something that is limited and provisional”.<sup>175</sup>

Persecution is another different meaning that can be traced from *θλιψις* when translated as the present distress in reference to v. 26. Uncounted Christians had been arrested, beaten, imprisoned, and even killed because of the gospel. Persecution is too difficult enough for a single person, but the problems and pain are multiplied for one who is married. David Prior also

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<sup>171</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, “1 Corinthians” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 324.

<sup>172</sup> RSV, SEB, GNB, JB; but REB and NJB have ‘hardships.’

<sup>173</sup> Cf. S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 239.

<sup>174</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 178.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. A. SCHWEITZER, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 7, G. W. BROMILEY (trans.), W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1976, 126.

narrates on the difficult social situations raised by both Jews and Roman authorities as the explanation of present distress.<sup>176</sup>

Pauline reasons for assuming that marriage brings affliction in the flesh are grounded mainly in his end-time orientation. Garland says that the affliction is caused by the ‘present distress.’<sup>177</sup> Paul is not against matrimony, but in the present situation he discourages marriage to spare people on many impending problems. V. 28b is abundantly clear with Paul’s pro-celibacy views. He proposes this argument on the pillar of present distress as we explained above. He clearly explains that ‘to marry’ or ‘not to marry’ is not a moral question to be discussed and stated as sin or virtue. He is a practical pastor as we stated during the arguments on marriage who cares his sheep to be free from all the stresses to serve the Lord without any preoccupation. Marrion states, “Paul is not necessarily an anti-marriage or negative about the value of marital relationship. He considers marriage as the second best choice in the life of Christian life”.<sup>178</sup>

#### **2.4.3. ARGUMENT II: CELIBACY IS BETTER FOR THE BREVITY OF TIME (vv. 29-31)**

Paul presents his second argument on pro-celibacy using the brevity of time by reference to vv. 29 to 31. Between these two verses Paul beautifully places a few poetic lines. He wishes to direct the Church’s attention to the changing pattern of this world in which time is very much compressed. He wants the audience to realize the temporality of this age, the rapidity of events, the brevity of life and to have another mode of conduct which never ends with the limited life in this world.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Cf. P. DAVID, *The Message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the Local Church*, 134.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, “1 Corinthians” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 325.

<sup>178</sup> S. L. MARION, *New International Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, 161.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 242.

The change from Pauline usage of ‘I say’ (λέγω) to ‘I do declare’ (φημί) gives special seriousness to the section.<sup>180</sup> ‘The allotted time has become short,’ here as in Rom. 13, 11 ὁ καιρός is used as a technical term for the period before the Parousia. According to Sanday, Paul still believed that the Second Coming was much near that is evident from 1 Cor 10, 11; 15, 51 but a little later his view seems to be changing.<sup>181</sup>

The shortness of time clearly fits within an eschatological framework. Paul puts marriage as the mode of life in this world that is surely willed by God. Paul also proposes singleness as the proper mode of life in this world in view of the coming of the Lord. This argument seems to be the passage most strongly subject to Stoic influence in all the Pauline epistles. But Pauline advice is not to withdraw from married life into the safe and unrestricted realms of the inner life, but to maintain freedom in the midst of involvement. Pauline eschatology really characterizes the conduct of life, whereas in the Stoa metaphysics is merely an expression of the attitude to the world as commented by Conzelmann.<sup>182</sup>

Pauline concern is not about the duration of time but the character of the time. His talk is not interested about how little time is left but about how Christ’s death and resurrection have changed their life and how Christians should look at the time that is left.<sup>183</sup> Fee says, “those who have a definite future and see it clearly live in the present with radically altered values as to what counts and what does not. It requires them to rethink their existence.”<sup>184</sup> Thus as a concluding note on the Pauline argument on brevity of time can be stated as characterized by the following pattern;

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<sup>180</sup> Cf. A. T. ROBERTSON - A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 153.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. W. SANDAY, *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, Oxford University Press, New York 1908, 113.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. H. CONZELMANN, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 132.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, “1 Corinthians” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 326.

<sup>184</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 339.

- A : The appointed time is short (v. 29 a)  
 B : Five daily experiences of man (vv. 29b-31a)  
 A<sup>1</sup> : The present form of the world is passing away (v. 31b)

#### 2.4.3.1. Everyday Experiences

Paul makes a pure reference to activities which are part of the everyday world of humans. Conzelmann says, “the reference in v. 29 to the approaching end of the world is taken up again by way of conclusion: *παράγει* (is passing away) *σχῆμα* (shape) here means not the form, but the essence, that is, the world itself”.<sup>185</sup> The appearance *present form* refers to the ‘distinctive manifestation’ (or form) of this world.<sup>186</sup> The mode of the world is impermanence; it is stated as passing away.<sup>187</sup>

Paul starts with marriage but does not want to teach that marriage is no longer binding on believers or that their marital responsibilities are reduced. Marriage exists only for life in this world and is therefore as brief as life. The responsibilities of marriage are never stated as excuse for slacking the Lord’s work. That means to invert the priorities.<sup>188</sup>

Again Pauline sayings on weeping and rejoicing are not to be taken literally. Barret says, “Paul is not calling for an end to mourning or joy. His point is that laughter and tears are not the last word. Christians should never allow themselves ‘to be lost in either’”.<sup>189</sup> Paul is clear that we are not to be emotionless and not to be hard-hearted or indifferent. But Christian way of love is much more than emotion; it is an act of will, not simply a reaction to circumstances. True love

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<sup>185</sup> H. CONZELMANN, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 133.

<sup>186</sup> The term occurs twice in the New Testament (1 Cor 7, 31; Phil 2, 7).

<sup>187</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 181.

<sup>188</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 182.

<sup>189</sup> C. K. BARRETT, “The First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *Harper’s New Testament Commentaries*, Harper & Row, New York 1968, 178.

will help us to keep our emotions in proportion and perspective. A mature Christian does not fall apart or lose all hope and purpose and motivation.<sup>190</sup>

The fourth example of buying presupposes that Paul does not intend Christians to withdraw from the world (5, 10). They may continue to do business, but they must keep lest they become consumed by their consuming as suggested by Garland.<sup>191</sup> The fifth area of attention is that of pleasure. In times of prosperity it is easy to live for pleasure. MacArthur says;

[p]leasures that are not immoral or extravagant may still be worldly. More leisure, more vacation time, earlier retirement, more comfortable homes, and such things can so occupy our interest and time that the things of the Spirit are neglected.<sup>192</sup>

Thus none of the five areas about which Paul warns is inherently bad. Marriage, sorrow, rejoicing, possessions, and pleasure all have their proper place in the life of a Christian. Therefore, each is a part of God's provision for life here. Thus this argument can be summarized as follows in the words of Toppe;

Do not be taken up with the affairs of this life. This includes even the marriage relationship. Intimate and absorbing as it is, our marriage commitment cannot transcend our devotion to our Lord. Nor can life's sorrows and its joys, or our business and our possessions supplant our concerns for our heavenly treasure. The things of this passing world dare not displace our eternal good. We are participants in life's experiences, but we keep an inner distance from them. We do not try to get everything we can out of this life, lest we forfeit our eternal inheritance to transient gains and pleasures. "life's little day" cannot be measured against eternity.<sup>193</sup>

Paul does not insist that his audience should live as if the end is tomorrow but as Fee states; "rather, in view of the 'time' and the fact that the 'form' of this present world is passing away, he

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<sup>190</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 181.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, "1 Corinthians" in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 326.

<sup>192</sup> J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 181.

<sup>193</sup> C. TOPPE, "1 Corinthians" in *The People's Bible*, 71.

calls for a radically new understanding of their *relationship to the world* ".<sup>194</sup> Fee correctly takes the rhythm of Pauline argument in commenting that Paul wants them to rethink their existence and to live within an eschatological framework as over against, their ascetic-spiritual one.

Thus one can continue to buy, sell, and marry, in short, to use this world but one must recognize that the things of this world are short-lived. Nothing in this physical world seen and experienced by our physical senses has any enduring character that including marriage, weeping, rejoicing, possession and business opportunities. Garland comments that the fabric of life is just that, a fabric, frayed and flimsy, and nothing eternal.<sup>195</sup> Thus by the way of speaking on the nature of marriage along with other momentary experiences of human being, Paul purposefully advocates singleness.

#### **2.4.4. ARGUMENT III: CELIBACY IS THE BETTER WAY TO SERVE THE LORD (vv. 32-34)**

Now Paul offers his third reason to remain unmarried by stating celibacy as the better way to serve the Lord. The unmarried man may devote himself to the things of the Lord that means, to the service of Christ.

Hodge comments here; "what is true of men is also true of women".<sup>196</sup> The equal emphasis on male and female in Pauline argumentation is always very much striking. Paul begins with men; he devotes two sentences to them and is almost perfectly balanced to women, except for the crucial addition at the end of the second, 'and is divided'. Literal translation for the last part of the first sentence is to be 'carefree' but this word carries a negative connotation of

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<sup>194</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, "First Epistle to the Corinthians" in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 336.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, "1 Corinthians" in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 327.

<sup>196</sup> Cf. C. HODGE, "1 and 2 Corinthians", in *The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, 129.

irresponsibility. Therefore, if we take the word in a positive sense, ‘free from all worries’ then we could understand Paul’s intention (compare with Mt 6, 25-34; Phil 4, 11; 1 Pt 5, 7). This sentence flows forth from the preceding section in which Paul teaches his audience to implement the concept *let them be as though and live in the freedom* which the Lord provides.<sup>197</sup> This becomes true for both the married and those who are single. They have to leave their worries with the Lord.

‘I want you to be free from anxiety’, here Paul says to all the members of the Corinthian church by addressing them as ‘you’ in plural. He begins and ends verses 32-35 with this personal pronoun to denote that he addresses the entire congregation.<sup>198</sup> Again in this argument we could trace the following pattern;

- A : Unmarried man (v. 32b)
- B : Married man (vv. 33-34a)
- A<sup>1</sup> : Unmarried woman (v. 34b)
- B<sup>1</sup> : Married woman (v. 34c)

#### **2.4.4.1. The Affairs of the Lord**

With the use of the cognate verb *μεριμνάω* (to care) Paul proceeds to describe married and unmarried as two kinds of existence, in terms of the object of their ‘anxiety’ or ‘concern’. One is not clear that how these sentences relate to the opening ‘wish’ that they be ‘without anxiety’ and to the rest of what has precede as well. We could three options:

1. The v. 32a is interpreted in connection with the worldly cares of married life. Thus the *merimna* of the two clauses, even though translated the same, is understood as positive in the first occurrence and negative in the second.

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<sup>197</sup> Cf. C. BROWN, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. 1, Zondervan, Grand Rapids 1986, 278.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 344.

2. According to the second view in both cases the verb is pejorative. The married and unmarried ‘are anxious about’ but neither of them should be. The anxiety to please the Lord is to be seen as stemming from the Corinthian asceticism. This kind of asceticism itself is an attempt to win favor with God on the basis of a false standard. Thus in the words of Barrett “the ascetics who decry marriage are not rising above but falling below the Christian standard”.<sup>199</sup>
3. It is possible also as a third view to read both verbs positively, meaning to ‘care for’ and to view them both as legitimate activities. The married man is stated as one who ‘cares for the things of the world, how to please his wife’ in the sense of vv. 30-31. It is a simple statement of real experience in the world. But the married must do so without anxiety because of the eschatological determination of life in the present. Fee comments, “in this case the usage of the verb is something of a play on the adjective in v. 32a: ‘I want you to be without ‘concern’ even as you must ‘concern yourselves’ with life in the present age”.<sup>200</sup>

The verb *care for* occurs five times in the 1 Corinthians and twice in the Philippians.<sup>201</sup> In the passages that appear outside the current chapter, Paul quotes this verb positively. On that basis, we assume that Paul has in mind a positive interpretation of the verb which is in question. Paul now repeats as seen in the whole chapter, for the women what he has just said about the men. Fee traces three differences; two of them are much significant;<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> C. K. BARRETT, “The First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *Harper’s New Testament Commentaries*, 179.

<sup>200</sup> G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 342.

<sup>201</sup> 1 Cor 7, 32, 33, 34 (twice); 12, 25; Phil 2, 20; 4, 6.

<sup>202</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 342.

- To the ‘unmarried woman’ he adds ‘the virgin’ which is the compound subject of the first sentence.
- In place of ‘how she might please the Lord’ Fee deliberately writes ‘in order that she might be holy both in body and in spirit’.
- The verb ‘is divided’ does not appear at the end of the second sentence.

The second difference in the above points is that; ‘she is consecrated in both body and spirit’.

Hodge states, “it is not in purity and spirituality that the virgin is said to have the advantage over the wise, but in freedom from distracting cares. In verse 14 even the unbelieving husband or wife is said to be sanctified or made holy”.<sup>203</sup>

The third difference initiates from the verb *memeristai* which means ‘is divided’ in the passive voice. This verb is never used in NT to indicate a difference and so it should not be translated in the active voice. As the last difference, the first example rearranges the word order to make the expression *the unmarried woman* subject of the verb *to care* in the second sentence.<sup>204</sup>

The unmarried are striving to be holy in body as well as in spirit, by avoiding sexual relations. This kind of understanding adds weight to the possibility of a ‘negative’ view. If the verb means ‘care for’ in a positive sense, then Paul probably wants to point by the phrase ‘body and spirit’ something like ‘holy in every way’ or ‘completely’ with ‘body and spirit’ not to be thought of separately but together which clearly as designating the whole person.<sup>205</sup> Fee makes a historical view by saying, “it is also possible, of course, that in the case of the woman this language reflects the cultural ideal of the ‘chaste woman,’ so that her chastity is part of her ‘setting herself apart’ to the Lord”.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> C. HODGE, “1 and 2 Corinthians”, in *The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, 129.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. S. J. KISTEMAKER - W. HENDRIKSEN, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 246.

<sup>205</sup> Cf. H. CONZELMANN, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 134.

<sup>206</sup> G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 342.

In short, Paul makes no words of disapproval concerning the married status of a worker in the church. He only makes a remark that the single worker has more time to devote to the cause of Christ than the other who is in marriage.

#### **2.4.5. ARGUMENT IV: PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FIANCÉES (vv. 35-38)**

Fourth argument for celibacy by Paul springs from his advice for fiancées. This argument also starts with v. 35 as a pattern that his every argument starts with some advisory statements (cf. vv. 25. 29. 32). Fee comments that this verse functions in two ways;

- First, it brings closure to the argument of vv. 29-35 by stating the resolution of what has been said.
- Second, it serves as a transition to the conclusion in vv. 36-38.<sup>207</sup>

We take the second explanation as it fits for the position of the fourth argumentation. Quoting Hodge, in this argument, “the apostle’s object was their advantage. They were perfectly free to do as they pleased. There was no moral obligation on them to remain single, no superior holiness in celibacy”.<sup>208</sup>

Now we shall spend some time on the historical background provided by MacArthur to this unit. According to him, in Jewish culture always parents, particularly fathers, had a dominant role in deciding whom their children would marry. The same general tradition prevailed in many ancient societies that including of Rome. In light of the extant teaching about the advantages of singleness, some of the fathers of marriageable daughters in Corinth apparently had dedicated their young ones to the Lord as permanent virgins. But when the daughters became of marriageable age, many of them wanted to be married, and their fathers were in a dilemma. The

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<sup>207</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 341.

<sup>208</sup> C. HODGE, “1 and 2 Corinthians”, in *The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, 129.

question raised was should they break the vow they made for the girl? It was clear that many of the girls did not have the gift of singleness and were struggling with their desire to get married and at the same time with their desire to please their fathers and the Lord. This was the problem that existed among those mentioned in the church's letter to Paul (7, 1).<sup>209</sup>

Even though accepting this background, it is too difficult to find out the real addressee of the unit. According to Lietzmann if any one reads without bias vv. 36-37, there will be no doubt that Paul is writing about a young man with his fiancée, but that if one reads v. 38 without reading the preceding verses and again without prejudice, there will be no doubt that the subject is the father of a virgin daughter.<sup>210</sup> Héring makes a for a third understanding where Paul is describing a kind of 'spiritual marriage' in which a couple lives together without sex relations. Ford has argued for a variant position that a levirate marriage is under consideration.<sup>211</sup>

Besides the problems regarding meaning of words there are also severe difficulties about subjects of clauses. It is not clear in the unit who the subject of 'if' is (he) *be of strong passion* (or 'of mature age') nor of *let (him) proceed to do what (he) wishes*. Four combinations of 'he' and 'she' are stated as possible, but there is really nothing in the verse itself to conclude which alternative is correct. The presence of plural subject of the jussive is not able to clarify the matter, for it can be shown to be possible with any of the four interpretations of the passage which takes two to make a marriage.

There is much considerable ambiguity in the phrase *his virgin*. But also, no line of argument offers incontrovertible evidence. There is evidence also in Greek literature for the use of

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<sup>209</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 185.

<sup>210</sup> Cf. W. F. ORR - J. A. WALTHER, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation, Introduction, with a Study of The Life of Paul, Notes and Commentary*, 223.

<sup>211</sup> Cf. J. M. FORD, "Levirate Marriage in St. Paul (1 Cor VII)" in *NTS* 10 (1963/64), 361- 65.

*parthenos* as both ‘fiancée’ and ‘daughter.’<sup>212</sup> Accepting to the views of Fee and Oster, a more possible view is that Paul directs his focus to male believers who are single but engaged to a virgin. Thus the notorious crux presents itself in 7, 36-38 for the ambiguity of ‘if anyone’ (εἰ ... τις). In the words of Moiser who comments it as ‘one of the most difficult and refractory passages in the entire Pauline corpus.’ He provides five exegetical questions present themselves in verse 36;<sup>213</sup>

1. What is the antecedent of *τις* (anyone)?
2. To what does *ἀσχημονεῖν* (to act dishonorably) apply?
3. To whom does *ἡ παρθένος αὐτοῦ* (his girl) refer- his daughter, spiritual bride, or fiancée?
4. Does *ὑπέρακμος* (mature in age) refer to the girl or the man, and what does it connote?
5. What does the phrase *καὶ οὕτως ὀφείλει γίνεσθαι* (and it ought to happen thus), literally mean?

Alike other arguments this argument is also modeled by ABA<sup>1</sup>B<sup>1</sup> pattern;

- A : No Control over desire (v. 36a)
- B : Let them marry (v. 36b)
- A<sup>1</sup> : Having control over desire (v. 37a)
- B<sup>1</sup> : Let them celibate (v. 37b)

#### 2.4.5.1. Use of Freedom

The view that we could adopt as the most likely is translated by the NRSV. It recognizes Paul, throughout 7, 25-38, to be addressing Christians who are engaged to marry. Collins comments 7, 36-38 to be ‘a kind of commentary on v. 27.’<sup>214</sup> According to Barret the ‘anyone’ denotes to the

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<sup>212</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 345.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. J. MOISER “A Reassessment of Paul’s View of Marriage with Reference to 1 Cor 7” in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 18/1983, 114.

<sup>214</sup> Cf. R. F. COLLINS, “First Corinthians” in *Sacra Pagina*, 299.

fiancé, and the ‘virgin’ is his fiancée. The expression ‘his virgin’ is very unusual, but it may be akin to ‘his girl’.<sup>215</sup> The two are bound by betrothal but curiosity asks them whether they should follow through on their marriage. The *ὑπέρακμος* clearly refers to man’s sexual desire. In helping the man to make his decision, Paul recommends that if his sexual drive is strong, then it is natural for him to go ahead and marry. If he has his sexual desire under control, he is free to decide not to go ahead with the marriage. Paul thus concludes that it is fine for him to do so; it is better, because of the reasons outlined in 7, 25-35, if they do not. What is significant in the argument is his description of this man. Paul repeats in four different ways that such a man must be fully convinced *in his own mind*.

- Firstly, he ‘has settled the matter in his own mind’.
- Secondly, he ‘is under no compulsion’.
- Thirdly, ‘he has authority, concerning his own will’ meaning no one else is forcing this action on him.
- Fourthly, he ‘has made up his own mind.’

According to Fee the verbal force strongly suggests that outside influences might lead him to take such an action, but against his own will. That seems in precise to be the case in Corinth.<sup>216</sup>

MacArthur wanted to state that, this choice is not between right or wrong but between good (well) and better.<sup>217</sup> Paul clearly declares that this person does not sin by marrying. Paul thus advises, ‘let him do what he wishes.’ If the man wishes is to marry and have sexual relations with his wife is genuine and good, thus Paul shows himself as a realist about the sexual drive.<sup>218</sup>

The young man who evidently does not have the gift of celibacy then Paul would not lasso him

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<sup>215</sup> Cf. C. K. BARRETT, “The First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *Harper’s New Testament Commentaries*, 184.

<sup>216</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 345.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 185.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. R. F. COLLINS, “First Corinthians” in *Sacra Pagina*, 290.

and impound him in the corral of celibacy when it is clearly against his nature. Paul strongly recommends marriage when the man's control over his sexual desire threatens to slip.

Wanting to marry and having strong sexual desires are sure signs that one does not have the gift of celibacy (7, 7). Paul thus concludes that the man does well in reaching the decision either to marry or to remain single. But this way of doing well has nothing to do with reaching idealistic spiritual heights. Fee specially notes that the adverb 'well' (*καλῶς*) seems to confirm that the usage 'it is good' does not carry moral overtones in the Pauline arguments. To do well in this context clearly means to make a careful, prayerful decision about what to do. It involves an authentic internal examination before God and then doing what is seemly and what will not undermine from service to the Lord. In this situation, one's service to God will be sabotaged if one sentences oneself to celibacy only to meet others' expectations.<sup>219</sup> Thus, one can do 'well' by marrying. Yarbrough comments,

Paul 'rejects the Corinthians' attempt to make one expression of the spiritual life binding on all believers, since to claim that there is only one legitimate expression of the spirit leads to elitism, which in turn leads to divisions in the community.'<sup>220</sup>

As a conclusion to the argument Paul is concerned only about what is fitting, most beneficial, and most likely to contribute to undistracted waiting on the Lord, that is celibacy out of full will.

#### **2.4.6. ARGUMENT V: PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR WIDOWS (vv. 39-40a)**

In the fourth argument on celibacy (7, 25-38) Paul instructed already single, engaged men about whether or not they should marry. In this fifth argument (7, 39-40a) he shortly instructs widows

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<sup>219</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, "First Epistle to the Corinthians" in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 354.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. O. L. YARBROUGH, *Not Like the Gentiles: Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul*, 122.

on whether or not they should remarry. According to Garland the question is very short and in the third person because it is not the burning issue.<sup>221</sup> The point of question in this case lies with a woman's remarriage.

'In my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is,' is to be taken as the basic principle where Paul makes it clear that he is not giving a command, but is giving a good counsel for the benefit and blessing of those who take it.<sup>222</sup> Paul writes unambiguously about the various conditions of believing women who are no longer virgins. Concerning believing married women, they are to remain married as long as their husbands are alive. But the freedom (*ἐλευθέρια*) that a believing widow has to remarry is not unconditional. According to Hodge that she is limited in her choices to a man who is 'in the Lord' (*ἐν κυρίῳ*), that is, who is a Christian.<sup>223</sup> This argument clearly points on the permanency of the marriage relationship. This relationship is not permanent only in the sense of being eternal but in the sense of being life-long. It is binding them as long as both partners are alive.<sup>224</sup> Commenting on the passage Fee states that the marriage bond is in effect until 'her husband dies.' If the partner dies, she has the same option as the man who wants to get married: 'she is free to marry anyone she wishes.' This sentence clearly seems to eliminate the possibility that levirate marriage is in view and it also indicates that in this matter the woman had full freedom to make her own choice.<sup>225</sup>

Paul does not consider remarriage is not the ideal. He believes that the widow would be 'happier' if she remained single. It harmonies with his maxim that the present crisis makes it good for a person to remain as he or she is (7, 26). The comparative use of *μακαριωτέρα* (blessed) parallels

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<sup>221</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, "1 Corinthians" in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 343.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 186.

<sup>223</sup> C. HODGE, "1 and 2 Corinthians", in *The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, 131.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 186.

<sup>225</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, "First Epistle to the Corinthians" in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 355.

with the use of *κρεῖσσον* (better) which is applied to the male in 7, 38. Paul uses the word *μακάριος* in the religious sense of blessed in Rom 4, 7- 8 and 14, 22. Edwards states; “he means that the widow is more blessed by remaining a widow and consecrating her life to the work of the Lord”.<sup>226</sup> But here Paul says nothing similar and many assume that the term *μακαριωτέρα* has no religious overtones but refers only to worldly well-being that is ‘she is happier.’<sup>227</sup> Thus the final argument from the advice to widows clearly exposes Pauline preference for singleness.

## **2.5. EPILOGUE: ENDOWED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD (v. 40b)**

Pauline statement in v. 40b ‘I think that I also have the Spirit of God’ does not lessen but clearly strengthen his point. With a clever touch of sarcasm he was saying that he, too, had access to the leading of the Holy Spirit, which is a claim apparently made both by the group that advocated celibacy only and by the group that advocated marriage only. He was still speaking like ‘an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God’ (1, 1). Pauline command was God’s command and his advice was God’s advice as commented by MacArthur.<sup>228</sup>

The usage of words ‘I too’ mean, ‘I as well as others’ is generally considered to mention somewhat ironically to the false claimants in Corinth. Hodge make a revision on this as; “I think I have the Spirit of God as well as those among you who make such high pretensions”.<sup>229</sup>

The usage of ‘have the Spirit of God’ indicates that they are under the influence of the Spirit, whether it is a Christian or an apostle that depends on the situation. The implied meaning here is that the apostle was directed by the Spirit to give the advice in question; so Pauline advice is the advice of the Spirit. Other people may believe that their views are inspired by the Holy Spirit,

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<sup>226</sup> T. C. EDWARDS, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hodder & Stoughton, London <sup>2</sup>1885, 205.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. C. K. BARRETT, “The First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *Harper’s New Testament Commentaries*, 186;

<sup>228</sup> Cf. J. MACARTHUR, *1 Corinthians*, 186.

<sup>229</sup> C. HODGE, “1 and 2 Corinthians”, in *The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, 132.

but the apostle endeavors also to believe that he is guided in his judgment by God's Spirit. Thus Paul is trying to make a proper conclusion to the whole chapter by overwhelming the power of Spirit upon all his nine arguments presented above.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus the above exegetical study has illuminated our view on marriage and celibacy from the Pauline viewpoint. Paul gives adequate space for two modes of life in the world. His views are going alongside with that of Lord make the specialty of Christian marriage with mutuality, monogamy, equality and above all the indissolubility in marriage. The usage of *digressio* is at apt place points to Pauline rhetorical skill to situate the basic principle of persuasion. Paul even though have a special preference to celibacy, he is not unaware of the bodily desires and specialty in the gift of God. He states five arguments in favor of celibacy which basically originates from his ardent desire to engage fully in the affairs of the lord, that is why he is stated as distressed with everyday affairs of the world.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

Paul has written this letter to Corinthians to confront their slanted view of spirituality, end of the age which resulted in confusions regarding marriage and celibacy. By using the rhetorical method for the exegetical analysis, we have come across different argumentations made by Paul to correct the views of his children in faith. Pauline preference for celibacy confirmed with the words like ‘well’ (vv. 1b. 8. 26. 37), ‘I wish’ (v. 7), ‘better’ (v. 9. 38), ‘benefit’ (v. 35) and ‘blessed’ (v. 40) again poses some theological questions. Thus in this chapter we will deal with three important questions which require an adequate answer from Pauline perspective itself. More often, it is criticized as a peripheral reading of our passage ends with the view that celibacy is superior to marriage but a deeper eye could catch that it all depends on the divine gift and the personal aptitude. Thus, the principle is stated in *digressio* has a great role in determining the position of Paul. The following study may enlighten our mind.

#### 3.1. MARRIAGE AS A WAY TO AVOID FORNICATION

The main criticism on Pauline view expressed in 1 Cor 7 is the question on marriage as a way to avoid fornication. It is to be noted seriously that the word *porneia* is used only once in this chapter and also in a general sense which comprises all sexual deviations. To answer the above problem we will analyze the peculiarities of marriage stated by the skillful apostle of Gentiles.

### 3.1.1. MUTUALITY IN MARRIAGE

The first and foremost principle in marriage can be stated as the mutuality according to Paul which expressed in the *propositio* (7, 1-2). The usage of *ἕκαστος* (each) is the marking point which clearly denotes fidelity along with mutuality. Orr says, “the use of the possessive reflexive pronoun *ἑαυτοῦ* and the adjective *ἴδιος* implies monogamy”.<sup>230</sup> According to Pierce, sexual immorality denoted by *πορνεία* is the occasion for the first principle on marriage in the discourse.<sup>231</sup> The mutuality of marriage is centered in the unity of the marriage partners (7, 4). In marriage the man and woman are united together as one flesh (6, 16b). Because of the unity in marriage, each partner is no longer the master of his or her body, both of them in a spirit of mutuality should agree on their sexual relations (7, 5).

In the view of Danker, by calling each man to be faithful to his own wife and each woman to her own husband, Paul also condemns in principle a wide range of unsanctioned sexual intercourse such as fornication, adultery, homosexuality and polygamy. Pauline use of the middle voice here evidently connotes an intimate relationship.<sup>232</sup>

Paul makes this imperative at v.3 in the midst of Greco-Roman culture with abuse of marital fidelity. Demosthenes, a Greek statesman and an orator from Athens summed up in this way: “courtesans were for companionship, concubines to meet every day sexual needs and wives to tend the house and bear legitimate children”.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Cf. W. F. ORR, “Paul’s Treatment of Marriage in 1 Corinthians 7”, in *Pittsburgh Perspective*, 8/1967, 9.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. R. W. PIERCE, “First Corinthians 7: Paul’s Neglected Treatise on Gender”, in *Priscilla Papers*, 23/ 3, Summer 2009, 8.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. F. W. DANKER (ed.) *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, University Of Chicago, Chicago, 420.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. R. W. PIERCE, “First Corinthians 7: Paul’s Neglected Treatise on Gender”, in *Priscilla Papers*, 12.

The gender inclusive pattern used by Paul in his rhetoric is specialized to point the mutuality in marriage as the basic principle that upholds Christian marriage rather than avoiding *porneia* which denotes to a vast area of sexual immorality.

### **3.1.2. SPOUSAL RIGHTS**

The heart of the rhetorical discourse on Christian marriage lies in the mutual sexual responsibility within marriage.<sup>234</sup> Paul considers sexual unity in marriage as a mutually obligatory service which is expressed with ‘due’. Sexuality always has rightful place in marriage. Paul’s concern on sexual immorality continues as he calls believers to offer to their spouses what is rightfully theirs which is regular and voluntary sexual intimacy. Pierce says,

They are to give generously not depriving each other. The longer statement addresses the husband first then comes a shorter statement to the wife, but the inclusive compound conjunction ‘and likewise also’ makes it clear that the same obligation evenhandedly applies to both.<sup>235</sup>

The verbs used to denote spousal rights are ‘to give up or yield’ (v. 3) points clearly to most intimate rights in marriage. In this situation the husband is called upon first to yield by giving what rightfully belongs to wife. Then, the wife is told as having the same obligation. Such mutuality regarding marriage rights is remarkable in a predominantly patriarchal world like that of ancient system.

### **3.1.3. AUTHORITY IN MARRIAGE**

The Christian view on marriage is of two equal partners united by harmony and loyalty upto the end of their lives.<sup>236</sup> Even in the contemporary world we could trace very hot debate on the male

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<sup>234</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, “1 Corinthians 7, 1 in the NIV”, in *JETS* 23/4, December 1980, 310.

<sup>235</sup> R. W. PIERCE, “First Corinthians 7: Paul’s Neglected Treatise on Gender”, in *Priscilla Papers*, 8.

<sup>236</sup> Cf. D. GARNSEY, “The Christian Teaching on Marriage” in *St. Mark’s Review*, September, 1983, 19.

authority over women in the society, church and home.<sup>237</sup> In this context it is better to realize that 1 Cor 7, 4 is the only biblical text that clearly addresses the question of authority in marriage and it is always mutual. Piper and Grudem acknowledge the emphasis on mutuality in this passage very well but then go on to qualify the principle by insisting that the husband as head should develop the way of intimacy for himself and his wife.<sup>238</sup> But this passage nowhere suggests such a qualification.

Paul firstly states personal rights with a model of giving what is due to the recipient that is sexual intimacy in v. 3. Then he expands this call to include the principle of submission to the presumed authority of marriage partner rather than exercising it in v. 4. From this Paul goes out of his way with gender inclusive pattern of referring man...woman.<sup>239</sup>

Two other Pauline passages are considered as opposing to the principle of authority stated in our passage are 1 Cor 11 and Eph 5. In 1 Cor 11, 10 Paul states that the wife should cover her head which represents her husband. But the word used here to denote authority is head (*κεφαλή*) can also denote 'authority over' but can also mean the ideas like 'topmost, prominence, point of origin or source of provision'. In the second passage from Eph 5, 21-24 we find Paul says to wife to submit herself to her husband as part of his principle of submitting one another in the church. But the headship metaphor can be taken in the larger context of Ephesians. On this particular point Arnold has made a quotable and long study.<sup>240</sup> In the Ephesians the author only reinforces the idea of source of provision for husbands to wives. Paul calls husbands to sacrifice lovingly for their wives by imitating Christ did for the church.

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<sup>237</sup> Cf. R. MOORE, "After Patriarchy What? Why Egalitarians are Winning the Gender Debate?", in *JETS* 49, 2006, 570.

<sup>238</sup> Cf. O. A. PIPER - W. GRUDEM (eds.), *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL: 1991, 80.

<sup>239</sup> Cf. R. W. PIERCE, "First Corinthians 7: Paul's Neglected Treatise on Gender", in *Priscilla Papers*, 9.

<sup>240</sup> Cf. C. E. ARNOLD, "Jesus Christ: Head of The Church" in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on The Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, J. B. GREEN - M. TURNER (eds.), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids MI: 1994, 346-366.

In our *pericope* Paul makes his point is that neither spouse should claim authority over his or her body. Each partner should yield that authority to the other. This mutual yielding of authority is the basis and specialty of Christian marriage partners.

### 3.1.4. DIVORCE AND SALVATION

Divorce in Christian marriage is not permitted by Paul that is expressed with the appealing to the authoritative command by using *parangello* of Jesus instead of *lego ego* which points on his own authority. Paul announces that married persons should not seek divorce (7, 10-11). Pauline stress on man-woman pattern is also clear with twice appeal not to leave the partner.<sup>241</sup> This command is given to the married believers. Conzelmann says, “the regulation is absolute for it comes from Lord Himself”.<sup>242</sup> Making the idea more clear Bruce says, “for a Christian husband or wife divorce is excluded by the law of Christ, here Paul has not needed to express a judgment of his own, for the Lord’s ruling on the matter was explicit”.<sup>243</sup> Thus we could not find any exception clause in the command of Jesus known to Paul. Stein restates the above view on the absence of exception clause among believing Gentiles.<sup>244</sup> The exception that was granted by Paul consists of two conditions such as to remain permanently unmarried or to be reconciled to the partner. This clearly expresses the permanence of marriage rather than divorce in marriage. In the words of Mare, “the stress of the passage on maintaining the marriage bond unbroken definitely strengthens the injunction for separated marriage partners to become reconciled”.<sup>245</sup>

In the eyes of Paul marriage leads to a sanctification of the body (7, 14) though it is hard to be precise on the real nature of such sanctification. Piper comments, “the meaning of marriage

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<sup>241</sup> Cf. C. LANEY, “Paul and The Permanence of Marriage in 1 Corinthians 7”, in *JETS* 25/3 September, 1982, 285.

<sup>242</sup> H. CONZELMANN, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to The Corinthians*, 120.

<sup>243</sup> F. F. BRUCE, *Paul: Apostle of The Heart Set Free*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1977, 267.

<sup>244</sup> Cf. R. H. STEIN, “Is it Lawful for a Man to Divorce His Wife?”, in *JETS* 22/1979, 118.

<sup>245</sup> W. H. MARE, “First Corinthians” , in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976, 229.

somehow transcends the natural relationship, extending even into the partner's life".<sup>246</sup> Morris states, "it is a scriptural principal that the blessings arising from fellowship with God are not confined to the immediate recipients but extend to others".<sup>247</sup>

Again when speaking on the mixed marriages Paul suggests that the godliness of either is of greater effect than the ungodliness of the other. That means the partners are being better related to God and the other unbelieving partner is apt to be pulled up and strengthened by it (cf. 7, 16). The clear teaching comes from the lips of Paul in 1 Cor 7 is that the God-ordained marriage union is indissoluble except by death.<sup>248</sup> Hodge says,

The uniform doctrine of the New Testament is that, marriage is a contract for life between one man and one woman: indissoluble by the will of the parties or by any human authority, but that the death of either party leaves the survivor free to contract another marriage.<sup>249</sup>

While Paul also acknowledges that divorce will sometimes take place (7, 10. 15) he does not present remarriage to another person as the better option for the divorced. Reconciliation to the original partner or a single life is the only alternatives that Paul recommends (7, 11).<sup>250</sup>

The above discussions have led to the conclusion that marriage is not a way to avoid fornication. According to Caragounis "Paul uses the arthrous plural *διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας* can under no circumstances in this context be understood as implying concrete cases of fornication and not the metonymical use of *πορνεία* to mean 'lusts', lusts that can lead to fornication."<sup>251</sup>

Thus as a conclusion from the above discussion we could state that if Paul had intended actual cases of immorality, he would have used *μοιχεία* rather than *πορνείας* .

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<sup>246</sup> O. PIPER, *The Biblical View of Sex and Marriage*, Scribner's, New York 1960, 127.

<sup>247</sup> L. MORRIS, *The First Epistle of Paul to The Corinthians*, W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1958, 110.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. D. INSTONE-BREWER, "1 Corinthians 7 in the Light of the Graeco- Roman Marriage and Divorce Papyri", in *TynB* , 51/2, 2001, 111.

<sup>249</sup> C. HODGE, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1976, 133.

<sup>250</sup> Cf. C. LANEY, "Paul and the Permanence of Marriage in 1 Corinthians 7", in *JETS*, 293.

<sup>251</sup> C. C. CARAGOUNIS, "What Did Paul Mean? The Debate on 1 Cor 7, 1-7", in *ETHL*, 82/1, 2006, 195.

## 3.2. CAN CELIBACY AVOID IMPENDING CRISIS?

The *sub-propositio* in vv. 25-26 states the necessity of being celibate in the light of impending crisis. By τὴν ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην (impending or present distress) Paul briefs his following points of the rhetorical discourse on celibacy such as worldly distress, brevity of time, serving the lord with undivided heart. To start our question on the value of celibacy in avoiding the impending crisis, we must make a short historical search on the pre-existence of abstinence among Jewish community from which Christ and Paul taught on the celibate way of life (cf. Mt 19, 10-12).

### 3.2.1. CELIBACY IN JUDAISM

Paul is always stated to be influenced by the Cynic-Stoic philosophical thinking on celibacy as the preferred way of life but a deep study through the first century Judaism also gives some influencing figures who kept abstinence. Basically in Judaism it is regarded as a religious obligation for a man to marry and raise a family.<sup>252</sup> McArthur by quoting a rabbinical view says;

The strong rabbinic preference for early marriage is confirmed by a collection of statements. Rabbi Huna was thus in accordance with his views. For he said, he who is twenty years of age and is not married spends all his days in sin. In sin can you really think so? But say spends all his days in sinful thoughts.<sup>253</sup>

But we could also trace a few who kept themselves alone for the ardent love for the Torah like Simeon ben ‘Azzai.<sup>254</sup> McArthur states his words, “what shall I do? My soul thirsts after Torah,

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<sup>252</sup> Cf. H. MCARTHUR, “Celibacy in Judaism at the Time of Christian Beginnings”, in *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Summer 25/2, 1987, 163.

<sup>253</sup> H. MCARTHUR, “Celibacy in Judaism at the Time of Christian Beginnings”, in *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 166.

<sup>254</sup> Cf. I. JAKOBOVITS, “Celibacy”, in *Encyclopedia of Judaism*, S. E. KARESH- M. M. HURVITZ (eds.) Vol. 5, Facts on File, New York 2006, 268.

let other people keep the world going”.<sup>255</sup> In the Jewish belief sexual intercourse resulted in temporary ritual impurity but this does not mean that sex was regarded as evil. Abstinence from sexual relations was considered a prerequisite for reception of the divine message and for the participation in certain sacred rites (cf. Ex 19, 10-15). Marriage and the regular exercise of the marital duty are the basic norm in the Judaism but also a counter-motif stresses the incompatibility of sexual intercourse with response to God’s presence and participation in divine services. This was explicit during the Day of the Atonement, at certain times of fasting, during the years of famine and also there were restrictions on sexual relations in a room containing the Torah scrolls.<sup>256</sup>

Indeed abstinence from sexual relations for a temporary period is one thing and complete celibacy is another. But by the recognition of this tension between sex and the sacred provides a foundation for the Pauline notion of celibacy which helped him to suggest the opinion that celibacy could be undistracted by the worldly affairs which result in more affinity with divine.

### **3.2.2. MARRIAGE BRINGS TROUBLES IN THE FLESH**

Paul states in the first argumentation that marriage causes *θλίψιν δὲ τῆ σαρκί* (troubles in the flesh). We have already analyzed the word *thlipsis* in the second chapter and came to the conclusion that it denotes to multi-dimensional situations of life in the world. Garland by quoting Midrash Qoheleth 1, 2 states that;

Here Paul would perhaps share the sardonic attitude of the rabbi who said: a young man is like a colt that whinnies, he paces up and down , he grooms himself with care: this is

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<sup>255</sup> Cf. H. MCARTHUR, “Celibacy in Judaism at the Time of Christian Beginnings”, in *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 168.

<sup>256</sup> Cf. H. MCARTHUR, “Celibacy in Judaism at the Time of Christian Beginnings”, in *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 173.

because he is looking for a wife. But once married, he resembles as ass, quite loaded down with burdens.<sup>257</sup>

### 3.2.3. DUE TO THE PASSING NATURE OF THE WORLD

In the second argument of Paul implies an over-realized eschatology. Bruce comments, ‘the whole discussion of marriage in this chapter is influenced by Paul’s eschatological awareness in addition to his pastoral concern’.<sup>258</sup> Paul says here marriage is inadvisable because of the urgency of the hour. By the term *καιρός* Paul might have referring to the appointed time of the eschatological fulfillment, the day of the Second coming of Christ and the day of final Judgment. Thus Paul might have believed that one would have distress enough in the last days without also having the burdens of marriage responsibilities. Referring to Jewish apocalyptic (1 Enoch 99, 4) mothers would have difficult time much more in the last days which is also influenced in the NT writings too (cf. Mt 24, 19).

Again Paul says that the form of this world with its institutions is passing off the stage. As coined by Garland it is a lame duck and those who are married must realize that in the new world their relationship will be transformed (7, 29. 31).<sup>259</sup>

### 3.2.4. HAVE AN UNDIVIDED HEART

Paul believed that an undivided heart which thirsts in the affairs of the God can be attained by a celibate. This idea is obviously stated in the third argument on celibacy. Marriage always with its responsibilities divides a person’s heart at a time when singleness of purpose is most needed.

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<sup>257</sup> D. E. GARLAND, “The Christian’s Posture Toward Marriage and Celibacy: 1 Corinthians 7”, in *Review and Expositor*, 80/3, 1983, 358.

<sup>258</sup> F. F. BRUCE, “1 and 2 Corinthians”, in *The New Century Bible Commentaries*, Eerdmans and Marshall, Morgan 1971, 74.

<sup>259</sup> Cf. D. E. GARLAND, “The Christian’s Posture Toward Marriage and Celibacy: 1 Corinthians 7”, in *Review and Expositor*, 358.

Preoccupation with the things of this world will end in a lack of preparedness for the world to come.

Paul shows a complete awareness and respect for the complexities of life in this world. We cannot say Paul is sure about the possibility of avoiding the worldly distress in the celibate life. But by proposing a single-hearted life he thinks that a celibate could spare more time in the affairs of the Lord. He presents this single-hearted way of life that is not attached to the activities of the world (vv. 29-31). Celibacy could offer better chance not to be struggled with the anxieties of the married partner as in the married life. It does not mean that he is free from other worries and worldly emotions but have more possibilities in comparison to marriage.

Paul is not to be stated as an authoritarian but gives authoritative advices. Taking the view of Ramsaran, by starting with γνώμη Paul puts a maxim rather than a simple opinion<sup>260</sup> which allows the audience to achieve a personal decision regarding his way of life. In 7, 25 he has not received any command of the Lord but he offers his own opinion with, ‘I think’ in 7, 26. At the conclusion of the chapter he adds, ‘I think I too have the Spirit of God on these matters’ (7, 40). Thus Paul was very flexible and practicalities were often his guides. He is very practical regarding his discussions. He is open to the circumstances and life experiences of the world but at the same time he is very much capable of making his preferences which is not compelling anyone but only guiding.

### **3.3. IS CELIBACY SUPERIOR TO MARRIAGE?**

Many have succeeded in finding evidences for Pauline preference for celibacy in 1 Cor 7. It is evident from our discussions in the previous chapters and also with the opinions of scholars like G. D. Fee, J. Weiss, Robertson and Plummer etc. We must also recognize that some Corinthians

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<sup>260</sup> Cf. R. A. RAMSARAN, “More Than an Opinion: Paul’s Rhetorical Maxim in First Corinthians 7, 25-26”, in *CBQ*, 57, 1995, 531-541.

themselves inclined toward or even advocated and practiced celibacy and thus Paul wanted to write partly to contest their position. This practice was rooted in the belief that celibacy exemplifies eschatological existence and in a strong sense of eschatological fulfillment displayed in a lively pneumatism.<sup>261</sup>

Hurd says that the Corinthians' sexual asceticism was based on the belief that the institution of marriage would cease when the kingdom comes. Paul himself had originally taught sexual asceticism in Corinth with enthusiasm and an intense expectation of the imminent Parousia and that the Corinthians had remained faithful to his teaching.<sup>262</sup>

According to Cartlidge, the Corinthian sexual ascetics had an over realized eschatology that led them to an attempt to reconstruct their society along with eschatological lines which ended in a demand for sexual asceticism.<sup>263</sup> Another argumentation can be found in Wire who identifies the sexual ascetics in Corinth as women who have taken up the roles of prophets. Those women advanced themselves socially through asceticism and their prophetic roles.<sup>264</sup> MacDonald suggests that the Corinthians believed that they had already transcended the material world and returned to the primordial excellence in a new sexless state which was symbolized by women's removal of their veil and that also implied avoidance of sex altogether.<sup>265</sup>

### **3.3.1. CELIBACY IS NOT A MORAL GOOD**

The *propositio* of our *pericope*, whether a quotation or a Pauline statement in 7, 1b-2, 'it is good for a man not to touch a woman' seems to be present celibacy as a moral good. The meaning of

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<sup>261</sup> Cf. J. M. GUNDRY-VOLF, "Controlling the Bodies: A Theological Profile of The Corinthian Sexual Ascetics (1 Cor 7)", in *The Corinthian Correspondence*, R. BIERINGER (ed.) Peeters, Leuven 1996, 519.

<sup>262</sup> Cf. J.C. HURD, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, Mercer University Press, Macon, GA: 1983, 276-278.

<sup>263</sup> Cf. D. CARTLIDGE, "1 Corinthians 7 as a Foundation for a Christian Sex Ethic", in *JR* 55/1975, 227-230.

<sup>264</sup> Cf. A. C. WIRE, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis MN: 1990, 82-97.

<sup>265</sup> Cf. M. Y. MACDONALD, "Women Holy in Body and Spirit: The Social Setting of 1 Corinthians 7", in *NTS* 36/1990, 164-173.

the word *καλός* was much debated<sup>266</sup> in this context and the presence of this word instantly takes to the opinion that marriage is sin or something bad. But Paul explicitly denies the view that one who marries sins in 7, 28. 36. Since Jewish tradition and scripture taught Paul that marriage and procreation were obligatory and part of the created order he would never present marriage as sin. Paul is really convinced of the mortal vulnerability of the believers and also convinced that the celibacy is a gift which is not given to all. Thus in the eyes of Paul celibacy is good for those who have been gifted and it never to be considered as a moral good that everyone should follow.

### 3.3.2. FREEDOM IN CELIBACY

Paul by using his rhetoric skill has dealt with ‘freedom’ or ‘right’ (*ἐξουσιάζω*) to denote the mutuality in the married life. By using two negative formulations in v. 4, he clearly asserts that the personal right over their body of spouses is taken away within the marriage. By Paul married ones are bound to each other (v. 39) but the celibates are not.<sup>267</sup> As a result, a celibate could enjoy his or her personal freedom in its perfection which helps him/her to devote fully in the affairs of the lord (v. 32). The married are interested in the affairs of the partner and thus gets little time to please Lord but at the same time celibate could have more time.

### 3.3.3. THE PRINCIPLE OF GIFT

Paul clearly argues that the capability of continence itself is a *χάρισμα* (spiritual gift) in v. 7. According to Fee one needs to have this gift in order to live a celibate life. Celibacy is not an obligation that to be observed but a gift.<sup>268</sup> The married is not given the gift of continence; otherwise they would not have married. Barret says that Paul does not mean to say that marriage

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<sup>266</sup> Cf. J. C. HURD, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, 158-161.

<sup>267</sup> Cf. J. M. GUNDRY-VOLF, “Controlling the Bodies: A Theological Profile of the Corinthian Sexual Ascetics (1 Cor 7)”, in *The Corinthian Correspondence*, 524.

<sup>268</sup> Cf. G. D. FEE, *1 Corinthians*, 284

is a gift but that God gives other spiritual gifts to those without the gift of celibacy.<sup>269</sup> This idea is clear in v. 7b. Paul really wants to state that the gifts are not given because of their own achievement but comes from the divine decision. It originates with one's personal response to his/her own passions whether it is controllable or not (vv. 36-37) which helps him/her to accept the call of celibacy or marriage.

### 3.3.4. THE PRINCIPLE OF CALLING

The usage of *digressio* in the rhetorical argumentation placed by Paul in the right place to illustrate the underlying principle for both marriage and celibacy is that 'remain in the condition in which you were called' (v. 20). Paul makes an exhortation to the Corinthians by using the examples of circumcision and uncircumcision, slavery and freedom. We have already dealt with them in detail in the previous chapters. Sexual ascetics in Corinth have proved that they had a deviated view on the new creation in Christ. Accepting the opinion of Gundry-Volf, Corinthians replaced the creation story of Genesis 1, 27-28 where God created male and female with sexual differentiation with the purpose of procreation. But due to their realized or over-realized eschatology, Corinthians thought that they have surpassed this sexual differentiation. Thus Paul wants to argue that the created order is not abrogated as such with respect to sexual distinctions.

Paul deliberately asserts the Creator's intention by stating that 'the one who marries does well' (v. 38) and by the prohibition of divorce (v. 10). Conjugal relations are a must according to Paul, taken the reality of sexual passion. But in the eyes of the apostle the new creation in Christ also presents new possibilities, including celibacy as a gift. There is no obligation to marry for the

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<sup>269</sup> Cf. C. K. BARRET, "A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians", in *Black's New Testament Commentaries*, A & C Black, 1968, 158-159.

sake of procreation which is clear from the absence of the term ‘procreation’ in the long discourse on marriage by the skillful author of the letter.<sup>270</sup>

Thus we could find that the underlying principle in both marriage and celibacy is ‘call’. The confirmation of the principle of ‘remain as you are when God called you’ echoes the Pauline view on the two ways of Christian life. Ultimately over emphasis to any one is not tolerated for God does not look on the status of life but the life itself. We cannot infer that celibacy is better than marriage or vice versa on the basis of accepting one’s own proper way of life. Both are equal and valuable in the eyes of God just as circumcised and uncircumcised or slave or freed one.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have dealt with three important questions emerged from the exegetical study of our *pericope*. We have analyzed the nature and specialties of marriage and celibacy which got a new face with the rhetorical argumentation of Paul. He is a good practical pastor than a theologian but not missing any theological basis. He uses his rhetorical skills to give proper advice to his audience which upholds their personal freedom to accept each one’s way of life. Paul is not stating that celibacy is the best way of living but he formulates the obligations and advantages of both ways of life. It is one who decides one’s own future as God allows freedom to humanity.

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<sup>270</sup> Cf. J. M. GUNDRY-VOLF, “Controlling the Bodies: A Theological Profile of the Corinthian Sexual Ascetics (1 Cor 7)”, in *The Corinthian Correspondence*, 539.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The thesis on ‘marriage and celibacy in 1 Corinthians 7’ was an effort to confront the real mind of Paul on the topic which has unending implications up to this time. This effort was based on the historical-exegetical analysis of the letter which got its primary appearance with the audience of Corinth. Its value cannot be limited with the Corinthian context but overshadows all the spheres of Catholic faith and life. Pauline teaching on celibacy and marriage coined as a precious stone which cannot be surpassed in determining the way of life of every Christian. The chapter is profound with meaning which paved way for much debates on marriage, divorce, singleness, remarriage etc.

As a conclusion to our study we may propose the following points that emerged from our analysis. They are;

1. Marriage and celibacy are parallel ways of life: Paul presents marriage and celibacy as two different ways of life which are not to be contrasted in any manner. Paul is sure on the divine will on marriage expressed in v. 10 which states, ‘To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord...’ The added emphasis on the Divine commandment thus recalls the creation story (Gn 2, 24). Paul presents marriage as the natural or common way of life appropriated by the Divine will. It is not something to be considered as inferior to celibacy but in accordance with the will of God. He is aware of the fallibility of human desires and advises marriage as the real way of perfection that helps not to be burned in the passions of the body (v. 9). The conjugal rights in marriage are said to be obligatory (v. 3) for it is the part and parcel of married life which again attested with a concession only for a limited period of time (v. 5). Again marriage is presented as a life-long union

that conveyed in v. 10, the high command against divorce and in v. 39 says, ‘A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives...’ Celibate life is presented as another way of life for those who have the gift of continence from God (v. 7). In the *sub-propositio* Paul wants to explain singleness as another way of life. Pauline sayings with ‘well’ and ‘better’ is used to present the nature of singleness rather than putting it in a superior position. Thus marriage and celibacy are two ways having same eschatological end in mind which are not opposites but parallel that can be embraced according to their personal will.

2. Marriage is mutual: Pauline view on marriage was appreciated much on the mutual responsibility that he presented in a special way. Gender inclusive statements expressed by stating wife-husband, man-woman are specially noted because it made a radical change in the patterns of traditional patriarchal society. Paul values both gender equally and prevents inferiority of either. Marriage is a life-long union of persons where the authority over body is shifted mutually. Personal authority on body is exchanged in marriage (v. 4). This is a radical shift from counting wives as a personal property of man to consider her equal with him. In Christian marriage both the partners are real partners and not possession of either of them. Again this equality and authority is expressed in the conjugal rights where it is an obligation not a charity. Mutuality is thus praised as the real underlying principle in Christian marriage.
3. Marriage is indissoluble: Another amazing nature of Christian marriage presented by Paul is its indissolubility. Divorce is not envisioned by divine will (v. 10) and also by Paul. It is a life-long union between two persons. Though Paul counts marriage among the worldly experiences (vv. 29-31), he consider it as indissoluble (v. 39). Paul proposes

a mutual sanctifying life in Christian marriage (v. 14). Paul is an optimist who believes that one believing partner could lead the unbelieving partner into faith (vv. 14, 16). Paul is not unaware of the practical possibility of divorce but he highly forbids divorce with the expressions by imperatives (vv. 12-13).

4. Paul makes a preference for celibacy: It is quite clear from our study that Paul makes a clear preference for celibacy but it does not devalues marriage. Paul considers celibacy and marriage as a gift (v. 7) but cannot be valued one as prominent. His preferential quotes made with *kalon* sayings must be taken as one of his rhetorical skills to advice his audience to reach a decision by themselves. Paul proposes a maxim not a simple opinion (v. 25) that may help the believer to examine himself. Pauline arguments for celibacy like brevity of time, anxieties of the world, practical advices to virgins and widows comes from his ardent passion for the gospel of Christ. That is why he says, 'I wish that all were as I myself am' but recognizes soon the variant gifts given by God to each one. His preference for celibacy originates from his own gift of singleness which liberated him from the worldly affairs.
5. Principle of calling as the basis of distinguishing the way of life: The underlying principle to choose between marriage and celibacy lies in the Christian vocation. The status of the believer does not matter before God (vv. 17-24). The principle of calling stated in the middle of the discourse where we could trace the real nature of calling. In v. 17 we read, '...let everyone lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him'. Now the problem arises how one can distinguishes his way of life. The answer can be concluded from vv. 36-37 where an unmarried is well advised to choose his status. The response to Christian vocation either to marriage or to celibacy comes

from personal will. This personal response can be attained by a close examination of self. If he/she could enjoy control over his/her passions, singleness will be the best option. Otherwise he/she could go on with marriage which is also a gift from God. Here what Paul wants to communicate is that, marriage or celibacy is not obligatory but choices to lead a genuine Christian life. Both are good in principle, better is relative to person.

Thus the thesis on marriage and celibacy in 1 Corinthians 7 was a journey to find out the Pauline mind on Christian marriage and singleness. He is fairly sure about the appropriateness of both ways of life. He calls his audience and whole Church to embrace their way of life according to the gifts that they have been given. By stating the obligations of marriage Paul raises the status of marriage upto celibate way where extremists thought singleness as best way of life. Pauline rhetorical maxims and techniques achieve good results by proposing both ways are suited to Christian life. Thus, in Pauline thinking a particular action might be appropriate for one and not for the other. Pauline maxims do not prescribe celibacy or marriage as a moral good to be achieved by all but they guide believers how they ought to choose between them as appropriate to one's life. This does not mean that one is better than the other rather both are ways to achieve the same end.

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