**Relationship Seasons - Blessings and Boundaries**

***Deputy Senior Pastor Chris Kam***

Now for the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. (1 Corinthians 7:1-7)

**Introduction**

We all go through different phases of relationships with different people; so in a world that evolves every single day, how, then, do we handle these changes? We must remember that the Word of God is relevant for everyday use for everyone, and it is important we live our lives in conjunction with the Bible and what it teaches us, and what it instructs us to do; because when we work within God's boundaries, we enjoy His blessings.

**Four things you should ask yourself:**

# What are the issues? What are the real questions?

"Now for the matters you wrote about: 'It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.'" (1 Corinthians 7:1)

The real questions, many times, come from the real issues happening right now in our hearts. So how do we ask the real questions? Find the root of the issues. What is causing our current dilemma? Why are we stuck in this rut we cannot get out off? When we find the answers to these questions, we can slowly get to asking the actual questions that will help us solve our problems.

Ask the right questions. There are some questions that will not help you move further, and there are some that will guide you on towards to path of issue-obliteration. So you need to know what to ask yourself, or to ask others if you know that you cannot walk through your problems alone.

A common issue: insufficiency on your own. Many people have this common misconception that they need someone else to make them "sufficient". This notion is wrong, and needs to be gotten rid of. People tend to look in the wrong places to find things to "complete" themselves. They look to wrong influences, temporary relationships and so one without realizing that sufficiency if found in Christ alone. That is right¬– it is Christ who makes us whole. We are sufficient in Him. In Him, we are enough.

And now all we have to do is remember that simple principle, and it will make our faith so much more steadfast in such a godless world.

# What are suggestions, and what are standards?

"But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband." (1 Corinthians 7:2)


We need to look to the Bible – always. This is because it offers standards and suggestions that we can live by.

"But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die." (Genesis 2:17)

"The Lord God said, 'It is not suitable for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'"

(Genesis 2:18)

When you read verse 17 to 18, you will notice that God sets a boundary before he gives His blessing (the boundary being not eating from the tree, and the blessing being the helper for man). This is an example of a standard set by the Bible–which is there will come boundaries before blessings. He knows if He gives you the blessings without the boundaries, it will not be a blessing anymore. It will become lawlessness. If we do not have boundaries, we will not be able to properly enjoy the blessings God has put in our lives.

# What are desires and what are duties?

"The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command." (1 Corinthians 7:3-6)


Duty has to come first. Desire must, at all times, come after duty. This is especially so in marriage because the first thing both spouses must do is conform to submission towards each other. That is their duty. In a marriage, it is never just about you, because you have a duty to fulfil. If you are a wife, you have to fulfil your duty as a wife - the exact same thing goes for all husbands. In case you do not already know, marriage is extremely hard work because there are duties that you cannot neglect - not even for a second.

But there is always a bright side to the hard work. When you do what is right and operate within the confines of the boundaries, the blessings will be plentiful. What you must remember: God is not in the process of making you happy. Instead, he is in the process of making you holy. Marriage (and all relationships, really) is all about what you can give, and not what you can get.

# What are gifts and what is grace?

"I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that." (1 Corinthians 7:6-7)

We have to go against out humanly selfish nature and instead of just taking and taking, we must learn to give.

We must stop envying other people because of what they have, especially if it is a relationship. And though you may think it is a little bit ironic, singleness and marriage are both gifts! Be happy with what God has given you, and when you work within His boundaries and what He has given you, blessings will fall. Because God will never give you more than you need - He will always give you exactly what He knows you need, even if you do not see the logic behind His gifts.

Charisma: the gift of grace. It needs to be remembered that the real gift does not concern whether you are married or single. The real gift, is grace. Train your eyes on receiving grace. Because some people are so bent on receiving other gifts, that they miss the greatest gift: and that is the gift of grace.

Grace is something we need.

Grace is something we cannot live without.

Grace is something that can only be found in God, and His family.

Paul has a thorn in his flesh. So humiliating maybe that he did not want to say it. He wanted God to fix his situation. God says no. You don’t know what you need.

My grace is sufficient for you. In the passage, Paul requested that God fix the situation he was in, but God said, that Paul had not a clue of what he really needed. This is something we need to remember. We do not know what we need, most of the time. But God knows what we need, all of the time.

His grace, is enough for us.



Sermon summary contributed by Faith Ling

Prayer points contributed by May Ng



SERMON: **Relationship Seasons – Blessings & Boundaries**

**Pray:**

* Wisdom to discern between worldly practices and biblical standards
* Sanctity, respect and priority for the marriage institution.
* Courting couples to know their boundaries.
* Fear and worship of God to be the guiding principle in people’s lives.

***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:*** ***(2 Corinthians 5:17-18)***

**MINISTRIES & EVENTS: Alpha Season**

**The next Alpha Course is scheduled to commence on 6 March 2016.**

**Pray:**

* Believers will encourage their pre-believing friends to sign up.
* Wisdom for the facilitators to speak what the Lord would like them to speak.
* Joyful fellowship amongst all participants and facilitators.
* Heavy outpouring of the Holy Spirit during all sessions.

***Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.***  ***(John 17:3)***

MALAYSIA MY NATION: Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA)

***The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) was finally signed, even though its implementation is not a done deal yet. There are now two years until the ratification and certification processes take place, before the TPPA comes into force.***

**Pray:**

* Wisdom for the government to protect the interest of the country.
* Prudent spending by the people and government.
* Promotion of true market efficiency.
* Protection of the welfare of all groups of people and not just a select group.
* Betterment for the countries involved in the TPPA.

***Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (John 13:14)***

* **A TRANSFORMED WORLD: Extreme Weather**

***An Arctic surge will bring bitter cold air to Northeast America this weekend, with record low temperatures expected.***

**Pray:**

* People are well-prepared to face adverse weather conditions.
* Businesses are well-prepared to face contingencies.
* Safe air travel for those affected.
* People will look to God as sovereign, all-mighty and that He is in control.

***He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!” (Matthew 8:26-27)***