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wife withhold herself from her husband, but the couple must decide together to refrain from ordinary marital satisfaction. No one is sending the other to the couch or the proverbial “doghouse” because this is not a punishment. No one is storming out in anger to spend the night at mom and dad’s, with a friend, at a hotel, or otherwise because this is not a unilateral decision. The couple, as such, has agreed to this break.

*“For a time”* indicates the separation is temporary. The Greek word means “a fixed or definite period” ([Vine](#)), so it is not only brief, but the duration must be agreed upon at the outset. No one is packing all their belongings and moving to another address without their spouse. This is a finite arrangement that others are unlikely to become aware of.

*“That you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer”* specifies the purpose for separating. Manuscripts vary, with just two translations including “fasting” (KJV, NKJV) while most mention “prayer” alone (ASV, NAS, LSB, ESV, NIV). While fasting and prayer are often paired in Scripture and a serious enough event that would cause a married couple to briefly separate for prayer would likely warrant fasting, as well, given the variation among Bible versions, it is acceptable to simply focus on prayer. That is the only justification for a hiatus from the marriage bed, and including fasting would not change much. Either way, increased devotion to God is the one reason for interrupting normal conjugal relations. No other cause meets His approval.

The Old Testament taught the honeymoon principle whereby newlywed couples were commanded to remain in each other’s company, uninterrupted, for a full year. *“When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken”* (Deuteronomy 24:5). After the first anniversary, a man might need to answer the call of duty, but this would be an external imposition, not a decision by the husband or wife to part ways.

*“And come together again”* repeats that the separation is temporary. The reason why it must be of a short duration is stated clearly: *“so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control”*. If marriage answers the need for sexual fulfillment, and it does (Proverbs 5:18; Hebrews 13:4; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:2-4), then a long-term interruption to conjugal satisfaction would present temptations to either or both husband and wife to commit adultery. Causing another to sin is, itself, sinning (Matthew 18:6; Romans 14:13).

## “WORK HEARTILY”

Jay Borden

We often hear that Christians should *“let their light shine”*. Yesterday, I was reminded what that looks like.

I’ve been working a few odd jobs while transitioning back into the agriculture classroom from the state department of education. Yesterday I worked at a college apartment complex. They expected four workers to paint, move furniture, and assemble furniture. Instead, only two of us showed up—one painter and me moving and assembling furniture.

It was a long, physically demanding day, but I simply worked as hard as I could. At the end of the day, the manager took notice of my work ethic, thanked me and even offered me a full-time job! I smiled and told her I was sticking with my “teaching gig”.

I try to live my life by Colossians 3:23: *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.”* That verse is for every Christian, every day and on every job no matter how big or small.

I often tell my students that when they’re on the clock, they no longer own their time. If they’re avoiding work or spending their shift on their phones, they’re not just letting down an employer—they’re failing to honor the commitment they made. Essentially stealing from their employer. Most had never considered that fact.

Joseph understood this. His brothers sold him into slavery. Potiphar recognized Joseph’s abilities and placed him in charge of his whole household. When Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife, he went to prison. Before long, he was in charge of all of the prisoners. Within a few years, Joseph was leading Egypt as Pharaoh’s second-in-command. Joseph stood out due to his faithfulness, attitude and work ethic. No matter the situation, he let his light shine. The same should be true of us.

Our attitude, integrity, and work ethic should point people to Christ. If we’re always complaining or doing the bare minimum, our light grows dim. But when we work with excellence—even when no one is watching—people notice.

Sometimes the brightest testimony we give isn’t with our words. It’s with the way we do our work.

***"WHAT MUST I DO  
TO BE SAVED?"***

***ACTS 16:30***

**LEARN THE GOSPEL**

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

**BELIEVE IN CHRIST**

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

**CONFESS CHRIST**

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 3:19; 17:30

**BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST**

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

***"THE ASSEMBLING OF  
OURSELVES TOGETHER"***

***HEBREWS 10:24-25***

**SUNDAY**

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

**WEDNESDAY**

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

**THURSDAY**

Men's & Ladies' Studies @ 6:20 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard  
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.  
Members Expected.

***"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN  
ANY TRESPASS...  
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"***

***GALATIANS 6:1***

**CONFESS TRESPASSES**

James 5:16; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 8:22

**PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS**

Acts 8:22

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

***"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS  
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN  
SETTINGS OF SILVER"***

***PROVERBS 25:11***

"Christians should use social media as a way to have Jesus gain more followers, not ourselves."

***"WHOLE COUNSEL"***

***ACTS 20:27***

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**"DO NOT DEPRIVE ONE ANOTHER"**

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Despite the worldly inclinations of man, Christ Jesus taught only one very specific reason for divorce: *"Whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery"* (Matthew 5:32). In much the same way that sexual immorality is the only justifiable cause for divorce, so marital separation is strictly limited.

Having warned about fornication, the apostle Paul presented marriage as the divinely approved alternative and acknowledged one permissible cause for interruption to an active sex life: *"Because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control"* (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:2-5). These are the inspired rules governing marital separation.

*"Except with consent"* sets forth that the deprivation of affection is mutual. The husband must not withhold himself from his wife nor the  
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