THE QUESTION

What does Paul mean that an unbelieving spouse is sanctified (1 Corinthians 7:14)?

Asked by a THF member on May 19, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 9 numbered quotations · the 11 early Christian passages and 168 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/what-does-paul-mean-that-an-unbelieving-spouse-is-sanctified

The short answer *Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words*

Paul is speaking to believers who were already married to unbelievers when they came to faith: they should stay, since the believer's holiness touches the home and the spouse may be won. Tertullian says this is not permission to marry an unbeliever, and that the children are set apart for holiness through a believing parent.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
SHARING WITH AN AI?	Every quotation here comes from The Historic Faith's library. If you paste this study into an AI, anything it adds beyond these pages comes from that AI, not from us.

IN THIS STUDY

1	Paul means marriages formed before conversion	2
2	It is not permission to marry an unbeliever	2
3	The unbelieving spouse may be won	3
4	The children are set apart for holiness	3
5	Holiness passes through union, as with Hosea	4
6	Marriage itself can be made holy	4
7	Lawful married life does not defile believers	5
	What these passages don't tell us	5
	The Sources: 11 early Christian passages and 168 Bible verses, with links	6

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don't republish.

POINT 1 OF 7

Paul means marriages formed before conversion

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Tertullian reads the verse closely. Paul says "if any believer has an unbelieving wife," not "takes" one. So the verse speaks to people who were already married when God's grace found them, and tells them to stay with a willing spouse.

1

> “But it is clear that this Scripture points to those believers who were found by the grace of God in the state of Gentile marriage, according to the very words themselves: "If any believer has an unbelieving wife."”
>
> *later in the same passage*
>
> “It shows that it is the duty of one who was already living in marriage with an unbelieving woman, and has now been converted by the grace of God, to continue with his wife.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *To His Wife* 2.2 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 8, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 7

It is not permission to marry an unbeliever

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Tertullian warns against people who used this verse to excuse a believer choosing to marry outside the faith. He says no Scripture gives that license, and reading the verse that way is a trap.

2

> “For there is no Scripture that holds out a license for this deed.”
>
> *later in the same passage*
>
> “It may be that by understanding this warning in a general way, as concerning believers who are married, they think that permission is thereby granted even to marry unbelievers. God forbid that one who interprets it this way should knowingly ensnare himself!”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *To His Wife* 2.2 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 8, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

POINT 3 OF 7

The unbelieving spouse may be won

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Tertullian says Paul gives a reason for staying married: God calls us in peace, and the unbelieving partner may be won to the Lord through the shared life of marriage. Staying is a hope for the spouse, not a claim that the spouse is already saved.

3 "Accordingly, he also adds a reason: that we are called in peace unto the Lord God, and that the unbeliever may, through the use of matrimony, be gained by the believer."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *To His Wife* 2.2 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 8, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 7

The children are set apart for holiness

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Tertullian explains Paul's line about the children. When one parent is a believer, the children are holy through being born to Christians and through baptism and Christian training. He says Paul meant they were meant for holiness and salvation, which also upholds the marriage.

4 "It was because of this that the apostle said that when either parent was sanctified, the children were holy, 1 Corinthians 7:14. This was true both by the privilege of Christian offspring and by the discipline of the institution, that is, by baptism and Christian training."

later in the same passage

"It is as if he wanted us to understand that the children of believers were meant for holiness, and therefore for salvation, so that by the promise of such a hope he might support marriage, which he had decided to uphold in its full integrity."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *De Anima (On the Soul)* 39 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 9, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don't republish.

POINT 5 OF 7

Holiness passes through union, as with Hosea

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Irenaeus links this verse to the prophet Hosea, who married an unfaithful woman. She was made holy by her union with the prophet. In the same way, God makes a Church holy through fellowship with His Son, and Paul's words about the unbelieving wife fit this pattern.

5

> “For this reason, the prophet Hosea took "a wife of whoredoms," prophesying through this action "that in committing fornication the earth would fornicate from the Lord," meaning the people on the earth; and from such people, it will be God’s good pleasure to create a Church that shall be sanctified by fellowship with His Son, just as that woman was sanctified by union with the prophet. And for this reason, Paul declares that the “unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband.””

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book IV* (c. 175–202 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 3, page 6 Read it in the library ›

POINT 6 OF 7

Marriage itself can be made holy

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Clement of Alexandria uses this verse against people who called marriage evil. He says the children of those made holy are holy too, and that our whole life and body must be made holy. A marriage kept under God with a true heart and firm faith is holy.

6

> “And the seed of those who are sanctified is also holy, I think. And in our case, not only the spirit must be sanctified, but also our character, our life, and our body. For how does the apostle Paul say that the wife has been sanctified by the husband, or the husband by the wife?”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Stromata* 3 (c. 190–215 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 5, page 6 Read it in the library ›

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

7 “So, marriage that is completed according to the word is made holy, if the union is kept under submission to God and is carried out with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, with hearts cleansed from an evil conscience, and the body washed with pure water, while holding firmly to the confession of hope; for He who promised is faithful.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Stromata* 4.20 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 6, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 7 OF 7

Lawful married life does not defile believers

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

The Apostolic Constitutions teach that lawful marriage does not make a believer unclean or drive away the Holy Spirit. Only ungodliness and unlawful acts do that. This fits Paul's point that the believer need not fear being made unclean by staying married.

8 “For neither lawful union, nor childbearing, nor menstrual cleansing, nor a nighttime emission can defile a person's nature or separate the Holy Spirit from him. Nothing can do that except impiety and unlawful conduct.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 10, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

9 “Therefore, when a husband and wife come together in lawful marriage and then rise from one another, they may pray without any special observances, and they are clean without washing.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 11, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- These passages do not say that the unbelieving spouse is saved just by being married to a believer.
- They do not spell out exactly how far the holiness Paul speaks of reaches in the unbelieving partner.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 11 early Christian passages and 168 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–11, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 12–116, in Bible order), then 63 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF's updated English unless marked "1885 English" (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). "… [continues online]" marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *11 passages from 5 writers*

Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 1–2*

1 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English; on point 7) "took place] not as if the lawful union [of man and wife] were abominable, but such a kind of birth was fitting to God… [continues online] **read ›**

2 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English; on point 4) "parents, impart a holy training to your children… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · source 3*

3 *Against Heresies: Book IV* **Quote 5, page 4** "for this reason, Paul declares that the "unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband." Then again, the prophet names his children "Not having obtained mercy," and "Not a people… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 4–7*

4 *Stromata* 3 (on point 7) "rises from the marriage bed should be washed again, as in former times. For the Lord, who washes believers through one baptism into a way of life complete in every… [continues online] **read ›**

5 *Stromata* 3 **Quote 6, page 4** "their own existence from intercourse, how are they not wicked? And the seed of those who are sanctified is also holy, I think. And in our case, not only the… [continues online] **read ›**

6 *Stromata* 4.20 (1885 English) **Quote 7, page 5** "marriage, then, that is consummated according to the word, is sanctified, if the union be under subjection to God, and be conducted with a true heart, in full assurance of… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *Stromata* 2.23 (on point 6) "then, as a sacred image, must be kept pure from… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 8–9*

8 *To His Wife* 2.2 **Quotes 1, 2, 3, pages 2, 3** "that the unbeliever may, through the use of matrimony, be gained by the believer… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *De Anima (On the Soul)* 39 (1885 English) **Quote 4, page 3** "says he, were the children unclean by birth: 1 Corinthians 7:14 as if he meant us to understand that the children of believers were designed for holiness, and thereby… [continues online] **read ›**

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 10–11*

10 *Apostolic Constitutions* **Quote 8, page 5** "to receive the Eucharist? If they admit that they do, then it is plain that they are without the Holy Spirit, who always remains with the faithful. For Solomon says… [continues online] **read ›**

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don't republish.

11 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) **Quote 9, page 5** "husband, therefore, and a wife, when they company together in lawful marriage, and rise from one another, may pray without any observations, and without washing are clean… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *105 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

12 **Genesis 2:24** For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. **read ›**

13 **Exodus 29:37** For seven days you shall cleanse the altar and sanctify it, and the altar shall be most holy. Whoever touches the altar shall be sanctified. **read ›**

14 **Leviticus 12:2** "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: 'If a woman conceives and bears a male child, she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days set apart for her monthly separation, she shall be unclean. **read ›**

15 **Leviticus 12:5** But if she bears a female child, she shall be unclean twice seven days, as in her monthly separation; and for sixty-six days she shall remain in her unclean blood. **read ›**

16 **Leviticus 12:7** The priest shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her and cleanse her from the fountain of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a male or a female. **read ›**

17 **Leviticus 15:2** "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: Any man who has a discharge from his body—his discharge is unclean. **read ›**

18 **Leviticus 15:16** A man from whom seed goes out shall bathe his whole body in water, and be unclean until evening. **read ›**

19 **Leviticus 15:17** Every garment and every skin on which there is seed shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. **read ›**

20 **Leviticus 15:18** If a man lies with a woman and seed comes out, they shall both bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. **read ›**

21 **Leviticus 15:19** A woman who has a flow of blood, when the discharge is in her body, shall be seven days in her separation; everyone who touches her shall be unclean until evening. **read ›**

22 **Leviticus 15:24** If anyone lies with her in bed, and her uncleanness comes upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean. **read ›**

23 **Leviticus 15:31** So you shall make the children of Israel wary of their uncleannesses, that they may not die because of their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is among them. **read ›**

24 **Leviticus 20:7** You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy. **read ›**

25 **Leviticus 20:26** You shall be holy to me, for I, the Lord your God, am holy, who separated you from all the nations to be mine. **read ›**

26 **Leviticus 21:3** and for a virgin sister who is near to him and has not been given to a husband; for these he may defile himself. **read ›**

27 **Leviticus 21:7** They shall not take a woman who is a prostitute and profaned, nor a woman cast out by her husband, for he is holy to the Lord his God. **read ›**

28 **Leviticus 21:8** You shall sanctify him; he offers the gifts of the Lord your God. He shall be holy, for I, the Lord who sanctifies them, am holy. **read ›**

29 **Leviticus 21:15** He shall not profane his seed among his people: I am the Lord who sanctifies him.' " **read ›**

30 **Leviticus 22:3** Say to them, 'Throughout your generations, any man of all your seed who approaches the holy things that the children of Israel sanctify to the Lord, while his uncleanness is on him, that person shall be utterly destroyed from before me: I am the Lord your God. **read ›**

31 **Leviticus 22:4** Any man of the seed of Aaron the priest who has leprosy or a discharge shall not eat of the holy things until he is cleansed. And whoever touches anything made unclean by a dead person, or a man from whom seed has gone out, **read ›**

32 **Leviticus 22:6** the person who touches any of these shall be unclean until evening. He shall not eat of the holy things unless he washes his body with water; **read ›**

33 **Leviticus 22:12** If the daughter of a man who is a priest marries a man who is a stranger, she shall not eat of the firstfruits of the holy things. **read ›**

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don't republish.

34 **Leviticus 27:14** If a man sanctifies his house as holy to the Lord, the priest shall value it, whether good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. **read ›**

35 **Leviticus 27:15** If the one who sanctified it redeems his house, he shall add to it the fifth part of the valuation money, and it shall be his. **read ›**

36 **Numbers 5:19** Then the priest shall put her under oath and say to the woman, ‘If no one has lain with you, and if you have not gone astray to be defiled while under your own husband, be free from this water of proof that brings the curse. **read ›**

37 **Numbers 5:28** But if the woman has not been defiled and is clean, she shall be free and shall conceive seed. **read ›**

38 **Numbers 6:8** All the days of his vow he shall be holy to the Lord. **read ›**

39 **Numbers 19:18** And a man who is clean shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the house and on the furnishings and on the persons who are there, and on him who touched the human bone, or the slain, or the dead, or the tomb. **read ›**

40 **Numbers 19:19** And the clean man shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day, and he shall be purified on the seventh day; and he shall wash his garments and bathe in water, and he shall be unclean until evening. **read ›**

41 **Numbers 19:20** But the man who is defiled and does not purify himself, that person shall be utterly destroyed from the midst of the congregation, because he has defiled the holy place of the Lord, because the water of sprinkling was not sprinkled on him; he is unclean. **read ›**

42 **Numbers 30:8** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

43 **Numbers 30:9** The vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, whatever she vows concerning her soul, shall remain on her. (Septuagint Numbers 30:10 (Numbers 30:9 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

44 **Numbers 30:11** and her husband hears, and keeps silent toward her, and does not refuse her, then all her vows shall stand, and all her obligations with which she has bound her soul shall stand against her. (Septuagint Numbers 30:12 (Numbers 30:11 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

45 **Numbers 30:12** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

46 **Numbers 30:13** Every vow and every binding oath to humble the soul—her husband shall confirm it for her, or her husband shall cancel it. (Septuagint Numbers 30:14 (Numbers 30:13 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

47 **Numbers 30:14** But if he keeps entirely silent toward her from day to day, then he confirms for her all her vows; and the obligations that are on her he confirms for her, because he kept silent toward her on the day he heard. (Septuagint Numbers 30:15 (Numbers 30:14 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

48 **Deuteronomy 23:2** One born of a prostitute shall not enter the assembly of the Lord. (Septuagint Deuteronomy 23:3 (Deuteronomy 23:2 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

49 **Deuteronomy 23:3** An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation he shall not enter the assembly of the Lord, even forever, (Septuagint Deuteronomy 23:4 (Deuteronomy 23:3 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

50 **Deuteronomy 23:8** If sons are born to them, in the third generation they may enter the assembly of the Lord. (Septuagint Deuteronomy 23:9 (Deuteronomy 23:8 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

51 **Judges 13:7** He said to me, ‘Behold, you are with child and shall bear a son. Now drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the child shall be holy to God from the womb until the day of his death.’ ” **read ›**

52 **2 Kings 4:9** And the woman said to her husband, “See now, I know that this is a holy man of God who passes by us continually. **read ›**

53 **2 Chronicles 30:19** “May the good Lord be merciful toward every heart that is directed to seek the Lord God of their fathers, though not according to the purity of the sanctuary.” **read ›**

54 **Ezra 7:11** And this is the account of the decree which Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the book of the words of the commandments of the Lord and of his statutes for Israel: **read ›**

55 **Ezra 9:9** For we are slaves; yet in our slavery the Lord our God has not forsaken us, but has extended mercy to us before the kings of the Persians, to give us reviving, so that they might raise up the house of our God and restore its desolate places, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. **read ›**

56 **Psalms 7:14** Behold, he has been in labor with unrighteousness; he has conceived trouble and brought forth iniquity. (Septuagint Psalm 7:15 (Psalm 7:14 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

57 **Isaiah 14:3** And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will give you rest from your anguish and your anger, and from your hard slavery, in which you served them. **read ›**

58 **Jeremiah 17:26** And they will come from the cities of Judah and from around Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the land of the plain, and from the hill country, and from the south, bringing whole burnt offerings and sacrifices and incense and grain offerings and frankincense, bringing praise to the house of the Lord. **read ›**

59 **Ezekiel 14:4** Therefore speak to them, and you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord: Any man of the house of Israel who sets his thoughts upon his heart, and places the punishment of his unrighteousness before his face, and comes to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him in the things in which his mind is entangled, **read ›**

60 **Ezekiel 25:4** therefore behold, I am handing you over to the children of Kedem for an inheritance, and they shall encamp with their goods among you, and they shall set their tents among you; they shall eat your fruits, and they shall drink your richness. **read ›**

61 **Amos 3:13** Hear, O priests, and testify to the house of Jacob, says the Lord God Almighty. **read ›**

62 **Amos 4:6** And I will give you dullness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places; yet you did not return to me, says the Lord. **read ›**

63 **Amos 5:5** But do not seek Bethel, and do not go into Gilgal, and do not cross over to the Well of the Oath; for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall be as though it were not. **read ›**

64 **Amos 5:19** It is as if a man should flee from the face of a lion, and a bear meet him; and he should rush into his house and lean his hands on the wall, and a serpent bite him. **read ›**

65 **Habakkuk 2:16** You also, drink your fill of dishonor instead of glory; be shaken, O heart, and quake; the cup of the right hand of the Lord has come round upon you, and dishonor has gathered upon your glory. **read ›**

66 **Malachi 2:15** And did he not do good? And a remnant of his spirit. And you said, “What else does God seek but seed?” So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not forsake the wife of your youth. **read ›**

67 **1 Esdras 7:11** and all the sons of the captivity together, for they were purified; for the Levites were all purified together. **read ›**

68 **1 Esdras 9:9** and do his will, and separate yourselves from the nations of the land and from the foreign wives.” **read ›**

69 **Tobit 7:14** And he called Edna his wife; and taking a scroll, he wrote a contract and sealed it. **read ›**

70 **Wisdom of Solomon 3:13** their offspring is cursed. For blessed is the barren woman who is undefiled, who has not known a bed of transgression; she will have fruit at the visitation of souls. **read ›**

71 **Wisdom of Solomon 3:16** But the children of adulterers will not come to maturity, and the seed of an unlawful bed will vanish. **read ›**

72 **Wisdom of Solomon 4:6** For children born of lawless unions are witnesses of evil against their parents when they are examined. **read ›**

73 **Wisdom of Solomon 5:5** How has he been counted among the sons of God, and how is his lot among the holy ones? **read ›**

74 **Wisdom of Solomon 5:19** he will take holiness as an invincible shield, **read ›**

75 **Wisdom of Sirach 25:1** In three things I was made beautiful, and I stood up in beauty before the Lord and men: harmony among brothers, and friendship among neighbors, and a wife and husband who suit each other. **read ›**

76 **Wisdom of Sirach 26:1** Blessed is the husband of a good wife; the number of his days will be doubled. **read ›**

77 **Wisdom of Sirach 33:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

78 **Wisdom of Sirach 41:5** The children of sinners become abominable children, and they live among the homes of the ungodly. **read ›**

79 **Wisdom of Sirach 42:10** in her virginity, lest she be defiled and become pregnant in her father’s house; when with a husband, lest she transgress, and when married, lest she be barren. **read ›**

80 **1 Maccabees 1:46** and to defile the sanctuary and the holy ones; **read ›**

81 **1 Maccabees 1:48** and to leave their sons uncircumcised, and to make their souls abominable with everything unclean and profane, **read ›**

82 **2 Maccabees 14:36** So now, O holy Lord of all holiness, keep undefiled forever this house that has so recently been purified.” **read ›**

83 **4 Maccabees 14:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

84 **4 Maccabees 18:23** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

85 **1 Enoch 15:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

86 **1 Enoch 15:7** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

87 **1 Enoch 81:6** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

88 **Mark 10:7** For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, **read ›**

89 **John 2:16** To those who sold the doves, he said, “Take these things out of here! Do not make my Father’s house a marketplace!” **read ›**

90 **Acts 8:13** Simon himself also believed, and after being baptized he stayed with Philip. Seeing miracles and signs taking place, he was amazed. **read ›**

91 **Romans 14:14** I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean of itself; except that to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. **read ›**

92 **1 Corinthians 7:1** Now concerning the things you wrote to me: it is good for a man not to touch a woman. **read ›**

93 **1 Corinthians 7:2** But because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. **read ›**

94 **1 Corinthians 7:3** Let the husband give his wife the affection owed to her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. **read ›**

95 **1 Corinthians 7:5** Do not deprive one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. **read ›**

96 **1 Corinthians 7:11** but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband—and that a husband not send away his wife. **read ›**

97 **1 Corinthians 7:12** But to the rest I say, not the Lord: if any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she agrees to live with him, let him not send her away. **read ›**

98 **1 Corinthians 7:13** And if a woman has an unbelieving husband, and he agrees to live with her, let her not send him away. **read ›**

99 **1 Corinthians 7:14** For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. **read ›**

100 **1 Corinthians 7:15** But if the unbeliever separates, let him separate. The brother or sister is not enslaved in such cases; but God has called us in peace. **read ›**

101 **1 Corinthians 7:16** For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? **read ›**

102 **1 Corinthians 7:28** But even if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such people will have trouble in the flesh, and I want to spare you. **read ›**

103 **1 Corinthians 7:34** There is also a distinction between the wife and the virgin. The unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But the married woman cares for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. **read ›**

104 **2 Corinthians 6:14** Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? **read ›**

105 **2 Corinthians 6:15** What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what share does a faithful person have with an unbeliever? **read ›**

106 **2 Corinthians 6:17** Therefore, “Go out from the midst of them and be separate,” says the Lord, “and touch nothing unclean; and I will receive you, **read ›**

107 **2 Corinthians 7:1** Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. **read ›**

108 **Ephesians 5:26** that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **read ›**

109 **Ephesians 5:31** For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. **read ›**

110 **Ephesians 5:32** This mystery is great, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. **read ›**

111 **1 Thessalonians 4:4** that each one of you know how to control his own body in sanctification and honor, **read ›**

112 **1 Thessalonians 4:7** For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification. **read ›**

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

113 **1 Timothy 4:5** For it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer. **read ›**

114 **Hebrews 13:4** Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled; but God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers. **read ›**

115 **1 Peter 3:5** For this is how in the past the holy women who hoped in God also adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands. **read ›**

116 **1 Peter 3:7** You husbands, in the same way, live with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor to the woman as to the weaker vessel, as also being joint heirs of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *63 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Genesis 4:25

Deuteronomy 8:18 · 20:5 · 20:19

Proverbs 9:17

Isaiah 50:9

Jeremiah 23:24

Matthew 5:17 · 6:19 · 6:24 · 7:21 · 18:20 · 19:3 · 19:4 · 19:6 · 22:30 · 23:9

Mark 10:2 · 10:9 · 10:11 · 12:23 · 12:25

Luke 6:46 · 20:25 · 20:27 · 20:34 · 20:35

John 2:18 · 3:6 · 6:27

Romans 7:4 · 7:12 · 14:19 · 14:21

1 Corinthians 6:12 · 6:13 · 6:18 · 7:7 · 7:8 · 7:9 · 7:17 · 7:32 · 7:39 · 11:11 · 15:8

2 Corinthians 11:3

Galatians 5:13 · 5:17

Ephesians 2:12 · 6:1

Philippians 2:25 · 3:8 · 3:12 · 4:3

Colossians 2:20

1 Timothy 3:2 · 4:1 · 4:3 · 5:14

Hebrews 13:5

1 Peter 3:6

1 John 2:18

Jude 1:7

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “What does Paul mean that an unbelieving spouse is sanctified (1 Corinthians 7:14)?” on May 19, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

Library only. This study was written only from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed above, with a link to read it.

How it was made. Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.

How to cite this study. The Historic Faith, “What does Paul mean that an unbelieving spouse is sanctified (1 Corinthians 7:14)?” Early Church Questions, published November 9, 2026, https://thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/what-does-paul-mean-that-an-unbelieving-spouse-is-sanctified. To cite one quotation, add its number and source, for example “quote 1, source 8.”

© 2026 The Historic Faith. Selection, arrangement and editing by THF; machine-compiled text and public-domain quotations are not claimed. For personal study; please don’t republish.

THEHISTORICFAITH.COM

THE END OF THIS STUDY