

Goal

COMMENTS ON I CORINTHIANS 7:15

If the unbeliever refuses to live with the spouse who becomes a Christian, there is nothing the believer can do except to remain faithful to the Lord. The believer is not bound to the unbeliever so as to forfeit his eternal happiness to maintain the unity of the home.

That the word BONDAGE here does not refer to the marriage bond is seen in that (a) the Greek word translated BONDAGE is never used elsewhere to refer to the marriage bond; (b) the marriage bond is mentioned in verses 27 and 39 and a different Greek word is used; and (c) if this refers to the marriage bond and so releases the believer that he can remarry, the Lord would deal with two people in exactly the same situation in exactly different ways. In Matthew 19:9, he says the divorced person cannot remarry, except for fornication, without committing adultery. If this verse gives the deserted believer the right to remarry, it does so in spite of the fact that the deserted person is in exactly the same situation as the divorced person who is not allowed to remarry. The Lord's teaching is not so inconsistent as that. The meaning is that the believer is not in such bondage to the unbeliever that he is obligated to leave the Lord in order to preserve his union with the unbeliever.

The word BONDAGE in I Cor. 7:15 comes from a Greek word meaning a SLAVE. . . . doulo - to make a slave of, reduce to bondage. . . . dedolomai en tini - to be under bondage, held by constraint of law or necessity, in some matter (I Cor. 7:15). Contrast I Cor. 7:15 and I Cor. 7:22,23 where BONDAGE and SERVANT come from the same Greek word. Would anyone affirm that a wife is the SLAVE (IN BONDAGE) of her husband, even though she is BOUND (deo - fastened to, under obligation to) to her husband (deo - I Cor. 7:27,39; Rom. 7:2)?

(GOODSPEED'S TRANSLATION). . . . "But if the one who is not a believer wishes to separate, let the separation take place. In such cases the brother or sister is not a slave; God has called you to live in peace!"

NEW WORLD TRANSLATION OF THE CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURES. . . . "But if the unbelieving one proceeds to depart, let him depart; a brother or sister is not in servitude under such circumstances, but God has called you to peace."

In applying the use of the words BOND or BOUND to marriage see I cor. 7:27,39; Rom. 7:2; I Cor. 7:10,11; Matt. 5:31,32; 19:3-12; Luke 16:16-18; Mark 10:2-12. Remember, should the unbeliever depart, the believer should remain faithful to the Lord and be ready to be a wife to the man. He might wake up and eventually obey the Gospel. (D.W.C.)

D. Claypool