

1. Orientation to duties and rights

First, we testify that God has a right to do as he wishes with his creatures (Rom. 9:21). All other human rights derive from his divine right.

- a. **God gives us rights:** When we belong to his family, **the Lord gives rights to his adopted children united to Christ through faith in his death and resurrection (this is not the focus of this text, but required to realize its beauty in human relationships).** God confers a *right to eat* from his sacramental table to all who come to it through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as mediator, willing to bear his reproach (Heb. 13:9-15; 1 Cor. 11:23-34). The children have rights to this bread and this cup and all that flows from covenantal union with Christ in the visible church, so, in some senses, these should not be 'thrown' to those 'dogs' outside the covenant (Matt. 15:26). These have a *right* to the tree of life and entrance to the New Jerusalem by its welcoming gates (Isa. 49:4; Rev. 22:14). However, as Ecclesiastes 3 teaches us, during the journey to reach the heavenly city, he will choose his sovereign times and places to let us experience deprivations because of the curse of sin in this world, all part of his fatherly disciplines to strengthen our repentance, faith, hope and love in a community of other believers taking that same journey.

As resurrected and ascended to God's right hand, The Father, through the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ now has authority over all things (Col. 1:12-13; 2:10, 15; Rev. 12:10),

- b. All thrones, or dominions, or rulers or authorities, all created through him and for him (Col. 1:15)
 - i. as head over the church (John 17:2; Col. 2:10), transferred from Satan dominion to his kingdom authority (Col. 1:13; 2:15) to save his elect; to teach (Matt. 7:29); to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6; Col. 1:14), to send apostles into all the world (Matt. 28:18);
 - ii. as judge, John 5:27, to conquer all ungodly rule and power, and death itself, 1 Cor. 15:24-26; Eph. 1:21; Rom. 9:21 as potter to clay; times fixed by God's authority, Acts 1:7),
- c. and grants to us "authority/rights" **spiritually**, in relation to his saving promises
 - i. To become sons of God by faith in Christ (John 1:12), to receive authority to eat from the tree of life and enter the holy city (Rev. 22:14)
 - ii. Elect angels have authority to serve the elect and execute judgment on enemies (Heb. 1:13-14; Rev. 14:18; 16:1-12)
 - iii. Fallen angels, Satan has a limited authority to wreak anti-*lex Christi*, spiritual, relational and material chaos and death on the creation and on humanity, and

entrusts anti-*lex Christi*, chaos-causing-authority to representative (Rev. 13:2, 4, 5, 7, 12; 17:13) and against the saints, to be resisted by faith-union with Christ's authority (Luke 22:53; Acts 26:18; Eph. 6:12, 15; Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; Rev. 6:8; 9:3, 10, 19;); disciples/apostles casting out unclean spirits, healing (Matt. 10:1)

- iv. Governments have an entrusted authority from God to punish evildoers (Rom. 13:1-4, some with assigned jurisdictions, Luke 23:7; though not used properly in John 19:10-11; Acts 9:14). Generally speaking, the government and citizens should have a mutual consent role similar to the marriage of a Christian to a non-Christian. Governments and citizens have mutual consent, governments to provide social order benefits (currency, citizenship, rights to income production and ownership by police and courts, generally enforcing 5th-9th C related common/natural law standards to protect citizens from evildoers) and national safety (trade, borders, military) and citizens to pay taxes or be conscripted for military duty. Neither side should be deprived without consent (1 Cor. 7:3-5, 12-15). The unbelieving government "consents" to the spiritual, priestly practices of the Christian citizens that covers/cleanses the nation by accepting the Christian citizen praying for forgiveness of sins, instructing in moral virtues, as well as "consents" to the relational and material authority granted to its Christian citizens (1 Cor. 7:12-15; 9:9-10, citizens share in the material prosperity of the nation).

d. Grants to us relational "authority/rights" (5th, 7th 9th Cs) that include material authority/rights (4th, 8th 6th Cs)

- i. Apostles, elders, have 5th, 9th Cs relational authority to build up the body in Christ (*symphonic pedagogical* authority, specifically, to know God and his works, to know and do 1st-10th C duties with one another; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; Eph. 4:11-13; e.g. 1 Timothy explains one another duties to trouble-makers, older, younger, rulers, women, elders, deacons, rich, poor widows) with authority to receive 4th, 8th, 6th Cs material support to eat & drink while doing that ministry, including travel with a wife (1 Cor. 9:4-6, 12, 18; 2 Thess. 3:9).
- ii. To receive spiritual, relational and material authority/rights in both spouses-Christian marriage and one spouse-Christian marriage, which cannot be deprived without consent (1 Cor. 7:3-5, 12-15). The unbeliever "consents" to the spiritual, priestly practices of the Christian spouse that covers/cleanses the family by accepting the Christian spouse praying for forgiveness of sins, instructing in moral virtues, as well as "consents" to the relational and material authority granted to the Christian spouse (1 Cor. 7:12-15; 9:9-10, each spouse shares in the material prosperity of the family).
- iii. To marry your fiancé, the one you are engaged to, after you become a believer (1 Cor. 7:37)
- iv. To control our own property (Acts 5:4)
- v. to eat food sacrificed to idols, which are really nothing (1 Cor. 8:4-9).

- vi. Not surrendering our bodily authority to inordinate desires for foods, drinks or sex outside marriage (1 Cor. 6:12)
- vii. The two witnesses given authority to execute judgments on the unbelievers, drought-famine (like Elijah to King Ahab and Queen Jezebel), water to blood (like Moses in Egypt) (Rev. 11:6)
- viii. The saints who conquer temptations to forsake Christ in trials and endure to the end, in the intermediate state as disembodied souls, receive authority over the nations (Rev. 2:26; 12:11; 20:6).

2. Introduction to 1 Corinthians 7:3-5

Today's text teaches more about the limits of authority over each other in marriage, but the implications cover many different types of relationships.

About 20 years ago a couple from New Zealand came to my church office (I was part time pastor and part time seminary teacher) wanting to renew their marriage vows. I didn't check with them on which vows to use (perhaps they thought these are standardized in a minister's handbook?), so I just used the ones developed from Ephesians 5. So the husband repeated after me about loving his wife like Christ loved the church. Then I read the wife's vow line by line about submitting to her husband like the church submits to Christ. The expression on his face was a smirk of "gotcha" and on her face was disbelief and she barely choked out the words as though I had suddenly asked her to give up her dignity and honor as a woman. I'd guess she would probably seize the first opportunity to tell him that she didn't mean that part and that she would not define her relationship to him in as one of "submission".

But in an age when the US military service is a voluntary calling, the choice to forego some usual US citizen rights is made when enlisting and choosing that particular military branch and potentially seeking training and certification for a specific career within that military branch. However, after enlistment in the military, there is a code calling for unquestioning SUBMISSION as part of the very identity of the various branches of military. In other words, much of the military code requires soldiers to forego the normal US citizen options for negotiated deprivations with superiors and must obey all orders and accept any deprivations your officers ask of you.

Some of you are single wondering if Christian marriage is even a good model to follow in the modern age. Some divorced or children of divorced parents, frustrated with the initial idealism promised by Christian marriage only to find those dreams shattered by abuse or infidelity. Perhaps you have a very negative view of authority and submission. Especially if you've come out of any relationships where abusive authority was used to your injury, you rightly have objections to the standard understanding of Christian submission.

Chinese cultural problems 1) improper fulfillment of duties of superiors (those in authority) and depriving of rights without consent and 2) improper fulfillment of duties of inferiors to superiors. Both superiors and inferiors live in bondage to Confucian norms (vaguely related to 5th C) without Scriptural balance of all

commandment duties and rights. Consider similar insights from some other secular counseling books like John Gottman (not specifically about Chinese culture, but lots of similar issues and therapies)

3. Problems in commentaries interpreting 1 Corinthians 7:3-5

If we survey some Christian marriage books or premarital counseling books about authority and submission roles in marriage, do any of them discuss 1 Cor 7:3-5 and the rights of both wives and husbands not to be deprived without consent? Do they view this text only as meaning deprived in the sexual relationship (7th C) or in relation to all the commandments? Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (NICNT commentary, Eerdmans, 1987), 271-282, interprets the meaning as mutual sexual duties with no other consideration that this text command to fulfill duties that are promised as rights given to the spouse, or that depriving could possibly includes other moral law commandments, nor does he refer to Exodus 21:8-11 as a possible background text for Paul's teaching. Gordon Fee (276, 280) interprets the text using mirror reading, providing an educated guess about what question the Corinthian were asking or what topic they wrote to Paul about. Fee guesses that Paul was replying to a problem of "eschatological women," who because of the view that marriage was done away with in the new age, neither marrying or given in marriage, but like the angels, it is a way to prepare for that age by refusing to have sexual relations. And because they tended to view the spirit as important and the body unimportant (6:13; 15:12), prostitutes could be used for the physical needs.

However, while this type of interpretation is quite common, it limits the meaning to the duties and rights of sexual relationships in marriage. While we could consider Fee's interpretation as one narrow possibility, I believe the text has much broader implications for mutual duties and rights in marriage. There are other interpreters who have seen the link between Paul's text and Exodus 21:10.

1 CORINTHIANS 7 IN THE LIGHT OF THE JEWISH GREEK AND ARAMAIC MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE PAPYRI,
David Instone-Brewer (*Tyndale Bulletin*, 52.2, 2001, pp. 232-233)

<https://tyndalebulletin.org/> <https://doi.org/10.53751/001c.30269>

The phrase 'feed and clothe' is also very common in Jewish marriage contracts (as detailed above), and is often accompanied, as here, by some kind of euphemistic reference to conjugal rights. Here we find two references to food and clothing with each followed by a different euphemistic phrase: 'I will bring you into my house' and your bed'. 25 This threefold group is based on the threefold marriage obligations in Exodus 21:10-11, to provide food, clothing, and love. These obligations, together with Deuteronomy 24:1-4, formed the basis for rabbinic divorce law. Men and women had the right to a divorce if any of these obligations were not carried out, and the guilty party lost the dowry. . . .

Paul recognises these same marital obligations in 1 Corinthians 7.²⁹

Article footnote 29 lists several resource citations: This reference to Ex. 21:10-11 in 1 Cor. 7:3-5 has not been widely recognised. It is noted in the excellent reference system prepared for the Revised Version (Cambridge: CUP, 1912) and in a few publications including: of R.J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. 1* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973; Kindle version) 570;

So I looked up Rushdoony's book (I have the Kindle edition), he says, "A second form of divorce appears in the Mosaic legislation, divorce for breach of the marital law, i.e. failure to provide food, raiment and the due sexual relations [for bonded girls or endowered wives]: . . . Paul referred to this law in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, where the requirement of sexual relations and all . . . "obligations" is specified. St. Paul spoke of the failure to meet the sexual responsibilities of the marriage as defrauding the marital partner. (It can also be described, and has been, as a form of desertion). The reference to Exodus 21:1-11 is clear; St Paul spoke in the context of biblical law.

In article footnote 29, David Instone-Brewer also cites this book by William F. Luck, *Divorce and Remarriage: Recovering the Biblical View* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 34-35; <https://www.freegraceresources.org/div-luck-book.pdf>

Since this book has a free PDF online, I read portions of that book. Adapting themes from Luck's (chapter 2, 33-45) study of biblical law for basic legal protections for concubines, he assumes, *a fortiori*, that any requirements or protections provided for concubines were assumed to be provided for wives. Luck writes the duties tailored individually to a husband of a concubine or wife. I borrow his themes to glean the following principle of general equity linked to the symphonic commandments' perspective and expanded to include mutual duties to each other.

1. Married couples are required to generously provide and share household resources and steward them wisely (4th, 6th 8th 10th Commandments; Exod. 21:10)
2. Married couples should have a monogamous sexual relationship that permitted birth of children who were eligible for inheritance rights (7th and 6th Commandments to marry and fill the earth with living children, Exod. 21:10).
3. Married couples must protect the other's reputation from unjust shame or false accusations of adultery (9th C, Deut. 22:13-21; Num. 5:29).
4. Married couples must be present in the home, only leaving for valid reasons, and not deserting each other without consent (5th C rights of those in authority and those in submission).
5. Married couples must ensure mutual physical protection from physical abuse, drawing a parallel from the rights of concubines or slaves (6th C, Exod. 21:26-27). Any abuse that permanently injures a significant part of a spouse's body (assuming facial abuse, listing injuries such as ruining an eye or knocking out a tooth) is grounds for separation and divorce.

Today's text focuses on the relationship between husbands and wives. But the adapting several interpreters of this text cited above, the implications of the text challenge abuse of authority models (absolute authority and unquestioned submission) in all human relationships whether government-citizens, church leaders-members, parents-children,

In the following exposition, Paul is teaching that there are limits to authority and submission, explained by an

easily overlooked example in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 and a corollary text in verses 33-34. Wherever mutual vows, promises, and contracts are involved, both parties to the agreement have moral law duties and corresponding moral law rights that may not be altered by one party without the other party's consent. All these relationships aim to develop an awareness of how to mutually please each other under moral law duties.

4. **Married couples give rights to each other with** decision making authority to preserve those rights (1 Cor. 7:3-4; see v. 12 'consent to live with' includes the mutual investment in duties & rights marriage).

Mutual *lex Christi* duties confer mutual *lex Christi* rights

If you had a Christian marriage in the church, you promised to trust God (1st-4th commandments) to give you the power to love your spouse (4th-10th commandments). Your spouse then has a right to receive what you promised. You support each other in fulfilling duties, rights you grant each other to receive those duties. (Exodus 21:10)

- a. **INVEST in mutual *lex Christi* blessings (投資存款箱 each invests ten hearts in bank, each represents supporting one another in their duties to God and supporting their duties to each other, and giving these rights to one another)**

Biblical evidence supports **the principle that vowed, promised or contracted mutual duties grant covenanted mutual rights to enjoy all *lex Christi* virtues**. Perhaps Paul is using a the general equity principle derived from this Old Testament regulation to develop his thesis in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5. Exodus 21:10 shows interdependent *lex Christi* obligations: "If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish **her food, her clothing, or her marital rights**. 若另娶一個，那女子的吃食、衣服，並好合的事，仍不可減少。 11 And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money." In this text, the husband has no unilateral authority 沒有單方面的權威 to expect other benefits from his wife while depriving her of normal *lex Christi* rights due to any Israelite wife. She is due all the blessed *lex Christi* pleasurable rights of wives. Food and clothing could be defined as 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th C's interdependent rights to the fruits of the family's six-day vocation (4th C), sharing in family material resources (8th C), thankfully and contently sharing things in common (10th C) for their healthy and flourishing lives (6th C). Nor can her marital rights be neglected, nor can her desires for the relational intimacy and love-making techniques that she finds pleasurable (7th C) or the common desire of most wives to bear and raise children from that union (6th C). Of course, every Jewish family was expected to observe and mutually support each other in keeping the laws related to God and his worship (1st-4th Cs; Exod. 20:10; Gen. 18:19; Josh. 24:15; Ruth 1:16).

- b. **What are those duties and rights?**

Contrast with Gary Smalley, *The Five Love Languages*,

Gary Smalley *Five Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts* (Northfield 2015) 愛之語：兩性溝通的雙贏策略 簡體譯本又名：《愛的五種語言》作者：蓋瑞·巧門

When each spouse commits to speaking the love language of the other spouse, feelings of intimacy and feeling cared for develop, making it easier to reciprocate.

1. **Metaphor of “love-tanks”** that are “full” (thus satisfied with marriage) when love languages are spoken, “needy/empty” (and not happy with marriage) when love languages neglected.
2. **Mutual identification of love languages:** my love language(s) are the one(s) I use most, the one(s) I complain about most when not satisfied, and the ones I ask for most often:
 - a. Words of Affirmation
 - b. Acts of Service
 - c. Receiving Gifts
 - d. Quality Time
 - e. Physical Touch
3. **Mutual determination to speak spouse's love language(s)**

Smalley proposes a love-tank system disconnected from the biblical-redemptive union with Christ (I serve in order to be served). Also he creates a list that is generally valid and biblical but unrelated to the categories of the moral law. I borrow his metaphor and try to improve it: Married couples cannot stop filling the love tank (fulfilling moral law duties) without consent from the other spouse.

To develop a full comparison with WLC (in parallel with 1 Corinthians, Paul's duties as apostle): duties of superiors to have maturity in the full Larger Catechism **symphonic pedagogical** perspective: They know God and his works very well in order to imitate God in his *lex Christi* likeness; to give inferiors what is due them under those two categories: they have a right to have a superior who properly speaks, teaches and counsels about God and his works, and proactively performs the duties of the *lex Christi* virtues while using formative abilities and covenant relational affections. Paul shows both sets of duties to the Corinthian church. Inferiors do not deprive superiors of their rights without consent.

5. The **comprehensive symphonic pedagogical perspective has a sub-category called the symphonic morality perspective, defining the duties and rights by two great commandments** to love God and love neighbor and the specific duties of the moral law (1st-10th commandments). These seem to be the main idea in 1 Cor. 7:3-5, related to bodily rights, particularly the second table of the moral law. Authority is not independent of the desires of those in submission or absolute (consultation for win-win decisions/solutions is needed). What are those duties?

1	Worship only the true God	Do not worship any other gods
2	Worship God in the way he defines	Do not worship idols
3	Worship with reverence of God's name	Do not misuse God's name
4	Honor the 6-1 work-rest-worship pattern	Do not corrupt the 6-1 work-rest-worship pattern

5	Honor your appointed role-relationships	Do not dishonor your appointed role-relationships
6	Honor human life	Do not murder
7	Honor marriage	Do not dishonor marriage
8	Honor property rights	Do not steal
9	Honor reputations	Do not lie
10	Be thankful and content	Do not envy

What are the moral law virtues you promise to fulfill?

- A. **What are the *Lex Christi* virtues? Meta-virtue** (righteousness, put off unrighteousness). Each love-of God command involves a complexity of duties. Each love-of-neighbor command involves a complexity of duties to protect and preserve those *lex Christi virtues* and rights to those virtue privileges.

1.1. Great commandments virtues in the Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC 103-148)

1.1.1 love God

1.1.1.1 Lex Christi virtue: pro-Lord (1st C), requiring faith and obedience to this Triune God. Our highest allegiance belongs to his majesty. He is preeminent in all our thoughts and all our worship. We are jealous of his glory. WLC 103-106

1.1.1.2 Lex Christi virtue: pro-covenantal (2nd C): all proper worship must be according to the demands of the covenant under which God's people lived. He is uni-approachable, meaning we may only approach Him in worship in the way he commands through his condescension in the covenant. These broader requirements are given more specific application in WLC 107–110, focusing on what defines proper corporate worship. WLC 107-110

1.1.1.3 Lex Christi virtue: pro-blessing (3rd C) requiring the proper use of the name of the LORD, namely to receive blessings from the LORD, in his name (Gen. 12:2; Num. 6:24-27; Ps. 5:12; 29:11), *in their hearts and with their mouths* honor and bless his holy name (Ps. 16:7; 103:1-2; Rev. 5:11-14), pray and worship in his name (John 14:13-14; Eph. 5:20), and give blessings in his name to others (Gen. 27:7; 28:1-4; 49:28; Deut. 33; Ps. 72:17). WLC 111-114

1.1.1.4 Lex Christi virtue: pro-theosynchrony (4th C, Sabbath rest): WLC 115–21 focuses on the observance of the Lord's Day.

1.1.2 love man

1.1.2.1 Lex Christi virtue: pro-theosynchrony (4th C, six days labor): requiring our submission to his appointed times for work and Sabbath rest, as well as submission to his providential times (Eccles. 3:1-14; Jas. 4:15) in weekly cycles, annual patterns, and lifetime perspectives, as well as with God's interpretation of history, past, present, future.

1.1.2.2 Lex Christi virtue: pro-harmony (5th C) requires preserving harmonious role relationships between those in authority, submission, and equals. WLC 123-133

1.1.2.3 Lex Christi virtue: pro-life (6th C) requiring protection of human life from conception to death (so against abortion and euthanasia), and, for those who are married and able to bear and raise children. WLC 134-136, sustenance and protection of the lives of the weak and poor (Jas. 1:27; 2:15-16)

1.1.2.4 Lex Christi virtue: pro-marriage (7th C) requiring preservation of one-man-one-woman heterosexual attraction within the marriage covenant. WLC 137-139

1.1.2.5 Lex Christi virtue: pro-stewardship (8th C) requiring man to preserve, protect and prosper all that is needed for the body in the material world, including family, Gospel ministers, fellow believers and neighbors in need, without resources (1 Tim. 5:3, 8; Gal. 6:6, 9-10), opportunities to work for food (OT gleaning laws, Lev. 19:10; 23:22). WLC 140-142

1.1.2.6 Lex Christi virtue: pro-truthfulness (9th C) requiring truthful witness. WLC 143-145

1.1.2.7 Lex Christi virtue: pro-contentment (10th C): requiring complete satisfaction in the LORD and all he provides for our earthly existence: "I shall not want. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life (Ps. 23:1, 6; Phil. 4:11-13). WLC 146-148

B. Let us start with the broad biblical principles of mutual agreements to support each other in living out *lex Christi* duties.

Westminster Larger Catechism 99:7-8). It must support others (including spouses) in performing duties and preventing sins against the moral law. Prooftexts (household heads, church leaders have duties to teach and apply the commandments to their families or members (Gen 18:19; Exod. 20:10; Josh. 24:15; Deut. 6:6-7; Eph. 5:11). Economic-material support is one essential duty of families to one another (1 Tim. 5:4, 8, 16; Matt. 7:11; 2 Cor. 12:14), and of believers to one another (Matt. 25:31-45; Gal. 6:9-10; Isa. 58:7). These are exemplified by the Lord as he answers our petitions for his will to be accomplished on earth, especially to all men, as it is in heaven (Matt. 5:44; 6:9-13).

IMPLICIT FROM 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, 12-15 are the duties and rights to mutual support in faith-union with Christ in the covenant of grace.

GIVE WHAT YOU OWE, what you promised, to please within moral law (7th C pleasure): 1 Cor. 7:3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. 丈夫當用合宜之分待妻子；妻子待丈夫也要如此。

LORD'S PRAYER teaches us to ask for what the Lord wills, for his creatures to reflect his glory

Honoring his holy name, asking for material sustenance for life (food, drink, clothing, a place to live), the forgiveness of our sins as we forgive others, delivered from temptation and evil

INVESTING IN THE LOVE BANK

SUM: do you know the Lord, and have you experienced union with his mediator, Christ, in the covenant of grace so that you desire to DO HIS *lex Christi* WILL from the heart?

GOD CHOPS YOUR TOKEN (代幣), YOU **KNOW** WHAT PLEASES HIM (Faith working through love for God, love for SPOUSE, love for FAMILY, RELATIVES, neighbors, STEWARD RESOURCES) Is this enough? No, this is just the beginning of learning to love.

NEXT DAY: **you EXERCISE that relationship** (PUT A TOKEN IN THE BANK)

6. Bible examples of duties and rights in marriage (Exodus 21:8-11; Numbers 5:12-31), families, the poor, legal courts, kings and citizens, pastors and church members, business, schools.

a. Biblical background on mutual duties and corresponding rights

- i. Christians have general duties to exemplify, proclaim, intercede, and administer *lex Christi virtues* to all neighbors, but especially to those to whom we have made vows, promises, or contracts. Most of these relational agreements have mutual components.
 - a. Businesses (e.g., if you order food at restaurants, the owner expects payment, written contracts for goods and services provided within a certain time frame for a certain payment, employer-employee contracts).
 - b. Schools (socially expected prepayment by parents or students for expected teacher competencies and student learning outcomes, joined with some form of recognized accomplishment, such as a grade, transcript, credited/transferrable courses, a certificate, diploma, or degree)
- ii. Several general equity examples from the Law of Moses in the Old Testament support this principle of mutual duties and rights.
 - a. Firstborn sons have rights to a double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:17; so the meaning of Esau giving up this double portion of the inheritance, Gen. 25:29-34). Children whose parents and congregation fulfill the covenant rite of circumcision on their male infants or make unilateral infant baptism vows have rights to being raised in the nurture and instruction of the Lord by the means of grace (Gen. 17:1-14; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Eph 6:4).
 - b. Spousal rights (also assumes fulfillment of wedding vows to one another; specifically noted conjugal rights related to 6th C for food, clothing and 7th C sexual relationship, Exod. 21:8-11; 1 Cor. 7:3-5; 12-15), thus implying all ten sets of *lex Christi* rights related to support for a spouse's relationship to God and his worship and the spouse's rights to share in the 6th C privilege of pregnancy and childbirth and the 5th C consequent authority of parenting, sharing in the 9th C rights of family reputation (Prov. 31:23, 28-31). *Lex Christi* duty is also a right to live in a harmonious (5th C), peace-preserving (6th C) marriage. An unrestrainable, constantly quarreling spouse is ruinous to the other's peaceful home (Prov. 19:13; 21:9; 25:24; 27:15-16). The duty of a husband to protect the sexual purity of his marriage (7th C) also granted the accused wife a fair trial before the priest (9th C), ultimately

protecting the marriage bond from either the husband's false accusations or the wife's adulterous deception (Num. 5:12-31). A husband initiated a test before the Lord officiated by the priest in the temple by the wife swearing an oath before the Lord of her innocence from the husband's accusation of adultery and then drinking the cursed, bitter water as a threat of judgment if she is lying under oath. Without conclusive proof, the husband entrusts the wife to God's just judgment rather than initiating divorce (1 Pet. 2:23; 4:19).

- c. Familial duties conferred rights to widows. In a sense, we can say that the widow (her body/life) had *authority* over the bodies/lives of living brothers-in-law 近的親屬. In God's design for **levirate marriage**, 娶寡嫂制婚姻 brothers of a widowed sister-in-law must marry, care for, and provide offspring and continuance in managing and prospering their deceased brother's land allotment (Deut. 25:5-9; Gen. 38:8-9; Ruth 4:3-12).
- d. Rights of the poor to various laws for swift payment of wages (Deut. 24:12-15), economic support, not charging interest (Exod. 22:25), kinsmen redeemer care for family who become poor (Lev. 25:25, 35, 39), right of redemption of property (Lev. 25:29, 33; Jer. 32:8), levirate marriage (Ruth 4:6), gleaning (Lev. 19:10; 23:22), impartiality to either rich or poor (Exod. 23:3, 6; Lev. 9:15), not abusing the poor, but showing kindness and justice, and honoring their rich faith (Deut. 15:7-11; Job 20:19; 22:9, 16, 22; 24:4-9; 29:7, 12-16; Ps. 82:3-4; Prov. 14:21; 29:7; 31:5, 8-9; Isa. 1:17, 23; Jer. 5:28; 22:3; Amos 5:11-12; Zech. 7:9-10; Jas. 2:5-6)
- e. OT Israelites had justice rights within the graded courts of Israel's theocracy, appealing to higher courts when the cases were too complicated for the lower courts (Deut. 17:8). Outsiders had no rights or claims in Israel (Neh. 2:20).
- f. Israelite kingship duties and rights created mutual duties and rights for Israel's citizens. Saul, as king defines his rights and duties to the people of Israel, written up as a form of a constitution (1 Sam. 10:25). The political obligations for military service (5th C) and the possibility of dying on the battlefield (6th C) are waived for one year after marriage, granting a newlywed couple the right of mutual enjoyment of marriage (Deut. 24:5; Prov. 5:18). After the first year, the husband does not have authority over his own body/life. The king's duty to protect the nation from invasion also granted him authority to draft any able-bodied husband into his military and life maintenance apparatus (1 Sam. 8:11-18). Nor does the Israelite family have total autonomy rights over their resources since **taxes** (or the equivalent in produce) must be paid to the king (1 Sam. 8:14-17) and **tithes** to the temple (Deut. 12:5-12).

iii. Similarly, in the New Testament, these rights continue in those various relationships.

- a. Mutual rights in the visible church exist between leaders and members (leadership

makes vows to members and other leaders; members make vows to leaders and other members). As believers have the right to faithful teaching from the apostle Paul (Acts 20:26-32), the apostle Paul has the *right* to *material* support for his ministry. However, he did not make use of these rights in order to be a servant who was more blessed to give than receive, without accusations of simony, idleness, greed, or abuse of power (see Acts 20:33-35; Tit. 1:7; 2 Thess. 3:7-11). Thus, all who labor in the ministry of the Word, sacraments, and prayer (Acts 6:4) have the right to material support from their flock. Disciples should "share all good things" with their teachers, which included housing, supporting a spouse and family who would serve with those leaders, food and drink, clothing, and means of transportation (Gal. 6:6; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Cor. 9:4-18). Teacher-pastor-shepherds should not have to groan with the failure of the flock to provide material needs in addition to groaning over the weaknesses and sins of their souls (Heb. 13:16-17).

- b. In exchange agreements, the master agrees to pay the vineyard laborers "whatever is right" (Matt. 20:4). Defrauding the laborer of his wages breaks multiple commandments at once: abuse of power, lying, stealing, and taking the life of the poor (James 5:4; see WLC 151).

We've all been through COVID (most of you here in the US, we in Taiwan). As many of us experienced, the government saw it as their duty to declare an epidemic emergency and then determined various deprivations of our rights (lock-downs, social distancing, mask mandates, closure of "non-essential" gatherings). Though our text today doesn't define the relationship between the federal & state governments and the citizens, the principles within it generally have been embedded in our governing documents. Declaration of Independence: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, consent of the governed; Bill of Rights, US Constitution is a type of contract of duties and rights). Government has certain duties to citizens. The citizens have rights that cannot be taken away without consent. Many of the government's commanded deprivations came without the consent of the governed.

Though our text is not specifically about church leaders and members, the principles are embedded within presbyterian forms of eldership and church constitutions. During COVID, church leaders were caught in various dilemmas balancing the need to gather for worship and fellowship with health and safety concerns that involved masks and social distancing, limits on church gatherings. With various legal, medical and freedom of religion opinions among church leaders and her members, it became increasingly difficult to balance leadership duties for guarding health and safety with the majority consent of members to be deprived of various rights. While elders have been chosen by the members to govern the church because of their evident biblical wisdom, elders committed to wise church governance should not make major changes that cause deprivation without the consent of the members.

DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH TOKENS FOR Engineering, Building and Teaching a Healthy Marriage 設計、建立和教導健康的婚姻

搖晃存款箱 Yáohuàng cúnkuǎn xiāng 動搖 Dòngyáo

NOT ENOUGH . . . TO INVEST IN THE LOVE BANK you **generally know the principles of love for each other, but more details about how to please your spouse are needed.**

7. Married couples' moral law investment should be pleasing to each other 投資存款箱

我在存款箱的投資應該會讓你滿意/喜悅

- a. Specific application in 1 Corinthians 7:33-34 expands to the principle of mutual enjoyment** (pleasing each other) in marriage by exemplifying, proclaiming, interceding, and administering all *lex Christi* blessings.

1 Cor. 7:33 But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. Moreover, the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord and how to be holy in body and spirit. However, the married woman is anxious about worldly things and how to please her husband. 娶了妻的，是為世上的事掛慮，想怎樣叫妻子喜悅。34 婦人和處女也有分別。沒有出嫁的，是為主的事掛慮，要身體、靈魂都聖潔；已經出嫁的，是為世上的事掛慮，想怎樣叫丈夫喜悅。

1. So the excellent, prudent wife is given by the Lord as a gracious gift, e.g., representing all the *lex Christi virtues* the Lord exemplifies and commands (Prov. 18:22; 19:14). She is the pleasure, the crown of a righteous husband who trusts her moral integrity, values the righteous results of her labors and praises her moral excellence above others (Prov. 12:4; 31:11-31). She actively seeks to please him within *Lex Christi's* duties. "She does him good and not harm all the days of her life!" 他一生使丈夫有益無損。(Prov. 31:12) .
2. You exercise your relationship with God in ways that support each other in knowing God and his will. You exercise your relationship with each other to show specific forms of love within *lex Christi* boundaries that please your spouse. The following is a reasonable way to apply this principle: (1 Cor. 7:33-34; Prov. 31:12): learn, remember, satisfy willingly when asked, proactively satisfy joyfully.
 - a. You learn what your spouse enjoys (asking about preferences, observing pleasures but also observing dislikes, negative emotions that indicate dislike, irritable, angry, frustrated, critical)
 - b. You remember what your spouse likes.
 - c. You gladly respond to do what your spouse likes when asked to do something.
 - d. You proactively do what your spouse likes without being asked, even though you may not like it.
 - e. Your pleasures and enjoyments become mutual in that you both start to enjoy what your spouse enjoys, such that proactively doing them does not feel burdensome.

YOU SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN KNOWING GOD AND DOING HIS WILL? YOU CHOP EACH OTHER'S TOKENS, YOU PLEASE EACH OTHER. (PUT A TOKEN IN THE BANK)

WISE SPOUSE GENTLY TEACHES WHAT YOU LIKE: "I do not like that. Next time, if you do it this way, it would be better." SPOUSE humbly hears without defensiveness and gets token chopped.

WISE SPOUSE GENEROUSLY ASKS WHAT IS PLEASING AND HOW TO IMPROVE. WANT MORE CHOPPED TOKENS: Do you like this? (hold out a wooden coin) She says YES, THAT PLEASES ME (stamps several with chop) (UNDERSTANDING WHAT SHE/HE LIKES WITHIN THE MORAL LAW).

WISE SPOUSE ENCOURAGES: I like it when you do _____! Thank you!

. (PUT A TOKEN IN THE BANK) EXERCISE THAT KNOWLEDGE by DOING IT EVEN THOUGH I MIGHT NOT LIKE IT) he puts one in the bank (doing it to please her, what she likes)

3. I can always abundantly bless and please you without asking permission. I can always expand the bounty and blessings of the vows, promises, and agreements (an already stamped token can be freely added). This is not usually contentious, and the other party happily gives consent to the positive changes.
4. In contrast, failure to perform these *lex Christi* duties brings sorrow and suffering to the spouse, bringing familial and public shame (Prov. 12:4).

Summary: Our mutual agreements should be *pleasing* to each other, offering each other mutual benefits that create attractive synergies that keep us in those agreements. Marriage is one instance of these types of mutually pleasing socio-cultural agreements, and the one taught by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:33-34.

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NOT ENOUGH . . . you need to seek permission in any decisions that deprive your spouse.

8. One spouse cannot deprive the other of these moral law rights without permission (1 Cor. 7:5, see, v. 15; complete refusal to provide rights = desertion, which is a legitimate reason for divorce).

- C. In contractual or vowed relationships, I cannot deprive (take out from the bank) without your permission to withdraw 提款

未經您的許可我不能從存款箱提款

未經你的允許我不能虧負你

- iv. Deprivation in 1 Corinthians 7:5 doesn't mean doing sinful things. **It means consenting together to let your spouse pursue other valid kingdom things, other *lex Christi* duties that limit what he/she can do for you.** The clues from the context involved marital separation for a time, likely due to one spouse leaving for work, travel, or missionary journeys.
 - i. Deprivation may enhance personal gifts and service opportunities (traveling away from home to study for short intervals, intensive classes, or a semester—but long-term separation for a 3-5 year period is not wise).
 - ii. Deprivation might be used to strengthen marital or parenting relationships (e.g., to receive counseling or attend a marriage or parenting enrichment conference).
 - iii. The deprivation might be for business or work (needed income from another location with better job options, but the family chooses to stay in their original location for various other reasons, perhaps to care for elderly parents or children's educational, social-community services, or friendships).
 - iv. Dialog example: husband asks wife, "Can I deprive you of my *lex Christi* presence to bless you for a short time (**three weeks, in order to do this other *lex Christi* thing: this mission trip, this work project, teach this class**) without you facing any other temptations or troubles? Will you draw near to God in prayer during this time of deprivation?"

- v. **Also, it means together consenting to life choices that cause familial, relational, socioeconomic, medical, and political deprivation** (leaving original family, not being able to purchase a home, losing political influence as a foreigner, political dangers, entering zones of religious persecution, income instability, lowered quality of medical care).
 - i. Deprivation in terms of no good, stable friends or nearby family into instability constantly changing international community,
 - ii. Deprivation in terms of no healthy churches to attend, into the instability of leaders and independent churches without constitutions or Reformed doctrinal statements (moving to new locations for work or missions).
 - iii. Deprivation in the hopes for kingdom expansion (planting a church together, doing missionary work together in a foreign country).
 - iv. Deprivation of monthly disposable family income might be used to invest in needed housing, vehicles, or tools for work.
 - v. Moving into a non-Christian or anti-Christian community to witness for Christ among hostile or resistant neighbors might result in a deprivation of social reputation.
 - vi. **Dialog example:** "Can we pursue foreign missions together? Do you consent to face various deprivations in your life options to pursue this work?" My own

example from 1995 is my uncertainty about my future calling and 1.5 years of Barbara's refusal to consider returning to Taiwan. At the funeral of our good friend's infant son, Barbara shifted from an unwillingness to be deprived to a willingness to go, when she had a mental image comparing the hope of Christians in death during one of the Christian hymns while picturing the dissonant music played from trucks with pictures of the deceased in front for folk religion funeral processions in Tanshui. This change in her willingness to consent to deprivation led me to pursue returning to Taiwan. Barbara also had a few desired conditions for our return to lessen the deprivation: raise enough money to return to the US every two years to see family with budgeting to communicate with family while in Taiwan, housing that did not put us in a missionary fishbowl comparing parenting styles with other missionary parents on campus at Christ's College.

CAN I DEPRIVE YOU IN THIS AREA OF DUTIES?

Yes, (and she opens the bank with a password and takes one token out; I am willing to be deprived for a limited time)

BUT respect for my rights and seeking my permission adds to the honoring in the relationship CHOP a TOKEN, GOD IS PLEASED, SPOUSE IS PLEASED, next time important decision, EXERCISE THIS PLEASING BEHAVIOR: seek win-win solution, (ADD TOKEN to BANK)

(can I leave you for two years to go to a foreign country and study) Please wait; let's discuss this more

(can we move to another more difficult place to live and plant a church?) I am not ready for that yet

Can we I go to the south each week to take a new job? No, I'm not willing to let you do that. I need you here to help me with the children. Maybe we can try that when the children are older.

WIFE: Can I return to school or work and put the children in preschool? (yes, open lockbox, take out token, meaning I give permission to be deprived)

Can I become a deacon in the church? Let's wait until the children are older (not open safe)

Can we have more children?" (open lockbox, take out token, meaning I give permission to be deprived, initially many new deprivations for pregnancy and giving birth and caring for children under 5 years old)

Specific application in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 expands to the principle of mutual decision-making authority over all lex Christi blessings provided by the spouse

1 Corinthians 7:3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

丈夫當用合宜之分待妻子；妻子待丈夫也要如此。4 妻子沒有權柄主張自己的身子，乃在丈夫；丈夫也沒有權柄主張自己的身子，乃在妻子。5 夫妻不可彼此虧負，除非兩相情願，暫時分房，為要專心禱告方可；以後仍要同房，免得撒但趁著你們情不自禁，引誘你們。

ENOUGH FOR INVESTING IN LOVE? NOT ENOUGH! **CAN I DEPRIVE YOU FOR THIS AMOUNT OF TIME?**

9. Set mutually agreeable limits on permitted deprivations to avoid moral law crisis and marital destruction. (1 Cor 7:5).

- D. CHECK UP ON DEPRIVATION MODE (one week, one month, two months, etc.) to PREVENT EMERGENCY MODE (I'm committed to pleasing you and not making unacceptable changes)
- 1. Even after making a mutual decision to accept deprivation, the couple must be **open to renegotiating if the variables create intolerable forms of deprivation** for either the husband or the wife. The goal is to find win-win solutions enabling both husband and wife to thrive in mutually supported callings. If there are differences of viewpoint on what actions constitute depriving or neglect without consent, try to negotiate for win-win solutions. Make specific plans right away to restore trust and show encouraging efforts to meet all *lex Christi* duties in your marriage in ways that please your spouse.
- 2. The depriving must stop if you become aware that this leads either one of us into temptation or *lex Christi* failure. Mutual consent is required whenever the couple changes plans, vocations, and income that leads to any forms of *lex Christi* deprivation. Such forms of deprivation might include changes in vocation [4th C], relationships [5th & 7th Cs], life, health and child-bearing [6th C], material resources and housing [8th C], or reputations [9th C]. Those forms of deprivation could include long-term living with your parents after marriage with no time limit or essential purpose, how many children to have, health care decisions, moving away from the original family to a strange or foreign location, one spouse leaves the other to study, travel or work in another country or city, living in polluted environments for the sake of ministry, moving to a cheaper apartment with fewer amenities, taking jobs with low pay to serve in ministry, husband loses a job, how to allocate the monthly household income, the husband pursuing seminary education while the wife works or while the husband attempts both work and school, living in areas with fewer resources or with higher safety dangers, lending the family's money to a relative to start a business, making housing or business investments, threats of religious ostracism or persecution, or threats of war. MOST AFFAIRS START

WHEN ANOTHER PERSON PROVIDES SOME OF THE LEX CHRISTI BENEFITS THAT THE SPOUSE IS NOT PROVIDING.

- a. The terms of our vows, promises, and contracts confer rights to their recipients. Mutual vows and contracts promise the fulfillment of duties and give rights to both parties in the agreements. Any non-consensual changes by either side to the terms of the vows, promises, or contracts, especially those changes that could deprive or defraud, require the consent of the other party and some agreement on the altered time frame for those depriving factors.
- b. For example, if a school suddenly defrauds or deprives its teachers of less experienced and competent ones, vacates adequate course requirements, and raises tuition after initial prepayments or deposits, it must arrange for mutual consent of those whom they are serving or offer refunds of any prepayments. However, if a school administration lowers tuition payments, hires more competent teachers, and improves course requirements, the parents and students happily consent.
- c. Neither spouse should deprive the other of any *lex Christi* duty/blessing in marriage. Deprive means independently choosing not to bless, to give what has been promised, without the spouse's consent. Any situation/period where these blessings would stop or be removed should be "by agreement for a limited time."
- d. Notice 1 Corinthians 7:12-13, where the same moral principle of mutual consent is used again, in this case, related to an agreement to remain in a mixed religious orientation marriage. When a non-Christian spouse unilaterally abandons these duties, demanding for him or herself an ungodly independent authority to decide to separate (separating without consent for an unlimited time), frequently accompanied by some form of conflict or abuse, depriving the spouse of *lex Christi* rights, the Christian spouse is free to divorce since God has called us to peace (1 Cor. 7:15).
- e. The principle of 7th C ***mutual sexual duties*** to each other corresponds to ***mutual sexual rights with decision-making authority*** of each to their unhindered maintenance. There can be no independent decision-making to *deprive* the spouse of these rights. They may only be limited, stopped, or deprived with consent for a limited time to prevent temptations and sins associated with their deprived condition.
- f. The husband cannot unilaterally make *depriving* changes to the terms without the wife's consent. There should be a mutually agreed-upon *lex Christi* purpose for any *depriving* changes, and generally, those changes should be for a specified time frame, normally only for a designated duration, to prevent either one from being led into various Spiritual attacks from Satan or temptations due to moral or physical weakness. The couple should remain open to negotiation of deprivation factors and duration even after making a decision.
- g. Husbands and wives must fulfill all *lex Christi* duties to one another. But these are also mutually *covenanted rights with executive authority to preserve* granted *to the spouse* that cannot be removed without consent for a limited time and agreed upon purpose (Gen. 1:28-29; 2:15-24;

implied in 1 Cor. 7:3-5; Eph. 5:28-28; Mal. 2:14-16). Note Ecclesiastes 9:9, where enjoyment of life with a wife should be understood in light of Eccl. 12:13, enjoyment within the married life of *lex Christi* virtues).

- h. For example, if a husband vowed to love his wife like Christ loved the church, this confers on his wife a corresponding right to be loved by the husband with all forms and applications of the ten sets of *lex Christi* virtues. Most married couples make many family planning and vocational and income-related adjustments throughout their married lives. Bountiful, blessed expansion of these duties that benefit both husband and wife only requires a minor negotiated consent. The wife would gladly accept changes that expand the bounty and blessings of his love, such as an anniversary vacation together to a mutually desirable location without the children. Still, this requires some level of negotiated consent to decide the date and time of such an event.

FOR FURTHER BIBLICAL THEOLOGY RESEARCH

Consider 1 Corinthians as a mutually interpretive context for the idea of the duties of superiors and the rights of inferiors,

Paul knows God and his works and properly represents him in pastoral counseling.

Paul's example in solving division problem Chapters 1-4, using 5th C principle of the headship of Christ, the leadership of apostles and the supervision of guides (1 Cor. 4:15-16)

Paul willingly giving up rights to wife (7th C) and financial support (8th C) This is an example of a superior willing giving up his rights of inferiors' financial support, therefore giving consent for them not to give him offerings> he does this for sake of Gospel, that people will not misunderstand his motives and so others will see he is living for their interests as an apostle's ministry example of self-sacrifice 1 Cor. 9. *Paul consents to financial deprivation, giving up his rights to Corinthians' financial support as an apostle, for other kingdom purposes.* Obviously, consent to be deprived is never to make allowances for either his own sin or for the Corinthians to use their money for sinful purposes. He does encourage them to use their finances for another kingdom purpose, to help the saints suffering in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8-9).

love chapter 13, love is not self-seeking (one form of self-seeking could be depriving without consent, which is against the principles of love).

Leaders should be able to help equals sort out their rights, rather than going to secular courts for solutions (1 Cor. 6:1-5).

Counselor duties and counselee rights could also be derived from 1 Corinthians examples.

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NOT ENOUGH . . . SHAKE THE LOVE-INVESTMENT BANK you need an optimistic attitude to the amount of investments in the deposit box. Is it half full or half empty? 半滿或半空 Bàn mǎn huò bànkōng

10. Make sure your desire for the pleasure of satisfied rights don't become discontented demands that cause you to constantly feel deprived. Devotion to the Lord brings contentment and freedom from material and relational anxiety (1 Cor. 7:35). Surrendering rights in order to advance kingdom service is another way to express devotion to the Lord and love for those we serve.

E. CAUTIONS:

1. MAKE SURE YOUR PLEASURES DO NOT BECOME DISCONTENTED COVETING (e.g., beware if you constantly feel your spouse is "depriving" you; be realistic about limits to time, energy, abilities, and resources). This could be like SHAKING the storage BANK, and saying it's not worth it. I always feel deprived, so I don't want to invest in this marriage.

From another perspective, Christian husbands and wives ought to exercise caution in publicly claiming their spouse is intentionally and willfully depriving them. Each spouse will constantly face temptations to be dissatisfied with the *lex Christi* blessings their partner provides. How should our dissatisfactions be handled?¹

- a. Areas of dissatisfaction ought to be prayerfully self-examined. Consider if this might be a log in your eye that exaggerates the spouse's eye-speck of neglect and deprivation (Matt. 7:4-5). Sometimes, your own spousal neglect or deprivation in other *lex Christi* categories creates a mutual spiral of unilateral decision-making to neglect and deprive each other. In other words, your unilateral decision to neglect some areas where your spouse has requested your corrections to bring pleasure and blessing led to your spouse returning evil for evil and unilaterally choosing to deprive you of the blessings you want from the marriage.
- b. Pray and ask God to give some measure of contentment in every situation (Phil. 4:10-12). Consider if your desires for this marital blessing might be an insatiable lust that reasons, "If only I had _____ (more sex, more money, more reputational success), I could be happy." Marital deprivation may feel like "hell on earth," but God can use that to strengthen your faith and endurance in deprivation trials (Jas. 1:2-4).

Hold the bank and say, "thank you" for the blessings.

2. NOT OPENING AND TAKING OUT WITHOUT PERMISSION

Never use "depriving" as a threat or punishment. I don't like what you did, so I will take away what you enjoy.

How do we face this issue of attitude?

Generally, it is unwise to raise this topic by accusing your spouse of depriving or neglecting you. It is better to agree to ask each other this question: "Am I regularly depriving or neglecting in essential categories of the

¹ If you are in a marriage with regularly recurring abusive patterns, this requires a much different approach than the methods suggested here. That situation *would require immediate counseling intervention and protective separation*.

moral law (Westminster Larger Catechism 103-148) without your consent and with ongoing duration? What areas would you like to see me improve that would please you in union with Christ by the grace of the new covenant? Try to listen without self-defense or arguing. Ask more questions to clarify situations and examples of depriving without consent over long periods.

If you cannot negotiate win-win solutions and still have significant disagreements, seek out a biblical counselor to help mediate your dispute, examining your complaints against the duties and rights of the *lex Christi virtues* and pointing you to reconciliation and blessed flourishing.

Reminder that in the fulfillment of all the above principles, that we belong to his family, and that **the Lord gives rights to his adopted children united to Christ through faith in his death and resurrection. This is not the focus of this text, but this foundation is required to realize its beauty in human relationships.** God confers a *right to eat* from his sacramental table to all who come to it through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as mediator, willing to bear his reproach (Heb. 13:9-15; 1 Cor. 11:23-34). He enables us to partake of his Spirit and perform the duties and receive the rights of our roles and places with grateful hearts.

3. Every spouse in marriage brings his/her own cultural, traditional expectations about his/her own roles and the roles for his/her spouse. These are not necessarily the proper definition of the moral law duties and corresponding rights in your marriage. Married couples need to start with the moral law definitions of Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC 101-151) and then negotiate roles and expectations for the delegation of duties. As the marriage situation changes over time (different jobs, health, children, in-laws, financial pressures), the couple needs to renegotiate the ways that the moral law applies to their various roles and responsibilities within their own context.
 - a. Examples:
 - i. **Spiritual duties and maintenance (1st-4th Cs)** : spiritual exercises of prayer and Bible reading, family worship, Sunday worship, choice of church membership, level of church involvement.
 - ii. **Material duties and maintenance (4th, 8th, 6th, 10th Cs)**: employment, parents' continuing education to qualify for better income or more suitable work-gifts matching, household chores like laundry, meal preparation, washing dishes, shopping, garbage disposal, car maintenance, filing forms, taxes, banking, credit cards, managing debt payments for loans, budgeting, adjusting to housing order, decisions about purchasing and using household furniture and appliances,
 - iii. **Relational duties and maintenance (7th, 5th, 9th Cs)**: planning and administrating frequency of visits to in-laws and family, childcare, bedtime routines, children's education (costs, location, transportation, ethos of the school, safety, homework management), training children to help with household duties, caring for elderly parents, neighborhood relationships.
 - iv. **Scheduling all the primary duties above as a life routine**: bedtimes (does the couple sleep and rise at similar times or different, why? Is it a source of conflict? Is it because of duties or optional plans?). Schedules also should build in some flexibility for when life is very busy for one spouse (studying, heavy workload) or sickness in the family, the other spouse fills in to cover for those duties.

- v. **Optional plans that become part of established family patterns:** travel plans, vacation planning, leisure time activities (outdoor-biking, jogging, hiking, sports; indoor-TV, online, games, video games).
- vi. **Traditional-cultural patterns shape the negotiation of duties and rights above:**
Does the wife do all household jobs and all childcare while the husband does all income producing labor outside the home and returns to relax? Not necessarily. This could be unfair since both are responsible for everything. First consider gifts and interests. If one spouse is better at XYZ, then that is a starting reason for managing those duties. If one spouse is willing to learn those duties, that is a second reason for taking over those duties. If neither spouse is either gifted or interested in those duties, then both should demonstrate initiative to show loving, sacrificial willingness to do what isn't easy (*many parts of childcare are difficult; many aspects of household maintenance are not pleasant*). Find ways to make it more pleasant and interesting, as well as remembering Colossians 3:23-25, that all your service to each other is service to the Lord! Play worship music or listen to sermons and podcasts while doing routine household work that doesn't require a lot of focus or thought.

11.. WILLING TO GIVE UP RIGHTS TO RECEIVE IN ORDER TO MODEL WHAT IS MORE BLESSED: TO GIVE (ACTS 20:35)

The words of the Lord Jesus: It's More Blessed to Give than to Receive (Acts 20:35). He reveals his BLESSED FACE TO THOSE IN COVENANT: USING ALL RESOURCES TO BLESS, KEEP, SHINE GOD'S FACE and GIVE PEACE (Num. 6:24-26) in all categories of *lex Christi*.

- a. Paul surrendered his rights to marital and material support from those churches he planted, or in other words, he chose to remain single because he could control his sexual passions and wanted to stay focused on his ministry, and he voluntarily requested a permanent arrangement of not giving him material support, his agreement to be deprived (1 Cor. 7:6-9, 33-35; 9:4-18; Acts 20:33-35). This would be similar to a missionary who raised support to serve believers without pay in another country because he was a tentmaker and had other personal means of income from business or inheritance.
 - 1. Paul's Example **Financial giving** (Acts 20:33-35; 2 Cor. 11:7, 9) joined with **apostolic giving** (5th command related to his sacrificial use of authority as an apostle to *give* teaching and any other help they needed (Acts 20:24); and the content of his testimony related to 1st -4th commandments to *give* them knowledge of the true God and his righteous law (Acts 20:27) to bless the churches with impartial, honorable and faithful service to his Lord, testifying to the gospel of the grace of God, declaring his whole counsel, caring for and protecting the flock (Acts 20:24-32) without financially burdening them, though entitled to their support (Gal. 6:6). The apostle Paul had *rights* to *material* support for his ministry. However, he did not make use of

- these rights in order to be a servant who was more blessed to give than receive, without accusations of simony, idleness, greed, or abuse of power (see Acts 20:33-35; Tit. 1:7; 2 Thess. 3:7-11). Paul gives similar teaching in Eph. 4:28 which explicitly teaches the 8th commandment to earn, steward and be generous with one's resources to "help the weak" (Acts 20:35). However, they are interdependent also on 4th, 6th, and 10th commands to labor 6 days, supply own life needs, and to be content (Phil. 4:12-19), to do additional labor to be financially self-sustaining (2 Cor. 12:15 "I will gladly spend and be spent for your souls") even more than just teaching. So, the principle of giving extends beyond the example of finances. Mutual giving and receiving are also blessings (Paul & the Philippian church Phil. 4:12-19), but the receiving is with the attitude of contentment and the blessing that accrues to the giver's account (Phil 4:17).
2. Sometimes, in faith related to our calling, gifts, and kingdom contribution, we, like Paul, also choose a path or pattern to forego various rights to achieve the purpose aligned with that group, organization, or career. For example, in volunteering for the military, the usual US citizen rights of self-determination, freedom to make job adjustments and choose geographic preferences for living and working are all given up when enlisting to serve the purposes of one military branch under the purposes of the federal government and its interactions with other countries and concerns, though there may be some choices offered within its systems and rules. When a teacher signs a two-year contract to teach a specific subject at one of Taiwan's three branch campuses of Morrison Academy, he or she agrees to forego some citizen rights to career freedom to fulfill that contract and may face financial penalties related to the school's investment in international moving and travel expenses if failing to fulfill that contract.
- b. Disciples**
1. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. (Matt. 10:8).
- c. The Heavenly Father's example**
1. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!
- d. Christ's example**
1. Christ used his authority (5th C) not to lord it over them so they would serve him, but to serve, give his life as a ransom for many (6th C) to seek and save the lost (Matt. 20:25-28; Luke 19:10) **symphonic *lex Christi*** (righteousness repeated in the history of redemption), **symphonic *commandments perspectives*** (righteousness depends on the mutual administration of each commandment together as a total lifestyle)
 2. Also fulfilling the duties to mankind: working faithfully 6 days, resting on 7th (4th C); honoring authorities, using authority to bless (5th C), giving apostles keys to the kingdom (Matt. 16:19); giving healing, life and food to the demon-possessed, sick and needy (6th C); honoring marriage, attending wedding feast, blessing the family with good wine (7th C); receiving other's support to do his work, stewarding resources (8th C); bearing truthful witness to both righteousness and unrighteousness (9th C); content with his life situation, though no place to call home (10th C).

3. "As you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. . . . do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High." (Luke 6:31, 35)
4. We should not wait to be served or thanked but serve with humility as unworthy servants doing our duty (Luke 17:7- 10).

e. **Timothy's example**

1. Seeking the interests of Christ on behalf of others, rather than seeking his own interests (Phil. 2:19-23).

f. **Elders and Deacons are Models of Moral Maturity (all these principles show the complex interdependence of the Ten Commandments)**

1. **Requires giving sacrificially:** willing and eager examples to the flock (1 Pet. 5:2-3; 1 Tim. 3:1); "above reproach, husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, . . . gentle, . . . manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, . . . well thought of by outsiders, . . . first tested, . . . faithful in all things" (1 Tim 3:2, 4, 7, 10-11); "lover of good, . . . upright, holy and disciplined, . . . hold fast to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also rebuke those who contradict it" (Tit. 1:8-9).
2. **Prohibits self-centered (=demanding) leadership:** "not domineering" (1 Pet. 5:3); "not a drunkard, not violent . . . not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, . . . not a recent convert→pride, . . . not double-tongued, . . . not slanderers," (1 Tim. 3:3, 6, 8, 11); "not arrogant or quick-tempered" (Tit. 1:7).

12. **SYMPHONIC COMMANDMENTS PERSPECTIVE: Marriage as a Ministry of Giving: "It is More Blessed to Give than to Receive"** (Acts 20:35).

- a. GIVER: The general qualifications for a healthy marriage *should be* to seek the greatest blessing of being a "giver" rather than other self-centered. Love "seeks not her own [benefit]" (KJV 1 Cor. 13:5).
- b. **I desire to bless you** with all of myself and all of my resources, talents, gifts, and time to *help form* Christ's likeness in you, to seek Christ's interests on your behalf, genuine concern for your welfare (Gal. 4:19; Phil. 2:20-23; 2 Cor. 11:28), seeking to please spouse (1 Cor. 7:33-35)
- c. **Practice Giving** in all categories of *Lex Christi*.
 - a. *Giving to Support and Sustain Fellowship with God* (1st-4th Cs)
 - i. Self-study the Bible and good books, pray together, join as members of a church, use your gifts to help others grow in Christ, and participate in Lord's Day worship together.
 - b. *Giving to Preserve Relational Harmony: Husband & Wife Roles* (5th C)
 - i. Sacrificing self, loving, nourishing, cherishing to produce cleansing, holiness-producing by the Word (Eph. 5:25-29) (yet love is required of both husband and wife)
 - ii. Wives submit, as to the Lord, with respect (Eph. 5:22, 24, 33; as if you were submitting to the Lord, Col. 3:23-25)
 - c. *Giving to Preserve a Healthy. Peace-filled Life* (6th C)

- i. Mercy, forgiveness: Not recording [other's] wrongs [against me to punish, attack, despise]. Not resentful 1 Cor. 13:5; not building up resentments by rehearsing and remembering failures sins of spouse; but keeping a record to remember what to restore and build up in areas of weakness, remembering what needs to be strengthened to help protect a spouse from the evil one and establish saving faith (1 Pet. 5:8-10)
- ii. Humility: Not keeping a record of [my doing] rights [for them] to be seen and praised by others. Therefore, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing (Matt 6:1-4). Service is noticed and will be rewarded by the Lord, so it is not quid pro quo, I serve you for you to serve me (Col. 3:23-25).
- d. *Giving bodies to each other*: (7th C) in marriage (7th commandment), each spouse gives sexually (1 Cor. 7:3-5; 33-35).
 - i. Authority over bodies belongs to the spouse, so one spouse cannot unilaterally decide to deprive the other spouse of the benefits/rights of his/her bodily presence and blessing, including sexual rights. Any form of deprivation must be by agreement for a limited time, with a devotion to prayer to resist Satan due to a lack of sexual self-control (1 Cor. 7:3-5).
- e. *Giving Financial Resources to each other* (8th C)
- f. *Giving Witness that Builds Up Trust* (9th C)
 - i. Remind yourselves often of your wedding vows: they are unilateral, unconditional to the performance of the other person (unless there is marital collapse due to meeting biblical conditions for divorce by desertion [1 Cor. 7:15] or adultery [Matt. 19:9]).
 - ii. Blessing you by seeing, saying, and rejoicing in how Christ is already at work in you (Phil. 1:3-11; 2:2, 12-13; 4:10-20)
- g. *Giving as Evidence of Righteous Desires, Contentment, Generosity, thankfulness* (10th C)

13. BIBLICALLY DEFINING SELF-CENTERED MARRIAGE PERSONALITIES

- a. Adapting giving-love to various *marriage personality tendencies*: "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all." (1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Tim 3:16).
- b. Other types of self-centered marriage personality tendencies (which can be combined in various sets) cause much conflict and need reproof, admonishment, and correction because a spouse is seeking his/her own benefits.
 - 1. **Fool**: originally motivated to bless and serve, but, due to lack of communication and observation, or feelings of rejection for past efforts, does not build wisdom to speak, act, and serve in ways that genuinely benefit spouse or in ways preferred by spouse. So, realizing that foolishly motivated efforts are not complemented and praised by the spouse, he/she gives up serving (Prov. 12:18; 14:8; Eph. 4:29; Phil. 1:9; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:10)
 - 2. **Exchanger**: Give to receive payback; may accept psychological theories about empty love tanks and the need for a full love tank to love in return (Luke 6:27-36). Example: money manipulator:

"I did my part by earning income; now you do everything I want. I did more than my share, now it's your turn." The love-deposit illustration above is not to be understood in terms of the *Five Love Languages* by Gary Smalley that we invest in the marriage as a deposit that motivates and enables the spouse to respond with his/her deposits in the form of mutual exchange. My illustration is intended to show that both are investing in the health of marriage as service to Christ (Col. 3:23-25), and depriving of some *lex Christi* service to pursue other *lex Christi* service is done by mutual consent, not as an exchange model of marriage.

3. **Sluggard/Lazy** (Prov. 6:9; 24:30-34; 26:16) proud excuses not to invest in the marriage; irresponsible to complete expected tasks.

The following are forms of **marital abuse** that should be resisted with church counseling and advice about various forms of available protection for the abused spouse. Suppose dangers to spouse or child safety occur weekly or severe injury has occurred. In that case, this marriage probably needs documented proof of injuries (report to hospital after abuse occurs) and police and legal protections, possibly filing for divorce.

4. **Depriver**: (1 Cor. 7:5) unilaterally takes away a spouse's physical/bodily rights to his/her help and blessed presence without agreement. Choosing to deprive spouse and threatening with more deprivation. Abusers use manipulative tactics and threats.
5. **Demand** (1 Cor. 7:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:7) does not live with a spouse in an understanding way or freely agree to limit some marital rights due to the demands of life and concern for the spouse. Unwilling to patiently accept a limited-time deprivation or devote self to prayer when a spouse is weak, sick, physically tired, emotionally unready, or stressed out from work and relationships. Often unsatisfied, ungrateful, proud, angry, domineering, manipulative, or abusive.
6. **Fighter**: Repaying evil for evil (1 Thess. 5:15). You attack or hurt me, so I hurt or attack you in return. Often complicates arguments by changing the subject to a favorite blame-worthy fault in the spouse while failing to hear the original complaint with humility.
7. **Dumper**: speaking rashly, proudly, scornfully, in anger, without carefully listening, weighing truthfulness of words, or impact of words (Prov. 10:8, 18-19; 11:12; 12:16-18, 23; 13:3; 14:29; 15:2; 18:13; Isa. 32:6; Eph. 4:29).

Perplexity.ai query: Do any Reformed commentary, websites or journal articles provide an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, that the rights given to each other are part of the whole moral law duties, such as referring to Exodus 21:8-11, and do any interpret "do not deprive without consent" to include other types of moral law duties?

Some Reformed commentaries and scholarly resources do interpret 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 in light of broader moral law duties—including parallels to Exodus 21:8-11—and recognize that Paul's teaching on marital rights includes more than just sexual relations, extending to other forms of moral duty within marriage. [learn.ligonier+1](#)

Reformed Commentary and Parallels with Exodus 21

- Several academic sources and marriage contract analyses draw explicit links between the "conjugal rights" of 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, the Old Testament moral law foundation, and Exodus 21:8-11. [tyndalebulletin](#)
 - Instone-Brewer's research shows how early Jewish, Greek, and Aramaic marriage contracts referenced material obligations (food, clothing) as well as relational/emotional duties, and some Reformed interpreters treat Paul's instructions on not "defrauding" a spouse as encompassing these whole-life obligations. [tyndalebulletin](#)
 - Paul's use of "deprive" (1 Cor. 7:5) is linked by some Reformed preachers to the moral law's structure of duties in Exodus 21:8-11, including provision of food, clothing, and marital rights—suggesting that deprivation should not be limited only to sexual intimacy, but includes any failure in the substantive marital obligations recognized in biblical law. [harvestpca+1](#)

Broader Interpretation of "Do Not Deprive Without Consent"

- Ligonier Ministries and other Reformed sites note that "do not deprive" should be understood not as absolute license, but as an exhortation that spouses must lovingly fulfill each other's whole moral and emotional rights in marriage, only forbearing in cases of prayer, illness, or mutually agreed periods of abstinence. [learn.ligonier](#)
- The Westminster Standards interpret marital duties in 1 Corinthians 7 as expressions of mutual help, companionship, care, and provision—going beyond sexual relations. The principle that spouses must not selfishly withdraw is seen as consistent with the whole scope of biblical marital law. [apuritansmind+1](#)

Interpretations in Practice

- Some commentaries analyze Paul's logic as rooted in the concept of marital "debt," paralleling both the Old Testament (where deprivation could be grounds for divorce or redress, Exodus 21:8-11) and the New Testament command to honor the full spectrum of spousal obligations. [harvestpca+1](#)

- Scholars and Reformed counselors reflect on how temporary abstinence by mutual consent for prayer (or illness) recognizes other legitimate reasons to abstain—implying the underlying principle is whole-life sacrificial care, not only sex. [learn.ligonier](https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/conjugal-rights-in-marriage)

Examples of Resources

- “Practical Implications of 1 Corinthians 7:1-16” (A.A. Abera) reviews the broader duty of sexuality within marriage. [sats](https://sats.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Practical-Implications-of-1-Corinthians-7_1-16-1.pdf)
- Instone-Brewer's academic work collects Jewish, Greek, and Christian contract interpretations showing Paul's endorsement of Old Testament obligations, including food, clothing, affection, and rights. [tyndalebulletin](https://www.tyndalebulletin.org/article/30269-1-corinthians-7-in-the-light-of-the-jewish-greek-and-aramaic-marriage-and-divorce-papyri.pdf)
- Ligonier's devotional on 1 Corinthians 7 discusses how authority over each other's bodies includes but is not limited to sexual access, connecting to holistic spousal responsibility under biblical law. [learn.ligonier](https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/conjugal-rights-in-marriage)

These Reformed perspectives affirm that marital rights and duties in 1 Corinthians 7 are grounded in the whole moral law of Scripture, not merely sexual intimacy, and that “do not deprive” logically extends to the full context of biblical spousal obligations.[wrs+3](https://www.wrs.edu/assets/docs/Courses/Westminster%20Standards/WCF_24--Marriage_Divorce.pdf)

1. <https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/conjugal-rights-in-marriage>
2. <https://www.tyndalebulletin.org/article/30269-1-corinthians-7-in-the-light-of-the-jewish-greek-and-aramaic-marriage-and-divorce-papyri.pdf>
3. <https://harvestpca.org/wp-content/uploads/sermons/2021/10/1-Corinthians-71-40.pdf>
4. <https://www.apuritansmind.com/westminster-standards/chapter-24/>
5. https://www.wrs.edu/assets/docs/Courses/Westminster%20Standards/WCF_24--Marriage_Divorce.pdf
6. https://sats.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Practical-Implications-of-1-Corinthians-7_1-16-1.pdf
7. <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-corinthians-7/>
8. <https://www.unveiledfacesreformedpress.net/reflectionsofglory>
9. <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/bcc/1-corinthians-7.html>
10. <https://www.preceptaustin.org/1-corinthians-7-commentary>
11. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+7&version=NIV>

12. <https://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/10023/919/Christopher-Chandler-PhD-thesis.PDF?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>
13. <https://margmowczko.com/abuse-divorce-1-corinthians-7/>
14. <https://gospelreformation.net/the-westminster-statement-on-biblical-sexuality/>
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16. <https://missionventureministries.wordpress.com/2024/04/03/how-were-people-saved-prior-to-christs-crucifixion-and-resurrection-romans-120/>
17. <https://dtbm.org/1-corinthians-7-only-marriages-intimacy-as-god-designed-it-to-be/>
18. https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/1Cr/1Cr_007.cfm
19. <https://www.gospeldoctrine.com/new-testament/1-corinthians/1-corinthians-7>
20. <https://www.bibleref.com/1-Corinthians/7/1-Corinthians-chapter-7.html>