

Why I will not remarry
SO LONG AS WE BOTH SHALL LIVE

as compiled by a Christian divorcee

All scriptural quotations taken from the King James Version
unless otherwise noted.

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Conditions for the reader of this book:

1. Like salvation, these writings are to be given away
freely without charge. For it is written:

"...freely ye have received, freely give..."
Matthew 10:8

2. Furthermore, all the text here may be freely copied and
reproduced without restriction. For it is written:

"...the word of God is not bound."
2 Timothy 2:9

If the word of God is not bound, neither should
anything any unprofitable servant of Christ should print.

3. The reader must only consider what is written here, but
is exhorted to come to their own conclusions. For it is
written:

**"Consider what I say; and the Lord give
thee understanding in all things."**
2 Timothy 2:7

This book is the result of one man's search for the truth concerning divorce and remarriage. This book critically examines a topic that Jesus called "adultery" eight times: the topic of remarriage. It covers all the relevant scriptural passages including both the Old and New Testament. Furthermore, it examines how the early church confirmed Jesus' teachings. These writings are intended to be uncompromised in truth, which is why they are made available free of charge in an anonymous manner.

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Dedication

I dedicate these writings to the Lord Jesus Christ. Without Him I have no reason to live. He has given me life abundantly, life that is everlasting. He has turned my “mourning into dancing” (Psalm 30:11). He has completed me and made me whole (Colossians 2:10). Words would fail to express what I owe to my Saviour. He alone is worthy of all glory.

**“And they sung a new song, saying,
Thou art worthy to take the book,
and to open the seals thereof: for
thou wast slain, and hast redeemed
us to God by thy blood out of every
kindred, and tongue, and people,
and nation; And hast made us unto
our God kings and priests: and we
shall reign on the earth.”**

Revelation 5:9-10

“But now, contrary to what was written, even some of the rulers of the church have permitted a woman to marry—even when her husband was living, doing contrary to what was written. For it is said, ‘A wife is bound so long as her husband lives.’” *Origen (c.245,E), 9.510.*

“A woman who is an adulteress—even though she seems to be married to a man—if the former husband is still living. Likewise, also, the man who seems to marry the woman who has been put away, does not so much marry her as commit adultery with her—according to the declaration of our Savior.” *Origen (c.245,E),9.511.*

“‘To the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they can remain even as I am. But if they cannot contain themselves, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn.’ Here Paul also persisted in giving the preference to continence....He challenged his hearers to this state of life, teaching that it was better that a man who had been bound to one wife should from then on remain single, just as he did. On the other hand,... on account of the strength of animal passion, Paul allows ‘by permission’ one who is in such a condition to contract a second marriage.... He allows a second marriage to those who are burdened with the disease of the passions, lest they should be wholly defiled by fornication.” *Methodius (c.290,E),6.321.*

“Let not the younger widows be placed in the order of widows, let...they come to a second marriage and become subject to sin....For you should know this, that marrying once according to the law is righteous, as being according to the will of God. But second marriages, made after the promise, are wicked—not because of the marriage itself, but because of the falsehood. Third marriages are indications of incontinency. But any marriages beyond the third are manifest fornication....But to the younger women, let a second marriage be allowed after the death of their first husband.” *Apostolic Constitution (compiled c.390,E),7.426*

“That erring Samaritan woman did not remain with one husband. Rather, she committed fornication by many marriages.” *Irenaeus (c.180,E/W),1.445.*

“Being a heretic by his very nature,... he maintains repeated marriages.” *Tertullian (c.200,W),3.477.*

“The Lord ... hurled His denunciation against Herod in the form of unlawful marriages and of adultery. For he pronounced as an adulterer even the man who married a woman who had been put away by her husband. He said this in order the more severely to load Herod with guilt. For Herod had taken his brother’s wife after she had been loosed from her husband—by death rather than by divorce. For he had been impelled thereto by his lust—not by the commandment of the Law. For his brother had left a daughter. Therefore, the marriage with his widow could not be lawful.” *Tertullian (c.207,W),3.405,406.*

“The next two quotations reflect the Montanistic teaching that all remarriages are forbidden. `Now, if any limitation is set to marrying, it is the spiritual rule, which prescribes but one marriage under the Christian obedience, maintained by the authority of the Paraclete.’ Tertullian (c.207,W), 3.294 ‘The modest restraint in secret on the marriage bed—and the once only adoption of it—are fragrant offerings to God.’” Tertullian (c.210,W),3.551.

“If you are bound to a wife, do not seek to be loosed. If you have been loosed from a wife, do not seek a wife. But even if you have taken a wife, you have not sinned.” [1 Cor. 7:27, 28]. He says that because to a man who had been loosed from a wife prior to his believing [in Christ], his wife will not be counted as a ‘second wife.’ Because she is his first wife after his believing.” *Tertullian (c.217,W),4.68.*

“[SAID IN DISAPPROVAL:] ‘About the time of this man [i.e., Callistus], bishops, presbyters, and deacons who had been twice married—even thrice married—began to retain their place among the clergy.’” *Hippolytus (c.225,W),5.131.*

0. Preface

My motivation for writing this book

When my wife divorced me, I had many questions about what to do, and what the Bible had to say. I needed answers quick. I read several books, and found that every book seemed to come to a different conclusion. It has taken me five years of studying and prayer about this subject to come to a point that I am pretty confident that what I have written reflects the heart of God, as I have included about every reference in the Bible concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. We, who have been divorced, have a responsibility to comfort others in the same situation according to the verse:

“Blessed by God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”
2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Therefore, I wanted anyone else who went through the same situations to be able to have a place to start looking. I don’t encourage anyone to blindly accept my conclusions, but rather to “search the Scriptures” for themselves, and see if these things are true (Acts 17:11). And if you come to a different conclusion, please feel free to email me so that I can go back and prayerfully consider if I do not see some things correctly.

Also, I began to put this book together at the request of three separate instances of brothers who have advised me to compile such a book together, in addition to what I also believe that God has put on my heart with the words, and was encouraged by the words:

“This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD”

Psalm 102:18

God allows some of us to endure certain tribulations that “we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” 2 *Corinthians 1:4*

What this book is not

At the foremost, I must say that this is not the exhaustive and authoritative text on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. It is also not a thorough, exegetical exposition from the Greek text. These are simply the thoughts of one servant of Christ, who has experienced the agony of divorce, and has searched the Scriptures and cried out to God for answers. It was written over the course of seven years, and is composed mainly of letters, and writings to help myself clarify exactly what it is that I could see. Furthermore, during that seven years, some issues have been further clarified, and others I realized that I do not see as strongly as I used to. As such, unlike the Scriptures, it is a work in progress.

Therefore, I would only say that this is the way I see things at this moment in time. I certainly do not have all the answers. Many books have been written on divorce and remarriage that purport to be the definitive guide on the subject. Dear reader, please beware. Scholars for two thousand years have debated the issues, on both sides. Many people are severely biased by their experiences. I beseech you, dear reader, to only:

“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.”

2 Timothy 2:7

your spirit and will not forsake the wife of your youth’ [Mal. 2:14,15]....And the Lord says, ‘What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.’ For the wife is the partner of life, united by God into one body from two. However, he who divides back into two that body that has become one—he is the enemy of the creation of God and the adversary of His providence. Similarly, he who retains her who is corrupted [by adultery] is a transgressor of the law of nature. For ‘he who retains an adulterous is foolish and impious’ [Pro. 18:22]. Also, He says, ‘Cut her off from your flesh’ [Sir. 25:26]. For she is no longer a helpmate, but a snare, having turned her mind from you to another.” *Apostolic Constitutions (compiled c.390,E),7.456.*

“If a layman divorces his own wife and takes another—or if he marries one divorced by another—let him be suspended.” *Apostolic Constitutions (compiled c.390,E),7.503; extended discussion: 9.505-9.511.*

ON REMARRIAGE

“And I said, ‘If a wife or husband dies, and the widower or widow marries, does he or she commit sin?’ ‘There is no sin in marrying again,’ he said. ‘However, if they remain unmarried, they gain greater honor and glory with the Lord. Still, if they marry, they do not sin.’” *Hermas (c.150,W),2.22.*

“A person should either remain as he was born, or be content with one marriage. For a second marriage is only a specious adultery. Jesus says, ‘For whoever puts away his wife and marries another, commits adultery.’ He does not permit a man to send her away whose virginity he has brought to an end, nor to marry again. A man who deprives himself of his first wife, even though she is dead, is a cloaked adulterer, resisting the hand of God. For in the beginning, God made one man and one woman.” *Athenagoras (c.175,E),2.146,2.147.*

bound that they cannot thence be separated.” *Novatian (c.235,W),5.589, formerly attributed to Cyprian.*

“Some laws were written—not as excellent—but as by way of accommodation to the weakness of those to whom the Law was given. For something of this kind is indicated in the words, ‘Moses, because of your hardness of heart, allowed you to put away your wives.’” *Origen (c.245,E),9.510*

“Our Savior does not at all permit the dissolution of marriages for any other sin than fornication alone, when detected in the wife....But someone might ask if He allows a man to put away a wife for any other reasons besides her being caught in fornication. For example, what about poisoning [her husband]? Or what if, during the absence of her husband from the home, she destroys an infant born to them? Or what about any form of murder whatever?...adultery or fornication. To endure them would appear to be irrational. However, on the other hand, to act contrary to the design of the teaching of the Savior, everyone would acknowledge to be impious.” *Origen (c.245,E), 9.511*

“The husband can cause his own wife to commit adultery in other ways than by putting her away. For example, he can allow her to do what she wishes beyond what is fitting, and stooping to friendship with what men she wishes....And even he who withholds himself from his wife oftentimes makes her to be an adulterous when he does not satisfy her desires. This is true even though he does it under the appearance of greater seriousness and self-control.” *Origen (c.245,E),9.511*

“A wife must not depart from her husband. Or, if she should depart, she must remain unmarried.” *Cyprian (c.250,W),5.553*

“He who marries a woman divorced from her husband is an adulterer. So is he who divorced a wife for any cause other than adultery, in order to marry another.” *Lactantius (c. 304-313,W), 7.190, translated from the Latin.*

“Do not let it be considered lawful after marriage to put her away who is without blame. For he says, ‘You will take care to

We each have a responsibility before God to answer, not for the things which we do not know, but for the things that God has clearly shown us. Please make sure that you seek the truth for yourself by the Spirit of God and by the Word of God. Cry out to Him. I pray that these writings would only spur you to further search the Scriptures and study for yourself what is the mind of Christ on the issue of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. So, I leave you with a solemn warning:

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God...Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God.” *Romans 14:12, 22*

Moreover, the Bereans were commended in such a manner:

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” *Acts 17:11*

I pray that you will be like the Bereans: to receive the word with an open mind, but not to take anything as the truth, until you have gone back to search for yourselves, to see if it really is what it is claimed to be.

My testimony

It was the summer 1997. I was 26 years old. I had been married for three years to a woman that I have and still do deeply love with all my heart. Our marriage was coming apart at the seams. When I look back at those times, I am ashamed and confounded at the person I was. A man who lived for myself and did not take care of my wife, as God would have me to. However, I had desperately become dependent on her, and thought life could not go on without her.

One day, I knew she was planning to divorce me. I could not take the pain. I said that without her life is not worth living. I

had sat all day in my office at work, with my head on my desk. I finally had made up my mind to do it. Life was not worth living anymore. So my plan was to go home, call her at work, ask her if she wanted a divorce. If she said yes, I would start my car in the garage, fill the garage with carbon monoxide, and die a painless death. After all, there was no reason to live, no reason to stick around. I was too depressed to even write a note to my family.

So I started to leave work, and follow my plan. A voice inside me seemed to be telling me to talk with Doug at work, a man who loves the Lord, and is not ashamed of it. I wrestled with the thought, but finally gave in to it. Doug and I sat down. I explained everything to him. He gave me some wise advice. He told me I needed to “get right with God”, and not to worry about my marriage, God could fix that. He told me to cast my anxiety on the Lord because He cares for me (1 Peter 5:6). We prayed together and I was very encouraged. After he left, I prayed to God and said something like “God, I’ve made a mess of my life. I’m done living my life. I’m now turning it over to you.” So that day I died. I died to myself. From now on my life would be a sacrifice to God. It says in Romans 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” That is what I would become: a living sacrifice.

So this day I started a new life, a life in God. I did not know all the ramifications of what would happen from that single prayer, but the next few months were miraculous. It was as if I was blind and now I could see (John 9:25). Suddenly my whole life seemed to have purpose, and I was amazed at the word of God, how powerful it was. I remember thinking, “this book tells the entire history of mankind, and the entire future of mankind” and gives us everything we need for living a life of godliness (2 Peter 1:4). It was also as if I could hear God speaking to me, telling me things that I needed to do.

when justly deserved, has even a defender in Christ.” *Tertullian (c.207,W),3.405.*

“In whatever direction you try to escape, you will find Christ also protecting marriage. He prohibits divorce when He will have the marriage inviolable. He permits divorce when the marriage is spotted with unfaithfulness.” *Tertullian (c.207,W), 3.405*

“Christ plainly forbids divorce; Moses unquestionably permits it.... Even Christ, however, when He commands ‘the wife not to depart from her husband, or if she departs, to remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband,’ both permitted divorce (which indeed he never *absolutely prohibited*) and confirmed marriage (by first prohibiting its dissolution). If separation had taken place, He wished the marriage bond to be resumed by reconciliation.” *Tertullian (c.207,W),3.443.*

“The reason why He has abolished divorce, which ‘was not from the beginning,’ was in order to strengthen that thing which ‘was from the beginning’—the permanent joiner of two into one flesh....So He permits divorce for no cause, except one....So true is it that divorce ‘was not from the beginning,’ that among the Romans, it was not until after the six hundredth year from the building of the city [of Rome] that this type of ‘hard-heartedness’ began to be permitted.... To us, even if we do divorce them [i.e. adulterous spouses], marriage will not be lawful.” *Tertullian (c.217,W),4.66.*

“She must necessarily persevere in that peace with him whom she will no longer have the power to divorce. Not that she would have been marriageable—even if she had been able to divorce him.” *Tertullian (c.217,W),4.67.*

“We gladly abide by the bond of a single marriage. In the desire of procreating, we know either one wife, or none at all.” *Mark Minucius Felix (c.200,W)4.192*

“When being inquired of, Christ gave this judgment: He said that a wife must not be put away, except for the cause of adultery....Laws are prescribed to married women, who are so

other is alive....’ He who takes a woman who has been put away commits adultery.” *Clement of Alexandria (c. 195, E), 2.379.*

“Where is that happiness of married life, ever so desirable, that distinguished our earlier [Roman] manners? As the result of that, for about 600 years there was not among us [Romans] a single divorce. Now, [Roman] women have every member of the body heavy laden with gold;... and as for divorce, they long for it as though it were the natural consequence of marriage.” *Tertullian (c. 197, W), 3.23.*

“The Lord holds it more pleasing that marriage should not be contracted, than that it should at all be dissolved. In short, He prohibits divorce, except for the cause of fornication.” *Tertullian (c. 205, W), 4.45.*

“Christ prohibits divorce, saying ‘Whoever puts away his wife and marries another, commits adultery. And whoever marries her who is put away from her husband also commits adultery.’ In order to forbid divorce, He makes it unlawful to marry a woman who has been put away.” *Tertullian (c. 207, W), 3.404*

“I maintain, then, that there was a condition in the prohibition that He now made of divorce: the case at hand was that a man put away his wife for the express purpose of marrying another....That is, [she was put away] for the reason for which a woman should not be dismissed—to obtain another wife....Permanent is the marriage that is not rightly dissolved. Therefore, to marry while marriage is undissolved is to commit adultery. Since, therefore, His prohibition of divorce was a conditional one, He did not prohibit it absolutely. And what He did not absolutely forbid, He permitted on some occasions—when there is an absence of the cause why He gave His prohibition.” *Tertullian (c.207, W), 3.405*

“Well, then what is a husband to do in your sect [the Marcionites] if his wife commits adultery? Shall he keep her? But your own apostle [i.e. Paul], you know, does not permit the members of Christ to be joined to a harlot. Divorce, therefore,

Why had it taken 26 years for me to make this decision? It took the failure of the one thing that was most important to me to wake me up, to realize what life was really about.

At about the age of four, I had taken an alter call at a Baptist church with my dad. I remember knowing John 3:16 at that time,

“For God so loved the world
that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish,
but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16

So the preacher told me I was saved, and throughout my entire upbringing until the actual conversion occurred, I had been taught that I was saved, and that I should never doubt it. I had known all the right things: I had known that I was a sinner in need of a Saviour.

“For all have sinned,
and come short of the glory of God.”

Romans 3:23

I knew that even my good things were detestable in His sight:

“But we are all as an unclean thing,
and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;
and we all do fade as a leaf;
and our iniquities,
like the wind,
have taken us away.”

Isaiah 64:6

I had known that the price of my sin was death.

“For the wages of sin is death;
but the gift of God is eternal life
through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 6:23

And I had known that Christ died for me, so that I might be reconciled to Him.

“But God commendeth his love toward us,
in that, while we were yet sinners,
Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8

Moreover, I knew that the only requirement was to believe in Him with my whole heart.

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Romans 10:9-10

Yet though I knew all these things, I still did not know the One who died for me: Jesus Christ. What an amazing realization that we can be personal friends with the One who created all things (John 15:14, 1:3).

So though I knew the truth, I never acted on it. This seems to be a fairly common phenomena that happens. Someone recently explained this problem using the example of a chair. I can look at a chair and know it is going to hold me up, and have faith that it will hold me up, but until I sit down in the chair I truly have not trusted that the chair will hold me up. In other words, I can say that I believe in Jesus all day long, but until I actually take that step to trust in Him for salvation I have not really believed in Him for salvation.

Another person explained it to me like this, referring to the fact that salvation is the gift of God (Ephesian 2:8-9). If I have a pen, and reach out to give it to you as a gift, it is not actually yours until you reach out and take it.

I have since read of many Christians, even very famous ones, who thought they were Christians long before they ever were. For example, John Wesley was already a famous preacher before he became born again. Dietrich Bonhoeffer had already

do, if his wife continues in her vicious practices?’ And he said, ‘The husband should put her away, and remain by himself. But if he puts her away, and remain by himself. But if he puts his wife away and marries another, he also commits adultery.’ And I said to him, ‘What if the woman who has been put away should repent, and wishes to return to her husband? Shall she not be taken back by her husband?’ And he said to me, ‘Assuredly. If the husband does not take her back, he sins. And he brings a great sin upon himself. For he should take back the sinner who has repented. But not repeatedly. For there is but one repentance to the servants of God. In case, therefore, that the divorced wife may repent, the husband should not marry another after his wife has been put away. In this matter, man and woman are to be treated exactly in the same way. Moreover, adultery is committed not only by those who pollute their flesh, but also by those who imitate the pagans in their actions. For that reason, if anyone persists in such deeds, and does not repent, withdraw from him, and cease to live with him, otherwise you are a sharer in his sin.” *Hermas (c. 150, W), 2.21.*

“All who have been twice married by human law, are sinners in the eye of our Master.” *Justin Martyr (c. 160, E), 1.167.*

“She considered it wicked to live any longer as a wife with a husband who tried to indulge in every kind of pleasure contrary to the law of nature....So she desired to be divorced from him. But she changed her mind because of her [Christian] friends, who advised her to remain with him, with the thought that some time or other her husband might give some hope of change.” *Justin Martyr (c. 160, E), 1.189.*

“The Lord also showed that certain provisions were enacted for them by Moses on account of their hardness....It was for that reason that they received from Moses this law of divorce, adapted to their hard nature.” *Irenaeus (c. 180, E/W), 1.480.*

“That the Scripture counsels marriage and allows no release from the union is expressly contained in the law, ‘You will not put away your wife, except for the cause of fornication.’ And it regards as fornication the marriage of those separated while the

his power to put away his wife. Now, if a compulsory marriage contracted after violence to a damsel, shall be permanent, how much rather shall a voluntary one, the result of agreement! This has the sanction of the prophet: 'Thou shalt not forsake the wife of thy youth.'" 5

Tertullian also states, "The fact that [he] who shall have dismissed his wife, except on the ground of adultery, makes her commit adultery; and (he) who shall have married a [woman] dismissed by her husband, of course commits adultery. A divorced woman cannot even marry legitimately; and if she commit any such act without the name of marriage does it not fall under the category of adultery, in that adultery is a crime in the way of marriage? Such is God's verdict, within straighter limits than men's, that universally, whether through marriage or promiscuously, the admission of a second man (to intercourse) is pronounced adultery by Him. For let us see what marriage is in the eye of God; and thus we shall learn what adultery equally is. Marriage is (this): when God joins "two into one flesh;" or else, finding (them already) joined in the same flesh, has given His seal to the conjunction. Adultery is (this): when the two having been - in whatsoever way - disjoined, other - nay, rather alien - flesh is mingled (with either): flesh concerning which it cannot be affirmed, 'This is flesh out of my flesh, and this bone out of my bones.'" A little later he states, "But they (the Romans) indulge in promiscuous adulteries, even without divorcing (their partners): to us, even if we do divorce them, even marriage will not be lawful" 6

Quotes from the early church fathers

ON DIVORCE

"And I said unto him, 'Sir, if anyone has a wife who trusts in the Lord, and if he detects her in adultery, does the man sin if he continues to live with her?' And he said to me, 'As long as he remains ignorant of her sin, the husband commits no transgression in living with her. But if the husband knows that his wife has gone astray, and if the woman does not repent, but persists in her fornication, and yet the husband continues to live with her, he also is guilty of her crime, and a sharer in her adultery.' And I said to him, 'What then, sir, is the husband to

written significant theological works before his conversion. Of course they thought they were Christians all along, but they did not become children of God until they really trusted in Christ.

Do you know Jesus Christ? Is He the Lord of your life? Is He the only thing in your life that you could not live without? Don't make the mistake I did. Cry out to Jesus today, ask Him to take hold of your life. Surrender all to Him.

"'Now, therefore', says the LORD,
'Turn to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.'
So rend your heart, and not your garments;
Return to the LORD your God,
For He is gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger, and of great kindness;
And He relents from doing harm."

Joel 2:12

Prerequisites for doing the will of God

Dear reader, for some reason this book has come into your hands. If you desire to learn God's doctrine, not the doctrine of man, but God's doctrine, some scriptural guidelines must be observed. You must come with only one condition: *a heart to obey.*

Prerequisite #1: you must come willing to obey whatever is written

**"If any man will do his will,
he shall know of the doctrine,
whether it be of God,
or whether I speak of myself."**

John 7:17

If you want to know if my interpretation of God's doctrine of divorce and remarriage, you must first have a willing heart to obey whatever He says. For some, this may mean remaining unmarried for the rest of your life. Are you willing?

After the first and second exile of the Jews in Jerusalem, the remaining remnant asked Jeremiah to:

“...pray for us unto the LORD thy God...that the LORD thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.”

Jeremiah 42:2-3

and the Jews, seeming to have a heart to obey, even said

“Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee...” *Jeremiah 42:6*

So Jeremiah besought the LORD for the Jews in Jerusalem, and came back with the response:

“The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah: Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day.” *Jeremiah 42:19*

“And it came to pass, [that] when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, [even] all these words, Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely: the LORD our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there:”

Jeremiah 43:1-2

In other words, because they did not like what they had heard, maybe the thought of staying in Jerusalem was too difficult for them, they rebelled against Jeremiah and accused Him of prophesying falsely.

some who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake; but all cannot receive this saying.' So that all who, by human law, are twice married, are in the eye of our Master sinners, and those who look upon a woman to lust after her.” 2

Athenagoras the Athenian in A.D. 177 wrote A plea for the Christians. In it he writes: “For we bestow our attention, not on the study of words, but on the exhibition and teaching of action, - that a person should either remain as he was born, or be content with one marriage; for a second marriage is only a specious adultery. ‘For whosoever puts away his wife,’ says He, ‘and marries another, commits adultery’; not permitting a man to send her away whose virginity he has brought to an end, nor to marry again.” 3

Clement of Alexandria writing around A.D. 194 on the exception clause states that the only exception for divorce is for remarried couples to end their sinful marriage: “Now that the Scripture counsels marriage, and allows no release from the union, is expressly contained in the law, ‘Thou shalt not put away thy wife, except for the cause of fornication;’ and it regards as fornication, the marriage of those separated while the other is alive.” 4

Tertullian writing around A.D. 200 says: “I maintain, then, that there was a condition in the prohibition which He now made of divorce; the case supposed being, that a man put away his wife for the express purpose of marrying another. His words are: ‘Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, also committeth adultery,’ - ‘put away,’ that is, for the reason wherefore a woman ought not to be dismissed, that another wife may be obtained. For he who marries a woman who is unlawfully put away is as much of an adulterer as the man who marries one who is undivorced. Permanent is the marriage which is not rightly dissolved; to marry, therefore, whilst matrimony is undissolved, is to commit adultery.”... “For in the Gospel of Matthew he says, ‘Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery.’ He also is deemed equally guilty of adultery, who marries a woman put away by her husband. The creator, however, except on account of adultery, does not put asunder what He Himself joined together, the same Moses in another passage enacting that he who had married after violence to a damsel, should thenceforth not have it in

The early church's view on divorce and remarriage

The following is a quote from Myron Horst explaining the early Christian's view on divorce and remarriage and why it is relevant to us now.

The writings of the early Christians are significant to help us to understand what God says in the Bible about divorce and remarriage for several reasons: These men lived very shortly after the writing of the New Testament. The apostles had only passed away a short while before their time. They were not separated from the writing of the New Testament by almost two thousand years like we are. They also understood the cultural setting in which the New Testament was written. What the early Christians wrote is also significant because the society in which they lived was so similar to ours today—divorce and remarriage was very common. Many of these writings were widely circulated among the churches which adds to the credibility of what they say. The early Christians knew Greek. The New Testament Greek was not a foreign language to them as it is for us or even a “dead” language as it is today. These men were fluent in Greek. For many it was their native tongue.

What is significant is that in all of the writings of the early Christians, I did not find any teaching that the early Church believed that Jesus' words in Matthew 19:9, “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery,” permitted remarriage. I was not able to find remarriage allowed in any of the writings of the early Christians. They all speak the same thing that remarriage after divorce is sin.

The early Christians spoke clearly on divorce and remarriage. What they wrote is significant for our understanding of God's judgment of divorce and remarriage.

Justin Martyr around A.D. 150 writes: “And ‘Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced from another husband, committeth adultery.’ and, ‘There are some who have been made eunuchs of men, and some who were born eunuchs, and

We need to be careful that we do not have this same attitude. Maybe we think, concerning divorce and remarriage, we will obey whatever God has for us. But when we find out that it may be God's desire for some of us to remain unmarried for the rest of our life, maybe to never have a family, then our true hearts will be revealed. Then we may seek to justify a “different doctrinal position”, to say “that's not really what God meant”.

Prerequisite #2: you must not come to justify yourselves before men

Others will come with hardened hearts, seeking to justify themselves before men. In response the Pharisees derision about covetousness, Jesus answers:

“Ye are those which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts...”
Luke 16:15a

Prerequisite #3: You must not come with a hardened heart

When the Pharisees questioned Jesus about Moses divorcement decree, Jesus answers:

“...Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.” *Matthew 19:8*

If anyone uses the Matthew 19:9 “exception” to put away their spouse, so that they can remarry, they publicly reveal the hardness of their heart towards God. If someone has a heart willing to do God's will, he or she would see God's intention for marriage in Matthew 19:5-6, and would realize that

Matthew 19:9 has nothing to do with those who are under the covenant of grace.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you:
for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

Romans 6:14

Warning: “He gave them their own desire”

I write this second preface to consider God’s nature to give men their own desire. Many have come to the conclusion that it is God’s will for them to remarry, because God provided them a new wife. If we are stubborn and harden our hearts, many times God will give us that which we seek, to our detriment.

“And they tempted God in their heart
by asking meat for their lust.

So they did eat, and were well filled:
for he gave them their own desire;

they were not estranged from their lust:
but while their meat was yet in their mouths,
the wrath of God came upon them,
and slew the fattest of them,
and smote down the chosen men of Israel.”

Psalm 78:18, 29-31

When it comes to divorce and remarriage, if you are determined to remarry against God’s will, according to how He has revealed Himself throughout history, He will most likely allow you to have your own desire. Actually, I believe the reason God put the Matthew 19:9 exception was to expose the condition of people’s hearts. Jesus prefaced Matthew 19:9 by saying:

“He saith unto them, Moses
because of the hardness of your hearts
suffered you to put away your wives:

wives from the peoples of the land...” (Ezra 9:2). And they made a resolution: “...to put away all those wives... according to the law...” Also, they did it according to the law (I assume according to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, the only place where divorce is permitted).

Nehemiah’s Reforms

Nehemiah also makes similar reforms as Ezra. In Nehemiah 13:22, it is written:

²²And I commanded the Levites, that they should cleanse themselves... ²³In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab:... ²⁵And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair... ²⁶Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? ²⁷Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives? ²⁹Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood...³⁰Thus cleansed I them from all strangers...” *Nehemiah 13*

It is not my intention to tell people what they need to do. We will all stand before the LORD one day to give account of our life (2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:12). However, I do want to point out all the places in the Scripture where divorces occurred. I hope that it will assist the reader in finding the will of God for their own life.

been chief in this trespass.”

Ezra 9:1-2

Here the people had violated a law of God, not to be intermarried with the surrounding nations. And it is interesting how serious Ezra takes this:

“And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.” *Ezra 9:3*

“And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.” *Ezra 9:6*

“Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore.

And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.

Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it.”

Ezra 10:1-4

What I perceived from this is that this is an example of a case where they had taken wives for themselves, against the will of the Lord. They saw that it was a sin. They confessed their sin “We have trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan

but from the beginning it was not so.”

Matthew 19:8

So, if you are using the Matthew 19:9 exception as an excuse to remarry, you are publicly showing the hardness of your heart to God’s perfect will for marriage as revealed in Matthew 19:5-6.

A few verses related to the character of God “to give them their own desires” are given below:

“...God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves...”

Romans 1:24

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections...”

Romans 1:26

“...God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do things which are not convenient;”

Romans 1:28

“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12

Few will find the narrow path

In John 6, many people turned away from following Jesus. It is written:

“Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?”

John 6:60

When Jesus answers the Pharisees, his disciples responded:

“If the case of the man be so with his wife,
it is not good to marry.”
Matthew 19:10

There will be few that will be able to follow the way of Jesus, the way of suffering, and take up their cross daily, in the midst of much loneliness, despair, sorrow, standing against the tide of so-called “believers” that will use “grace” as a means of “lasciviousness” (Jude 4). There will only be a few that will remain unmarried for Jesus’ sake. As it is written to the church in Sardis:

“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis
which have not defiled their garments;
and they shall walk with me in white:
for they are worthy.”
Revelation 3:4

Betrothed (KJV, NKJV) vs. engaged (NASB)

Most newer English translations translate “betrothed” (Hebrew word ‘aras) as “engaged”. For example, Deuteronomy 22:23

“If a damsel [that is] a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;” *Deuteronomy 22:23*

The problem with translating the Hebrew word “aras” as “engaged” is that an engagement is not legally binding. However, in the Jewish culture, once the couple were “betrothed” they were legally husband and wife, even though they had not yet consummated the marriage. Thus, if a betrothed woman or man lie with another, they should both be stoned according to Deuteronomy 22:24.

Ezra and Nehemiah’s reforms

A story in the book of Ezra really struck me. Actually it is concerning marriages that were not supposed to occur. It does not have to do with divorce. However, we may be able to learn something from it since **“all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition”** (*1 Corinthians 10:11*).

“The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

For they have taken of their daughters (as wives) for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath

Differences in Bible Versions

On Matthew 19:9

KJV	NIV	NASV
And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.	I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.	And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.

On “porneia”: fornication vs. immorality

Most Bible translations translate “porneia” as either “immorality” or “marital unfaithfulness”. However, “fornication” is a much more accurate word because it specifically related to the condition of the woman in Deuteronomy 24:1, to which He is referring in Matthew 19:8. Fornication in the Old Testament has much more of a connotation as “harlotry” or “whoredom”. By defining “porneia” in a very general way, it opens the door for many to remarry. This has opened up the “exception clause” so that many people now see that it is perfectly ok to divorce and remarry. They have been blinded by the hardness of their hearts.

1. Introduction

A picture of Christ and the Church

The most important point (related to understanding the spirit of the Scriptures) is that marriage is a picture of Christ and the church.

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”

Ephesians 5:23

This is even more clearly illustrated in Paul’s comments on Genesis 2:24:

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

Ephesians 5:31-32

Therefore, when we believe on Christ, we enter into to a covenant (Hebrews 8:6) agreement in which we are betrothed to Him (Luke 1:27, 2 Corinthians 11:2). This agreement is only made valid by the promise of God (Titus 1:2-3), whereby we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30, Ephesians 1:13-14).

In my opinion it is of highest importance to keep the picture of marriage in the back of our minds as we search the Scriptures for spiritual direction.

We know the consequences of Moses destroying the picture of Christ by striking the rock instead of speaking to it (see Exodus 17:6, Numbers 20:8, 11-12). He was forbidden to enter into the Promised Land!

Three hermeneutical principals

At the end of the sermon on the mount it is written:

“For he taught them as one having authority,
and not as the scribes.”

Matthew 8:29

There are three principles we must be careful of making when we search the Scriptures:

Principle #1: scripture must be spiritually discerned

“And lean not on your own understanding”

Proverbs 3:5

We do not want to be like the scribes. They maybe had all the commandments memorized, and yet they could not teach with such authority as the Christ. When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment in the law, he answered from the Old Testament scriptures:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,
and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it,

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Matthew 22:37-39

The first commandment came from Deuteronomy 6:5 and the second came from Leviticus 19:34. No doubt the Pharisees knew as much scripture as Jesus. However, who had such

A. Appendix

When did the New Testament begin?

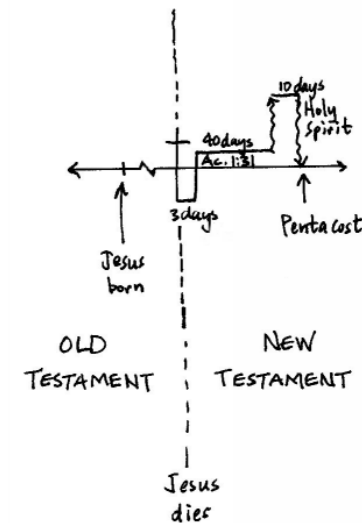
Hebrews 9:1 speaks of a "first covenant", and Hebrews 9:15 speaks of a "new covenant".

**“For where a testament is,
there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.
For a testament is of force after men are dead:
otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”**

Hebrews 9:16-17

This means that the New Testament was not in effect until Jesus died. Jesus died in the Gospels in Matthew 27:50, Mark 15:37, Luke 23:46, and John 19:30.

Here is a sketch to illustrate this point:



that my joy might remain in you,
and that your joy might be full.”

John 15:10-11

Actually, Paul says the woman who does not marry will actually be happier than the one who marries:

“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.” *1 Corinthians 7:39-40*

Jesus completes you

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:” *Colossians 2:8-10*

If you are married to Christ, you need no other spouse to complete you, you are complete in Him. We have free access to the throne room of grace. Let Him have free access to our life.

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” *Hebrews 4:14-16*

wisdom who could set God’s commandments in such an array of order. Finally, Jesus says:

“On these two commandments hang
all the law and the prophets.”

Matthew 22:40

To me, this means, that all the Scripture should be interpreted in the light of those two commandments. When it comes to marriage, all Scripture must be evaluated in light of the fact that marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. Therefore, when we read the scriptures, we must consider the husband’s model is Christ, and the wife’s model is the Church.

The Scriptures were written by the inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16), and thereby must be discerned by the Spirit.(1 Corinthians 2:10-16).

Jesus told the Samaritan woman:

**“God is a Spirit:
and they that worship him
must worship him
in spirit and in truth.”**

John 4:24

We must worship God in spirit, but we must also worship God in truth. Some people worship God only in spirit and not in truth. However, if we want to truly worship God, we must (it behooves us) to worship in both in spirit and in truth. This brings us to the second principle:

Principle #2: we must not spiritualize scripture

This might sound like it contradicts the first error. However, there is a significant difference between God giving the spirit of wisdom and revelation (Ephesians 1:17) and spiritualizing or

theologizing scripture so much that we can twist it to justify seeing what we want to see. Jesus said:

“Except ye be converted, and become as little children,
ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 18:3

At the same time that we must not lean on our own understanding, we must also be willing to take God’s word at face value. Once I warned a brother that was dating a divorced woman:

“whosoever shall marry her that is
divorced committeth adultery.”

Matthew 5:32

How I prayed that he could see, as a little child, the simple truth in that message. Any four or five year old will tell you exactly what Matthew 5:32 means. But this brother in seminary had so many excuses how Matthew 5:32 did not apply to his case, even though the lady he was dating was divorced. If we want to properly discern the Scriptures, we must “become as little children”.

Principle #3: we must progress from clear to unclear teachings

Finally, when discerning Scriptural truths, we must always work from clear verses to unclear verses. Our understanding of the unclear verses must never contradict the clear verses. One of the characteristics of false teachers, which Peter warned about, was that they twist “hard to be understood” scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16).

Happy is the man that finds wisdom

Many people divorce and remarry because they think that it will make them happy. In fact, many people make decisions based solely on what they think will make them happy. However, what we think will make us happy, is not what God says will make us happy. Most people’s purpose in life is “to be happy”. However, God says we are created for His glory (Isaiah 43:7). Therefore, we should based our actions on “what will glorify God”, not “what will make me happy”. As you glorify the Lord in obedience, God will make you happy.

“Delight thyself also in the LORD;
and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”

Psalms 37:4

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
and the man that getteth understanding.”

Proverbs 3:13

This is not what the world thinks..the world thinks “happy is the man that getteth a new car...” or “happy is the man that getteth a remarried...”.

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked:
for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Galatians 6:7

Even if we don’t believe that getting God’s wisdom will make us happy, God will not be mocked. If a person seeks to be happy be remarrying, God will make sure that that person will not be happy in that remarriage.

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;
even as I have kept my Father’s commandments,
and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you,

not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” *2 Peter 3:9*

Faith and patience

“That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” *Hebrews 6:12*

“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” *James 5:10-11*

Longsuffering is for us

According to the following verses, God desires for us also to experience the fruit of longsuffering:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” *Galatians 5:22-23*

“But in all [things] approving ourselves as the ministers of God...By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering...” *Corinthians 6:1, 6*

“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;” *Colossians 1:11*

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;” *Colossians 3:12*

Marriage in the Bible

“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing,
and obtaineth favour of the LORD.”

Proverbs 18:22

“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but
whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

Hebrews 13:4

The purpose of this section is to define what marriage is in very simple and clear terms using God’s word. Anytime we talk about divorce, we should as Jesus did in Matthew 19:4-6, go back and define what marriage is.

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother,
and shall cleave unto his wife:
and they shall be one flesh.”

Genesis 2:24

When does marriage begin?

“If a man vow a vow unto the LORD,
or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond;
he shall not break his word,
he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his
mouth.” *Numbers 30:2*

Here we see that if we make any vow, it is to stand as a covenant before God.

“When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God,
thou shalt not slack to pay it:
for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee;
and it would be sin in thee.”

Deuteronomy 23:21

If we make a vow before God, it will be required of us when we stand before Him in judgment (Romans 14:12).

Does it begin with a covenant or with the physical union?

“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

Genesis 2:23-24

Here, the vow is sealed in verse 23. Eve is first called his wife in verse 24, and then it is said that they shall be one flesh.

“If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; then ye shall bring them both out... because he hath humbled his neighbor’s wife.”

Deuteronomy 22:23-24

The woman clearly becomes a “wife” at the time of betrothal, not at the time of physical union. In verse 23 she is a virgin betrothed to a husband, but in verse 24 she is called his neighbor’s wife.

Additional verses showing this point:

- Genesis 34:1-4 (verse 3 “damsel”, then verse 5 “wife”)
- Exodus 21:10 (“take a wife” comes before “duty of marriage”)
- Isaiah 62:5 (“as a young woman marrieth a virgin”)
- Matthew 22 (“marriage” and “wedding” are translated from the same Greek word)
- John 2:2, 9 (“marriage” in verse 2 and “bridegroom” in verse 9)

Wife of thy covenant

In Malachi 2:14-16, we see how God views the wife that has been put away:

Notable quotes

“For if we would learn to suffer, we need not suffer.”

Pastor Richard Wurmbbrandt...

Spent 14 years in Communist prisons

Three of those years were in solitary confinement

**“Measure thy life by loss and not by gain,
not by the wine drunk but by the wine poured forth.
For loves strength standeth in loves sacrifice
and he that suffereth most hath most to give.”**

Ugo Bassi, young priest in Italy in 1848

Patience and longsuffering with joyfulness

Those of us who have been put away by our spouses should consider this a great opportunity to learn more of God’s quality of longsuffering. We can continue to love and pray for our spouse as the LORD longsuffers that all men should be saved.

God’s longsuffering towards us

“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”

Romans 2:4

"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.”

1 Timothy 6:16

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward,

faith believers were able to endure many difficulties...for they looked to the reward...Jesus Christ and the heavenly Jerusalem.

Deuteronomy	Hebrews
You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you. (8:5)	If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons... (11:7)
For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills... (8:7)	But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels... (12:22)

According to this, God is taking us to the heavenly Jerusalem. It is the promised land out of the wilderness. If we are looking for any comfort in this life, we will most likely be disappointed. Let us keep our eyes fixed upon the author and finisher of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we will never be disappointed.

“For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”

Hebrews 12:3

Rejoice

No matter how difficult the circumstances we may endure, God’s desire is that we continue to rejoice and give thanks and praise to Him. He is worthy. Let us offer up all of our suffering to Him.

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” *1 Thessalonians 5:16*

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” *Hebrews 13:15*

“...the LORD hath been a witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly see. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.” *Malachi 2:14-16*

Here, she is called “the wife of thy covenant”. Though verse 16 says “**he hateth the putting away**”, inferring that the wife of the covenant is the one that has been put away.

How long does it last?

“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 7:29

The bond between husband and wife lasts as long as they both shall live. To summarize:

1. Marriage is between a man and a woman
2. Marriage requires a vow—some indication that this is woman that the man is choosing to be with him
3. Marriage lasts for life

What is a covenant?

“...the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.”

Malachi 2:14

Marriage is a covenant. If we don't understand what a covenant is, we cannot properly understand divorce and remarriage according to the Scriptures.

How to establish a covenant

“And I will establish my covenant with you;
neither shall all flesh be cut off any more
by the waters of a flood;
neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.”
Genesis 9:11

To establish a covenant, one only need speak the words.

“In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates...” *Genesis 15:18*

Jesus further clears this up by saying:

“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” *Matthew 5:33-37*

A COVENANT BEGINS WITH A MAN'S WORD!

look on the things of this life for deliverance, but rather to look above.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 *Corinthians 4:17-18*

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” *Colossians 3:1-3*

Out of the wilderness

I have heard so many sermons on being in the wilderness, and once we will be delivered out of the wilderness. What the Lord showed me, is that we may spend the rest of our lives in the wilderness.

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.”
Hebrews 11:24-26

Here is a parallel treatment of Deuteronomy 8 and Hebrews 11-12. The writer of Hebrews uses the wilderness to show how by

say, as I have learned to say, that my divorce was the best thing that has ever happened to me. It was the road that led me to Christ.

Hope thou in God

Here are some scriptures that have been very encouraging to me about hope.

“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick:
but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.”
Proverbs 13:12

Whenever our hope is in this world, we will be let down. Our heart will be sick. The solution is:

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
and why art thou disquieted in me?
hope thou in God:
for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.”
Psalms 42.5

“And hope maketh not ashamed:
because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts
by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”
Romans 5:5

“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul,
both sure and stedfast,
and which entereth into that within the veil;
Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus,
made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”
Hebrews 6:19-20

Looking on the unseen

Much of the difficulty we experience in this life is due to our expectations, and not getting those things that we want. However, when we read the Scriptures we are exhorted not to

Here are a couple examples of God keeping His word for 430 years. I will just give a couple examples of God’s covenant.

Example 1: Amalek

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this [for] a memorial in a book, and rehearse [it] in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.”
Exodus 17:14

430 years pass until God’s promise to put out the Amalekites as recorded in First Samuel 15:2-3:

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember [that] which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid [wait] for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.” *1 Samuel 15:2-3*

God kept His word for 430 years.

Example 2: God punishes Israel for slaying the Gibeonites

“And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.” *Joshua 9:15*

Joshua made a covenant with the Gibeonites against the will of God. It was God’s desire that Joshua should slay all the men in the land of Canaan. But 430 years later, God still expected the Israelites to keep their word to the Gibeonites:

“Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David enquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, [It is] for Saul, and for [his] bloody house, because he slew the

Gibeonites. And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites [were] not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)”
2 Samuel 21:1-2

not only to believe on him,
but also to suffer for his sake;”
Phillipians 1:29

Is this not the message of the book of Job? The righteous suffer, but why? Are we not created for His glory (Isaiah 43:7)? He allows His children to suffer that our faith may be refined:

What is fornication?

“Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers (fornicators) ...God will judge.”
Hebrews 13:4

The study uses a systematic method of word study to define the word “fornication” by only comparing the Scriptures by the Scriptures. In this method, we start with a clear New Testament teaching, find the Greek word, then find a verse that will send us back to the Old Testament, for which we can then do a systematic study of the Old Testament.

Greek-to-Hebrew verse

Here we start at Hebrews 13:4 and from our concordance find that the Greek word for whoremongers/fornicators is “ pornos ” (Strong’s 4205). By looking up the word “ pornos ” we can find that there are three Greek words that are very similar: “ porne ” (Strong’s 4204) which is translated as “ harlot ” or “ whore ” and “ porneuo ” which is translated as “ commit fornication ”. Of all these, we desire to find a verse that will send us back to Old Testament Hebrew. In Hebrews, we can find a verse that relates back to the Old Testament:

“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.” *Hebrews 11:31*

This verse refers back to the book of Joshua in the Old Testament. Specifically Joshua 6:17 says:

“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:” *1 Peter 1:6-7*

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” *Romans 8:16-18*

Dear reader, does not the Lord know what you need? The Scripture says “if need be, ye are in heaviness”. If you are in heaviness now, it is because it is what is needed to refine your faith. And can we not give thanks that He is performing surgery on us, to root out the sinful, fleshly things of our life? We must give thanks, it is what He has asked us to do. We are created for His glory.

“What? shall we receive good at the hand of God,
and shall we not receive evil?”
Job 2:10

If you are going through a divorce, I hope and pray that you will see the good in the midst of the evil. I hope that you can

Lord (1 Corinthians 14:37). If your spouse is a believer, these matters are to be handled by the elders of the church, not by lawyers outside the church. It will save you many problems to let your spouse have whatever he/she wants, and let them walk away. In my case, I had already begun with a lawyer, when I was counselled by an elder on this issue. At that time, I told my lawyer, that I would not consent to the divorce, and I scheduled an elder to talk with my wife. Although, the Scripture does say “let him depart”, it also says “let not man put asundar” or “let not man separate” (Matthew 19:6). Practically, this means we are to allow them to leave to maintain peace, but I cannot believe we are to willingly agree to divorce. If they want a divorce, they can have it according to the state, but not with my blessing. I specifically had it written in the divorce proceedings that I was against divorce, and would not agree on it. This meant my spouse could essentially ask for a no-fault, which gives me no legal means of recourse. However, “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). That is to say, we must make our decisions based on what God wants us to do through His word, not what we think the best action is based on our circumstances.

Principle #4: “In everything give thanks”

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”

Hebrews 13:15

But you ask, “how can I give thanks in this terrible situation?”. I can only say that this situation is from the Lord. It is His desire that we suffer for His sake:

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,

“And the city shall be accursed, [even] it, and all that [are] therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that [are] with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.” *Joshua 6:17*

From this verse, we can find that the Hebrew word for “harlot” is “zanah”.

Systematic word study of “zanah” (02181)

Now we look specifically for the word “zanah” for Scriptures that have some sort of context.

Context verse #1: Dinah

We find that the first place it is used is in Genesis 34:31.

However for context, we will list Genesis 34:1-9:

“And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.”

Then in verse 31, it is written:

“And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?”

Context verse #2: Tamar

The Hebrew word “zanah” is also translated in Genesis 38:15 as harlot:

“When Judah saw her (Tamar), he thought her to be a harlot; because she had covered her face.”
Genesis 38:15

Context verse #3: Leviticus 19:29

“Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.”
Leviticus 19:29

Context verse #4: Deuteronomy 22:21

“...because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father’s house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.”
Deuteronomy 22:21

Context verse #4: Deuteronomy 23:17-18

“There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.”
Deuteronomy 23:17-18

Here a whore is also one who prostitutes or sells herself for hire.

Context verse #6: Ezekiel 16

Ezekiel 16 is filled with different variations of the word harlot, whore, and fornication. And thus gives a good context for what a harlot is: a beautiful woman that rose up and went after everyone she could.

things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:7). You must give your spouse unreservedly over to the Lord; put him/her on the alter. The Scripture says, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” (*1 Peter 5:7*).

Principle #2: “let him have your cloak also”

This was a very difficult principle for me. Since my spouse was leaving, I thought it was only fair that I should get at least half of our possessions...I mean I was getting the worse end of the deal already, there should be some consolation, right? However, what does the Scripture say?

“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.
And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.”
Matthew 5:39-40

So after struggling with my spouse over splitting everything equitably, I decided instead to just give everything to her. Our goal should always be to “overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21), “for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head” (Romans 12:20). Oh how good this felt... just to let go. It is time for a new life, between you and Jesus. None of those possessions will make you happy anyway, they will only bring back bad memories.

Principle #3: “Do not sue the brethren”

“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?”
1 Corinthians 6:1

I am sure many people would probably disagree with me on this point, but it is not my command that I give, it is of the

7. Help for divorcees

Let him depart

“But if the Unbelieving depart, let him depart.

A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases:
but God hath called us to peace.”

1 Corinthians 7:15

I wanted to title this section “Help! My husband (or wife) is leaving”, but I thought “let him depart” would put more focus on the Scriptural principles that I would like to share. When my spouse decided she wanted a divorce, I wish I would have had some clear scriptural principles for what I should do. Of course, at that time in my Christian walk, the only thing I knew to do was cry out to God for help. But also, I spent much time looking at books on divorce. It seemed that every book gave different advice, and most books did not seem to be very helpful. I hope in this section to share some simple Scriptural counsel that I learned throughout the divorce process. Essentially, if I had to go through a divorce again, these are the things I would do. As with all sections in this book, I only pray that you “Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things” 2 Timothy 2:7.

Principle #1: “If the unbelieving depart, let him depart...”

If your spouse desires to leave your marriage, the apostle Paul says “let him depart”. That is to say, we should not fight it; we must “follow after the things which make for peace” (Romans 14:19, Hebrews 12:14). So, in my case, I had to come to the point that I could say “if you want to leave, then please leave”. One person can never hold a relationship together, and trying to do so is futile. Love is voluntary, just as Jesus does not force us to trust in Him. He even continued to bless me when I was walking contrary to Him. Please remember, that “love bears all

⁴...in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee... ⁵...None eye pitied thee, to do any these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast in the open field... ⁶And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee... Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. ⁷I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare. ⁸...I spread my skirt over thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the LORD GOD, and thou becamest mine. ⁹Then washed I thee... ¹⁰I clothed thee... and shod thee... ¹¹I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands... ¹²I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears... ¹³...thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. ¹⁵But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pourest out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was. ¹⁶And thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colors, and playedst the harlot thereupon... ¹⁷Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them... ¹⁸...thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them... ¹⁹...I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour ²⁰Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter...? ²²And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood. ²⁵...multiplied thy whoredoms... ²⁶Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbors, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms to provoke me to anger. ²⁸Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and couldest not be satisfied. ²⁹Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith. ³⁰How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou does all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman; ³¹...makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as a harlot, in that thou scornest hire; ³²but as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband! ³³They give gifts to all whores: *Ezekiel 16*

Once we have studied by the Scriptures alone what “fornication” means, then it is helpful to compare with the

conclusions to which others have come. For example, The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament gives the following definition for the Greek word *porneia* (4202) *:

- 1) illicit sexual intercourse
 - 1a) adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals, etc.
 - 1b) sexual intercourse with close relatives; Lev. 18
 - 1c) sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman; Mark 10:11, 12
- 2) metaph. the worship of idols
 - 2a) of the defilement of idolatry, as incurred by eating the sacrifices offered to idols

Fornication is the wreckless setting aside of what God has clearly stated, entering into a relationship which was designed only under a marriage covenant.

What is adultery?

Although, we all probably have an idea of what adultery is. In this section, we would like to search the Scriptures, and define “adultery” by the Scriptures alone. We are looking for verses that define the word. The goal should be to take that word and define it by the Scriptures.

Context verse

Matthew 19:9 gives us a verse with context of adultery:

“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife,
except it be for fornication, and shall marry another,
committeth adultery:”

* There are 26 instances of the word *porneia* in Mat 5:32, 5:19, 19:9, Mat 7:21, John 8:41, Acts 15:20, 15:29, 21:25, Romans 1:29, 1Cor 5:1, 6:13, 6:18, 7:2, 12:21, Gal 5:19, Eph 5:3, Col 3:5, 1Th 4:3, Rev 2:21, 9:21, 14:8, 17:2, 17:4, 18:3, 19:2.

lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

mine oil and my drink. Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.

For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness. And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD.

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in

and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth
commit adultery.”
Matthew 19:9

Greek-to-Hebrew verse

In Matthew 19:18, Jesus quotes Exodus 20:14

“...Thou shalt not commit adultery...”

Exodus 20:14

The Greek adultery here is the word “moichao”. In Exodus 20:14, the word translated as adultery is the Hebrew word “na’aph”.

Systematic word study of “na’aph”

Now we can systematically investigate where the word “na’aph” is used. The first place it is used is in Exodus 20:14; however, no context is given as to infer what it means. The second place “na’aph” is used is in Leviticus 20:10:

“And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”
Leviticus 20:10

This verse at least tells us that adultery has to do with a man and another man’s wife. The third place “na’aph” is used is in Proverbs 6:29, 32:

“So that he goeth in to his neighbor’s wife; ...But whoso commiteth adultery lacketh understanding;”

The fourth place “na’aph” is rather translated as “break wedlock” as in Ezekiel 16:32, 38:

“...but as a wife that commiteth adultery...
And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock
and shed blood are judged;”

And the final place, that gives some context, is Hosea 4:14
which says:

“...therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom,
and your spouses shall commit adultery. I will not
punish your daughters when they commit whoredom,
nor your spouses when they commit adultery.”

Hosea 4:13-14

Here, Hosea distinguishes that daughters commit fornication
and spouses commit adultery. The Theological Dictionary of
the New Testament (TDNT) gives the following definition for
“moicheuo” (3431):

- 1) to commit adultery
 - a) to be an adulterer
 - b) to commit adultery with, have unlawful intercourse
with another's wife
 - c) of the wife: to suffer adultery, be debauched
 - d) A Hebrew idiom, the word is used of those who at
a woman's solicitation are drawn away to idolatry, i.e.
to the eating of things sacrificed to idols

*Adultery is sexual intercourse between a man another man's
wife. Adultery is also sexual intercourse between a married
man with an unmarried woman.*

“Such is the way of an adulterous woman;
she eateth, and wipeth her mouth,
and saith, I have done no wickedness.”

Proverbs 30:20

And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a
little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the
house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the
house of Israel. And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will
break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said
unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have
mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them
away. But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will
save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by
bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and
bare a son. Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are
not my people, and I will not be your God.

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of
the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall
come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye
are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the
sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the
children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves
one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall
be the day of Jezreel.

Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters,
Ruhamah. Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my
wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her
whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between
her breasts; Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that
she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a
dry land, and slay her with thirst. And I will not have mercy
upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms. For
their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them
hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers,
that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax,

“But Saul had given Michal his daughter,
David’s wife, to Phalti the son of Laish,
which was of Gallim.”

1 Samuel 25:44

Now we see that Michal is really in an adulteress relationship with Phalti (Matthew 5:32). Then, David is anointed King of Judah (in 2 Samuel 2), then he has children by both Ahinoam and Abigail, and he mentions a third wife (in God’s eyes a fourth wife) named Eglah (only mentioned two times in the Bible -- 2 Samuel 3:5, 1 Chronicles 3:3). After this, we see that David commands his first wife to be brought back to him:

“And David sent messengers to Ishbosheth Saul’s son, saying,
Deliver me my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an
hundred foreskins of the Philistines.”

2 Samuel 3:14

Although, Michal was currently married to Phalti, David still considered her his wife.

Then, it is interesting to note that “she despised him in her heart” (2 Samuel 6:16)....but yet David was faithful to his LORD. And then we see in 2 Samuel 6:23, “Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.” It appears that the LORD made her barren, possibly as a result of the law concerning jealousy (Number 5:11-31), or because simply they never had relations again.

Example 3: Hosea 1-3

The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel. The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

2. Divorce

Note: My hope in writing this chapter was to explain the passages concerning divorce as clearly as possible, without including my viewpoint on the issue. This principle was demonstrated by the prophet Jeremiah, who used the phrase “Thus saith the Lord” 147 times in the book Jeremiah.

An overview of New Testament teachings

The following Scriptures summarize the New Testament teachings on divorce and remarriage.

To the Jews under the Law:

“But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery:”

Matthew 5:32a

“...whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”

Matthew 5:32b

“Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:”

Matthew 19:9a

“...whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

Matthew 19:9b

Jesus teachings in Mark and Luke:

“Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.”

Mark 10:11

“And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.”

Mark 10:12

“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another committeth adultery:”

Luke 16:18a

“...whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.”

Luke 16:18b

Paul's instructions for the Church:

“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.”

Romans 7:2

“So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”

Romans 7:3

²¹A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God.

²²Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God. ²³Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel.

²⁴For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. ²⁵We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.

Example 2: David and Michal

Consider the story of David's wife Michal:

“And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal Saul's daughter loved him.”

1 Samuel 18:27b-28

So Michal is David's first wife, or what God would call the wife of his youth (Malachi 2:14-16). Then David must flee from Saul to escape death (1 Samuel 19:17). We see during the time of his fleeing Saul that he takes Abigail to be his wife (1 Samuel 25:39-42) (only after her husband, Nabal [note that the LORD struck Nabal, and he died. The practical application here is that the LORD can free up someone who is in a divorced situation to remarry by striking the offending spouse - or the one that left the marriage, committed adultery, etc.], dies, else it would have been adulterous), then he took Anihom of Jezreel to be his wife (1 Samuel 5:43). Now David has two wives in man's eyes, but really three in God's eyes. Right after this we see that Saul gives Michal to another man:

with stones and with stocks. ¹⁰And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD.

¹¹And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah. ¹²Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. ¹³Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. ¹⁴Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for **I am married unto you:** and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

¹⁵And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. ¹⁶And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. ¹⁷At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. ¹⁸In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.

¹⁹But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me. ²⁰**Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD.**

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:”
1 Corinthians 7:10

“But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband.”
1 Corinthians 7:11a

“...let not the husband put away his wife.”
1 Corinthians 7:11b

“A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.”
1 Corinthians 7:39

Divorce in the Bible

They two shall be one flesh

The first statement Jesus made in response to the Pharisees question in Matthew 19 was:

“Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain (two), but one flesh.

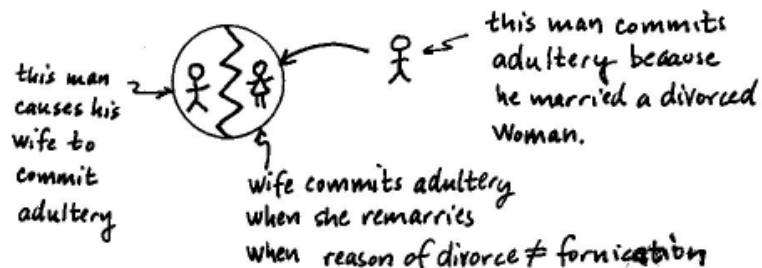
What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” *Matthew 19:4-6*

In the sketches below, the circle represents the one flesh union God has joined together. The zig-zag line represents divorce.

Matthew 5:32

Jesus teaching to the multitudes at the Mount of Olives:

“But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” *Matthew 5:32*



It is very interesting in both this verse and in Matthew 19:9, Jesus says that whosoever puts away his wife, except it be for “pornea”, commits “moichao”. Many people have tried to justify a spouse committing adultery on them as grounds for divorcing them. But Jesus is very clear about the exception being based on “pornea” not on “moichao”. This is further illuminated in the section titled the divorce exception, where we look back at the actual law that Moses gave concerning divorce.

Fornication is defined as “illicit sexual intercourse”, whereas adultery is defined “to have unlawful intercourse with another’s wife” [1]. Adultery differs from fornication in that it involves a person that God has joined together with another in a one-flesh union.

The following verse clearly delineates “fornicators” and “adulterers” as two different types of people:

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators , nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall

for her, that the LORD would sanctify and cleanse her by the washing of the water of the word.

“For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”
1 Corinthians 7:16

Example 1: Jeremiah 3

They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man’s, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted?[†] but thou hast played the harlot **with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.** ²Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. ³Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore’s forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed. ⁴Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth? ⁵Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.

⁶The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. ⁷And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. ⁸**And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce;** yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. ⁹And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery

[†] This is referring to Deuteronomy 24:4

“God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

Acts 10:28

Now, I know that the context of this is talking about the Gentiles also being saved. Actually, the same Greek word *koinoo/koinos* is translated in Jude 3 as “common salvation”. We could say “unclean salvation” or “polluted salvation” because God has allowed the Gentiles, who were not born under righteous Abraham to become Jews spiritually (Romans 2:29). So if a man or woman comes to Christ, and is washed. Please consider the following verse:

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” *1 Corinthians 6:9-11*

If someone has been washed by the blood of Christ, we must not call them unclean. In the book of Jeremiah, the LORD says to unfaithful Israel:

“...but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.”

Jeremiah 3:1b

How are husbands commanded to love their wives?

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;”

Ephesians 5:25

Husband, has your wife left you? I beseech you, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to continue to love her by praying daily

inherit the kingdom of God.”

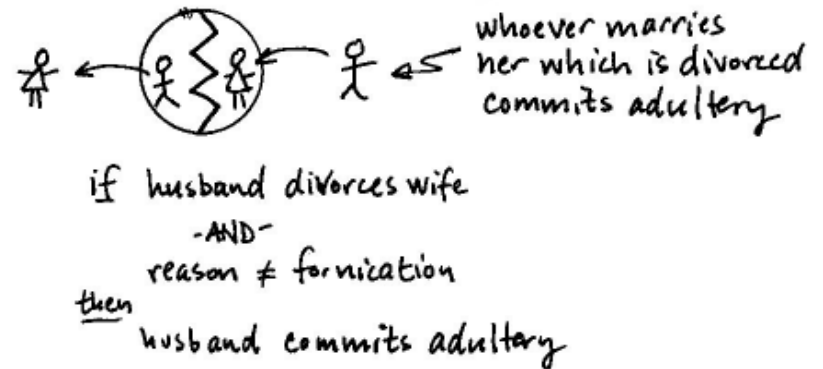
1 Corinthians 6.9-10

Matthew 19:9

Jesus answering the Pharisees who were living under the Mosaic law:

“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

Matthew 19:9



This situation refers back to the law that Moses gave:

“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife.” *Deuteronomy 24:1-2*

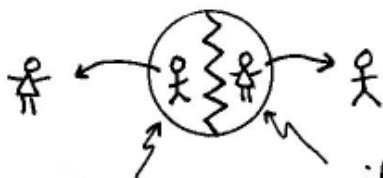
Mark 10:11-12

Jesus teaching to the Pharisees who were living under the Law:

“And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against

her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.”

Mark 10:11-12



this man commits adultery "against" his wife when he divorces and remarries

if a woman divorces her husband and remarries, she commits adultery

Luke 16:18

Jesus teaching to the Pharisees who were living under the Law:

“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.”

Luke 16:18



this man commits adultery

this man also commits adultery

This word “defiled” is used 7 times in Numbers chapter 5 in verses 13, 14, 20, 27, 28, 29 concerning the wife.

Hebrew-to-Greek link

Jeremiah 3:1 word “polluted” comes from a different Hebrew word *chaneph*. By looking up the English word “pollute” in the Concordance, we can find that “pollute” in the New Testament is translated from the Greek word *koinoo* by finding the following verse:

“Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all [men] every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.”

Acts 21:28

Greek word study: “koinoo” (2840)

Koinoo in the New Testament has a very similar meaning to the Hebrew word *tame* from the Old Testament. It is translated as:

- defile 11 times
- call common 2 times
- pollute” 1 time
- unclean” 1 time

By studying each place where *koinoo* is used, we can find the following relevant verses to our original question “should he return unto her again?” from Jeremiah 3:1. I think the following verses answer our question quite simply and clearly:

“And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.”

Acts 10:15

6. Shall the husband return?

“They say, If a man put away his wife and she go from him, and she go from him, and become another man’s, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted?”
Jeremiah 3:1a

This article investigates whether the husband should take back his wife. In other words, is the Deuteronomy 24:4 principle applicable today?

“...her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.” *Deuteronomy 24:4*

The first thing we notice about this verse is, under the law, it applies to the case where a man has put away his wife because he found some uncleanness in her.

Hebrew word study: “tame”

The word “defile” is translated from the Hebrew word “tame”, which is translated as:

- unclean 74 times
- defile 71 times
- pollute 14 times
- uncleanness 1 time
- utterly 1 time

Romans 7:2-3

Paul’s teaching to “all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints” (*Romans 1:7*):

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

“So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.” *Romans 7:2-3*



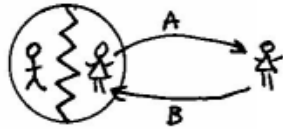
this woman
commits adultery
if she marries another
while her husband
is still alive

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Paul’s teaching to the “church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (*1 Corinthians 1:2*):

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”

1 Corinthians 7:10-11



- ① Wife is not to leave husband.
if she does, she has only
two options: A. Remain unmarried
B. Be reconciled to her husband
- ② A husband is not to divorce his wife.

1 Corinthians 7:15

“But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.” *1 Corinthians 7:15*

What does bondage mean?

It comes from the Greek word *douloo* (1401) which is translated [1]:

- To become a servant, 2 times in Romans 6:18, 6:22 and 1 Corinthians 9:19
- To give oneself wholly to one’s needs and service; to make oneself a bondman to him. To bring into/under bondage in Acts 7:6, Galatians 4:3, 2 Peter 2:19
- To be given (e.g. too much wine) in Titus 2:3.

This does not mean s/he is free to remarry (as Erasmus has translated it, and caused the majority of the church to follow). We take this bondage to mean, that s/he is relieved from the responsibilities or duties of being a spouse. This is confirmed by noticing later in the same passage, Paul says:

Abide in Him

“If ye abide in me,
and my words abide in you,
ye shall ask what you will
and it shall be done unto you.”

John 15:7

“Ask, and it shall be given you;
seek and ye shall find;
knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
For every one that asketh receiveth;
and he that seeketh findeth;
and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

Matthew 7:7-8

“And this is the confidence we have in him, that,
if we ask any thing **ACCORDING TO HIS WILL**,
he heareth us:

And if we know that he hear us,
whatsoever we ask,

WE KNOW that **WE HAVE** the petitions
that we desired of him.”

1 John 5:14-15

It is very important at this point, that the reason we desire to be reconciled with our spouse, is only because it will bring God glory: not because we feel incomplete, or lonely, or depressed. “ye are complete in Him...” that is Christ (Colossians 2:10). We must learn to total trust in Him for our sustenance and well being. Remember why James says that prayers are not answered:

“...ye have not, because ye ask not.
Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss,
that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.”

James 4:2b-3

ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” *Ezekiel 11:19-20*

All it takes is a little faith. We are talking about a hope that is beyond all hope:

“Who AGAINST HOPE believed in HOPE, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, ... He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was STRONG IN FAITH, giving glory to God; And being FULLY PERSUADED that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.”
Romans 4:18-21

Therefore, not leaning on my own understanding, not even trying on my own to fix things between my wife and I, I have presented my requests unto my God, and am fully persuaded that He has the power reconcile our relationship.

Wait on the LORD

“And therefore will the LORD wait,
that he may be gracious unto you,
and therefore will he be exalted,
that he may have mercy upon you:
for the LORD is a God of judgment:
blessed are all they that wait for him.”
Isaiah 30:18

The LORD desires to be gracious unto all those who wait for Him:

“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth;
but if her husband be dead,
she is at liberty to be married to whom she will;
only in the Lord.”
1 Corinthians 7:39

Here again, Paul reiterates the fact that a wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives.

Paul’s Judgment on the Matter

To the unmarried and to the widows

“I say therefore to the unmarried and widows,
It is good for them if they abide even as I.
But if they cannot contain, let them marry:
for it is better to marry than to burn.”
1 Corinthians 7:8-9

To the men:

“I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.
Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed.
Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.”
1 Corinthians 7:26-27

To the unmarried virgins:

“But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned;
and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned.
Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh:
but I spare you.”
1 Corinthians 7:28

“But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.” *1 Corinthians 7:32-35*

To the divorced woman (who left her husband):

“...let her remain unmarried,
or be reconciled to her husband:”
1 Corinthians 7:11

There does not appear to be any clearly explicit statements on what a wife should do that was put away because of marital unfaithfulness, but it clear that she is bound to her husband for as long as she lives (Romans 7:2, 1 Corinthians 7:39).

The goal in this section is to present the plain sense of the Scriptures on divorce. We encourage the reader to search the Scripture for themselves (Acts 17:11), and to have faith to yourselves before God (Romans 14:22).

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God, and keep his commandments:
for this is the whole duty of man.
For God shall bring every work into judgment,
with every secret thing,
whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”
Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

**“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink,
or whatsoever ye do, do all to the
glory of God.” *1 Corinthians 10:31***

If you believe that God wants to restore your marriage for His glory, then you must act by faith, unwavering, and knowing that He is faithful to accomplish that which He says. If faith is being certain of the things which we hope for (Hebrews 11:1), then our act of trusting God must be founded upon His unfailing word. Ask Him to give you promises to stand on (2 Peter 1:4). Whenever you begin to waver, remind God in prayer what He has already said:

“If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”
John 14:14

“Is there anything too hard for the Lord?”
Genesis 18:14

“For with God nothing shall be impossible.”
Luke 1:37

In other words, is it too difficult for God to heal a marriage that has been put asunder by man? We find two examples of reconciliation in the Scriptures: Hosea and Gomer (Hosea), the LORD and Israel (Jeremiah 3). The great cloud of Christian witnesses obtained God’s promises “by faith”.

“Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions...” *Hebrews 11:33*

But what is required? Perhaps a heart transplant of the spouse?

“And I will give them ONE HEART, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine

Remaining unmarried sounds difficult for most of us. However, let us not think upon the difficulties, but rather on the promises of God.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” *2 Corinthians 5:17-18*

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” *Colossians 3:1-3*

Option #2: Be reconciled

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”
1 Corinthians 7:10-11

We saw previously that if a wife puts away her husband, she has two options: (1) remain unmarried, or (2) be reconciled to her husband. Whether the wife remains unmarried, or reconciles with her husband depends on which situation would most glorify God. If we remain unmarried, it should be for the reason of glorifying God; if we reconcile, it should be for the purpose of glorifying God.

The Divorce Exception

This page seeks to explain the “divorce exception clause”, given in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9, which says:

“But I say unto you,
That whosoever shall put away his wife,
saving for the cause of fornication,
causeth her to commit adultery:
and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced
committeth adultery.”
Matthew 5:32

And I say unto you,

“Whosoever shall put away his wife,
except it be for fornication,
and shall marry another, committeth adultery:
and whoso marrieth her which is put away
doth commit adultery.”
Matthew 19:9

Here, Jesus was talking to the Pharisees, who were living under the Old Testament Law (see appendix titled “when did the New Testament begin”). This exception clause is referring to the Mosaic permission of divorce (because of the hardness of the men’s hearts):

“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife.” *Deuteronomy 24:1-2*

The first observation to make here is the Mosaic law of divorce is only for Jewish men under the law. The Matthew 19:9 exception is nowhere given for the case of women. In the Old

Testament, we see examples of the usage of the Deuteronomy 24:1 law in Ezra 10:3, Jeremiah 3:8, and Isaiah 50:1.

Whereas the majority of the present day church interprets this to be in any case where adultery has been committed, the innocent spouse is allowed to divorce the adulterer, and is allowed to remarry, the early church differed from this view considerably (please see the Appendix). Myron said:

What is significant is that in all of the writings of the early Christians, I did not find any teaching that the early Church believed that Jesus' words in Matthew 19:9, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery," permitted remarriage. I was not able to find remarriage allowed in any of the writings of the early Christians They all speak the same thing that remarriage after divorce is sin.

The Hebrew Tradition of Marriages

To really understand the exception that Jesus was talking about, one really has to understand that the way marriages were done in the Hebrew tradition was very different from our current customs. Deuteronomy 22:13-30 and 24:1-5 gives some of the background for the Mosaic law, which Jesus was referring to in Matthew 19:9. The following sketch illustrates the Hebrew marriage with respect to Deuteronomy 22:

Married to Christ

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Romans 7:4

Those that "remain unmarried" are not really "unmarried" in God's eyes, they are "married to Christ". When we begin to think about Christ as our husband, and serve Him as a husband, ministering to Him daily, there will be no want for another.

Jesus' disciples

"His disciples say unto him,
If the case of the man be so with his wife,
it is not good to marry."

Matthew 19:10

The eunuch's rewards

"Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation [is] near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed [is] the man [that] doeth this, and the son of man [that] layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I [am] a dry tree. For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose [the things] that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."

5. The departed wife

Option #1: Remain unmarried

“And unto the married I command, [yet] not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from [her] husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to [her] husband: and let not the husband put away [his] wife.” *1 Corinthians 7:11*

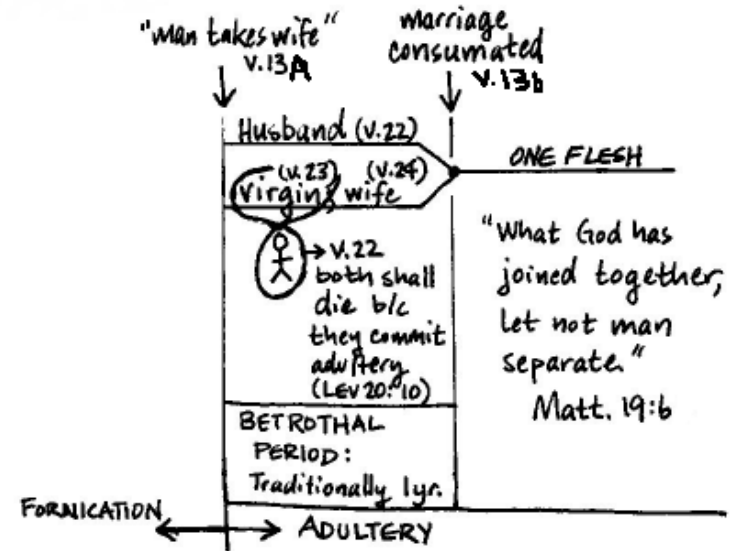
This article is written to address the first of two options give for wives that leave their husbands. As I have written in the article titled “love worketh no ill to her neighbor”, whether or hmanner, and another after that. I saw therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.” *1 Corinthians 7:7-8*

“But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the LORD: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.” *1 Corinthians 7:32-33*

Remaining unmarried, in Paul’s eyes, is better than marriage because only an unmarried person can have no cares of the world.

“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.” *1 Corinthians 7:39-40*

Here, according to Paul, the unmarried virgins are happier if they remain unmarried.



Verse 23 says:

“If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;” *Deuteronomy 22:23*

This shows that in that day a man became a husband when he “betrothed” his wife. Some people might call this an “engagement”. Darrell G. Young (1) wrote:

The Betrothal, or “Kiddushin” was not like today’s engagement period. It included a one year period in which Jewish men were excused from military service for the express purpose of preparing and building a bridal chamber facility, replete with every provision befitting a Queen.

A “betrothment” had legal ramifications; in other words, the only way out of a betrothment was by divorce. Verse 22 says:

“If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.” *Deuteronomy 22:22*

So we know that, once the marriage has been consummated, if the wife committed adultery with another, then they both should be put to death. This law was not always carried out because they were to be caught “in the very act” (John 8:4).

Who [is] among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh [in] darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.” *Isaiah 50:1, 2, 7, 10-11*

Let us lay hold of the all the promises that the LORD God will help us. Let us be sons of obedience, not sons of justification.

What about the children?

I write this article to address the question that inevitably comes when a person realizes that they are committing adultery and they should not stay in that situation. Many may use the excuse of the children's future to prevent them from doing God's will.

Well I was raised in a divorced family since I was the age of one. I don't ever remember having both my mother and father together. By the age of fourteen I was living on my own, working for myself. Yet, I can look back and see the hand of the LORD throughout my entire childhood, although I did not yet know Him. When I read Isaiah 50, it reminds me of how the Lord took care of me throughout my childhood, especially when the LORD asks "Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?"

"Thus saith the LORD, Where [is] the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors [is it] to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

Wherefore, when I came, [was there] no man? when I called, [was there] none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because [there is] no water, and dieth for thirst. For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who [is] he [that] shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

3. Remarriage: why not?

I have no intentions to remarry. I have been asked many times "why will you not remarry?" I have created this page to provide an answer that question.

I believe when I got married, I made a vow to God Himself to be faithful to my wife until I died. I only seek to emulate my Lord Jesus Christ, who while I forsake and rejected Him most of my life, He never forsook me, but loved me and laid down His life for me. It is written

"Husbands love your wives,
just as Christ also loved the church
and gave Himself up for her."
Ephesians 5:25

Marriage is a covenant with God

Marriage is a covenant with God, for life, that is not to be dissolved by man, and could not be dissolved by man. There are several scriptural passages that has really enlightened me on this:

"The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be ONE FLESH? Wherefore they are NO MORE TWAIN, but ONE FLESH. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you,

Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.” *Matthew 19:1-9*

This was Jesus talking to the Pharisees, who were under the law.

“When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.”
Deuteronomy 23:21

To me this says that when I die, God will be expecting me to have kept my vow to Him concerning my marriage. I want Him to be pleased with my decision.

“Art thou bound unto a wife?
Seek not to be loosed.
Art thou loosed from a wife?
Seek not a wife.”
1 Corinthians 7:27

This says to me that I should not remarry if I am divorced.

In most cases, remarriage is adulterous

“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, COMMITETH ADULTERY: and whosoever marrieth her that is putteth away from her husband COMMITETH ADULTERY.”
Luke 16:18

“Yet ye say, wherefore? Because the Lord hath been a witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt

3. We have no right to our lives.
4. We are to become slaves of righteousness (Romans 6:18).
5. We are to overcome sin, by the grace that has been given us.
6. We are never to use grace as a reason to stay in sin (1Co 6:1-2, 15 & Jude 4).

For seven years I prayed that God would prevent my wife from remarrying. But he did not. I believe it was for a purpose that He allowed her to remarry, the same purpose that Hosea had, that we could feel what is what like to have a wife committing adultery, so that we might be able to understand just a little bit what pain Jesus is experiencing because of the immorality in His church. John recorded Jesus’ view of this matter:

“But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.”
Revelation 2:14,16

I only hope that you will consider what I have written and consider what is your response to God? When I look at your situation and think about my wife being in the same situation as your wife, it hurts me very deeply.

Sincerely,
Christian

esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.”

Hebrews 11:27

I look at all the Saints today that are tortured for their faith, that are suffering in prison, that live in solitary confinement. And I think, what is a life of celibacy? It is nothing compared to what these saints have suffered. And I am reminded of Jesus’ saying:

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.”

Luke 9:23-24

Jesus is asking us to deny ourselves. If we want to follow Christ, we must deny ourselves. And so I ask: what is true repentance? If the thief restored fourfold at his conviction of sin, what should be our response, when we have remarried in direct contradiction to the Word of God, and are in an adulterous relationship? In the case of Ezra, it is (1) to confess their sin “we have trespassed against our God” (Ezra 10:2) and (2) to make restitution “let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them.” Ezra 10:3). This was a true act of repentance.

We cannot choose to live our lives however we want. If we have received Jesus Christ, we are no longer our own:

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

1. We are not our own.
2. We have been bought with a price.

treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth . For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.” *Malachi 2:14-16*

“For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” *Matthew 19:5-6*

The Scriptures call us to be faithful to every vow we make (Numbers 30:2, Deuteronomy 23:21; Matthew 5:37). Moreover, Jesus calls us to deny ourselves, to take up our cross daily and follow Him. To the divorced, remaining unmarried may be the cross that Jesus is asking us to carry:

“If any man will come after me,
let him deny himself,
and take up his cross daily,
and follow me.”

Luke 9:23

Letter: grace is no excuse to remarry

This letter was written to a sister who later married a divorced man, to explain why I cannot attend her wedding. The divorced man claimed “the divorce exception” as his reason for remarrying. Although, we can say that in the case of adultery, Moses permitted divorce (to those under the law), it was because of the hardness of their hearts.

Dear Sister,

When I read your email I was deeply saddened. First, I want to say that my interest for you is what is best for you spiritually, and my hope is that I only treat you in love as a younger sister in Christ **“with all purity”** (1 Timothy 5:2). Furthermore, I would like to say that I would gladly attend any marriage to any man (1) who is not divorced and (2) that is also able to do His godly duties as a husband, given as an example by Christ **“that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word”** (Ephesians 5:26). If you are going to put someone in Scriptural authority over you, should it not be someone who is (1) more spiritually mature than you, and (2) more scripturally grounded in the word than you: someone who walks precisely according to what he sees in the word?

Secondly, I would like to clear up something. Maybe at one time this was a little unclear to me, but I do believe now that it is most clear. Although I do not see that it is “adulterous” for you and your fiance to marry, but I do believe it is a sin to seek His permissive will, rather than His directive will. And this quote from Watchman Nee helps to explain why:

God said to the Israelites, “Moses, because of your hardness of heart, allowed you to divorce your wives” (Matthew 19:8), but the Lord Jesus said, “What God has yoked together, let man not separate” (Matthew 19:6). Is there not a discrepancy here? No! “Moses, because of your hardness of

declaration of our Savior, he commits adultery with her.”
Origen, A.D. 248, commentaries on Matthew 14:24

“A man who marries another man’s wife who has been taken away from him will be charged with adultery...”
Basil the Great, A.D. 375, Amphilochius 199:37

“...you are not permitted, while your wife lives to marry another.” *Ambrose of Milan, A.D. 387, Abraham 1:7:59*

“A woman begins to be the wife of no later husband unless she has ceased to be the wife of a former one. She will cease to be the wife of a former one, however, if that husband, should die, not if he commit adultery.”
Augustine, A.D. 419

Even in India today, most pastors will not perform a second marriage. Moreover, the church will not recognize any second marriage, unless the spouse from the first marriage has passed away.

WE MUST DENY OURSELVES

My wife divorced me. I never consented to the divorce, or signed papers agreeing to the divorce. I said I would not. She has remarried, and now she is an adulteress. I have no intention to remarry, although in my flesh I would very much like to remarry. As long as she lives, she still is the wife of my covenant, whether I like it or not. So, I intend to live a life of celibacy, at least until she dies.

Even this has been a very difficult thing for me to grasp: just alone, the possibility of never having a family. However, it really helps me when I think of how much Jesus suffered on the cross (Hebrews 12:3, 1Pe 2:20-21). And furthermore, it helps me to see how God’s servants have suffered throughout history for righteousness sake. For example, I am reminded of the faith of Moses:

“...choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

She does not cease to be called an adulteress until her husband dies at which time, she is no adulteress. Clearly, she is an adulterous as long as her husband still lives.

God has put this entire situation of remarriage and adultery heavily on my heart. When we look at the church in America today, it is in a devastating situation. The divorce and remarriage rates appear to be even higher within the church, than on the outside. I believe this is mainly due to the lack of the churches responsibility to practice church discipline in the case of remarriage. In other words, to condemn remarriage in the case of a divorced woman, or a man that puts away his wife and marries another, as adulterous.

THE EARLY CHURCH

It is interesting to note, that for over a thousand years, there was not a single dissenting voice on the issue of divorce and remarriage. All the early church fathers spoke with one voice on the issue. Not only were these men that lived very much in the time of Jesus. Most of them were severely persecuted or tortured for their faith. Each taught the same doctrine, each held the same opinion and each enforced the same moral standards. It has been written by the early church Fathers:

“if he divorces his wife and marry another, he too commits adultery.” *Hermas A.D. 90, The Shepherd 4:1:6*

“Whoever marries a woman who has been divorced from another husband, commits adultery.” *Justin Martyr, A.D. 151, First Apology 15*

“Whoever takes a divorced woman as wife commits adultery.”
Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 208, Miscellanies 2:23:145:3

“Just as the woman is an adulteress, even though she seems to be married to a man, while a former husband yet lives, so also the man who seems to marry who has been divorced does not marry her, but, according to the

heart, allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been so” (Matthew 19:8). It is not that in the beginning it was permissible again, as though God were a changeable God. No, the Lord said, “From the beginning it has not been so” showing that God’s will had never altered. From the beginning right on until today it is just the same. Here is the most important principle. If we want to know the mind of God, we must look at His commands in Genesis and not look at His permissions later on, because every later permission has this explanation, “because of your hardness of heart.” It is God’s directive will we want to discover, not His permissive will. We want to see what God’s purpose was from the beginning. We want to see things as they were when they proceeded in all their purity from the mind of God, not what they have become because of hardness of heart on the part of His people.

Seeking His permissive exposes the hardness of our heart. This is a lesson I have learned from a close brother in the faith, who has forsaken all to follow Christ. He left everything completely trusting Him to take care of his needs. And he is heading to a land where many will be martyred for their faith.

I believe the majority of the Church in America, are primarily “compromising”, “corrupt”, and “lukewarm” (Rev. 2:12ff), although there is a remnant of the “faithful” church here, but hardly any of the “persecuted” church. Most Chinese believers that are suffering persecution would agree. In fact, they are praying that we too might endure persecution that our faith may grow.

Somehow, the word “grace” among American Christians causes us to lower the standard that God has set for us. But scripturally, the word “grace” is always used as the means of giving us the ability to live supernaturally above the world, that God may be glorified. For example, someone saying “I believe God’s grace gives me the ability to remarry.” But I must ask as martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer did:

How cheap is the grace that God gives us?

Was it not costly grace that demanded His life? What is our response to that costly grace? Is it not to lay down ALL of our life and desires, and to fully give our life to Him...to become living sacrifices to God (Romans 12:1). If we believe that it was “costly grace”, how much more are we to take up our cross daily to follow Him? (Luke 9:23) Living no longer for ourselves, but for Him who purged us of our sin and made us clean. What do we give to God, but that we offer Him our entire lives as a “living sacrifice”.

But as far as I can tell, grace is not ever intended as a means to compromise God’s standard or to settle for His permissive will. Paul says it twice in Romans 6:

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”
Romans 6:1-2

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? Certainly not!”
Romans 6:15

It appears to me that Biblical “grace” is the type of “grace” that allows us to do great things for God. As in 1 Corinthians 1:4ff

“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus... that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” *1 Corinthians 1:4, 8*

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things,

However, the pain has still never ended. For the next five years, I would pray daily that God would take me home, because the pain was too much to bear. I spent many days in on drug therapy, and went through bouts of extreme depression, not being able to work for days at a time. All this because my wife thought it was more important to live her life as was pleasing to herself, and not to God. And just two months ago, I found out that she remarried.

When I read the scriptures, I do not see that I am to remarry. Many people, actually many “Christians”, have given me a hard time about this as well, which has made staying unmarried a difficult course of action for me.

Jesus very plainly spoke about the issue of remarriage:

“...whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.”
Matthew 5:32

“...whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”
Matthew 19:9

“...whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.”
Luke 16:18

Some have speculated that to ask forgiveness for the sin of adultery will cleanse the person once and for all. But as far as I can tell, every time adultery (“mochoiao”) is speaking about the actual act of sexual immorality, not the state of the person. Paul makes this clear in Romans 7:3

“So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.”

Letter: why I cannot fellowship with brothers committing adultery

“I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world... But now I have written unto you not to keep company with anyone name a brother, who is sexually immoral...not even to eat with such a person.” *1 Corinthians 5:9-11*

This letter expresses why I cannot fellowship with those people who are “called believers”, who by remarriage are committing adultery, as spoken by Jesus in Matthew 5:32, 19:9, Luke 16:18, and Mark 10:11-12.

Dear brother,

God put on my heart the need to write you and express why I do not fellowship with you. I don't write this letter as way of rebuke, but only to encourage you in your walk, and hoping that you will consider what I have to say and seek if there is any truth here.

I feel that I need to give you a short background of where I am coming from. Seven years ago my wife left me. She told me she was in love with someone else. I planned to go home one day and commit suicide by inhaling carbon monoxide: running my car in my closed garage. Before I left work that day, God put on my heart that I should talk with someone at work that day before I went home. The guy I talked with told me that my problem was not my wife. My problem was that I needed to get right with God. At that time, I prayed “God, I don't want to live for myself any longer. If I live, I live for you.” I didn't realize everything that happened at that moment. But ever since that decision, my life completely changed. That is, I received the power of the Holy Spirit in my life, which has taught me to say no to ungodliness.

may have an abundance FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”
2 Corinthians 9:8

“My grace is sufficient for you,
for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”
2 Corinthians 12:9

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
Philippians 4:13

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace,
that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in
time of need.” *Hebrews 4:16*

Costly grace calls us to perfection. It calls us to laying down our complete life for Him. It is the grace that God gives me to continue to love my wife even though she hates me. It is the grace that causes us to patiently endure suffering. It is the grace that allows us to follow His example to live a life of poverty, that others may be rich (2 Corinthians 6:10)

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor,
that you through His poverty might become rich.”
2 Corinthians 8:9

**Grace gives us the power to live a holy life,
Grace calls us to a higher standard, Grace
should never be used as an excuse to sin.**

I may be the only one that does not support you marrying a divorced man, but I take comfort in the fact that almost ALL of my brothers and sisters in Christ in the early Church would also forbid it, as remarriage was strictly forbidden for the first four centuries of the Church. John Stott notes this now “extreme” view held by the early church:

At this point I need to mention the extreme view which has been plausibly argued by Gordon Wenham in the Third Way articles already noted. He believes that Jesus' exceptive clause permitted divorce in the sense of separation, but that he forbade all remarriage. He bases his case on two main arguments. First, that for five centuries (with the sole exception of Ambrosiaster in the fourth century) the church fathers denied all right of remarriage after divorce, insisting that nothing can dissolve marriage except death. This remained the standard position of the Western church until Erasmus defended the innocent party's right to remarry after divorce, and the Protestant Reformers followed him. Second, Dr. Wenham argues that only a total ban on remarriage can account for the astonishment of the disciples. Their response was, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry" (Matthew 19:10). Moreover, Jesus replied to this by referring to three kinds of "eunuch," meaning "celibate."

With Erasmus' interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7, I believe the entire Church today has compromised God's true desire for the Church to remain blameless. Do you think that if the Church today upheld this standard, that the divorce rate in the church would be practically the same as it is in the world? God calls us to come out from among them and be separate (2 Corinthians 6:17). We are not to look in any way like the world. Where the world divorces and remarries at will, we dare not.

Being single is a very precious gift from God; only single people can have no cares in this world.

“But I want you to be without care.

He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord--
how he may please the Lord.

But he who is married cares about the things of the world--
how he may please his wife.”

1 Corinthians 7:32-33

Actually, most of us that have made vows, have vowed that we would remain “faithful to our wife, forsaking all others, until death do us part”. If we have made that vow, we dare not break our word, even though our spouse might have broken their word. God's heart is that the husband love his wife even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her (Ephesians 5:25). We see a glimpse of this related to an adulterous wife in Jeremiah 3. The LORD put away adulterous Israel, but He never looked for another wife, then He asked her to put away her adulteries and come back to Him.

However, if already did remarry, in essence he now has two wives (in God's eyes [consider Malachi 2:14-16... God still considers the wife that the man put away as the wife of his youth]). In which case, he should continue to care for both of those wives...although legally he cannot have two wives, but in God's eyes (or in reality) he does have two wives.

Also, if a man has more than one wife, he cannot be an elder/overseer/bishop according to:

“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach;” *1 Timothy 3:2*

It is not the intent of this section to tell someone what they must do, but only to provide some relevant Scriptural examples to consider. First, it is essential that we know Jesus Christ as our Lord and our Saviour. If we know Him, we have a promise that He will give wisdom to those who ask Him (James 1:5). But let us ask with a heart to do whatever it is He may ask us to do. Not our will be done, but Thy will be done.

I hope that you will only consider the things that are said here, and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11) for yourselves to “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (*Romans 12:2*). And may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another,
commiteth adultery:”

Luke 16:18a

It is very clear from Genesis 2:24, that God’s desire for man was to have one wife. Also, Moses instruction to the kings was not to “multiply wives to himself”:

“Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.”

Deuteronomy 17:17

Although, this was not God’s desire for man, it happened many times in the Old Testament. However, I could be wrong (and please correct me), but I cannot find anywhere in the Old Testament or the New Testament where it is condemned as adultery. We see throughout scripture that some very godly men had many wives. However, never do we see a wife that has several husbands and it not being condemned. I believe, this is because the marriage is a picture of Christ and the Church. Christ is one, but the church is many. As I wrote in the “vows” section, according to Numbers 30, the vows of a man stand before God, but the vows of a woman must be approved by first the father, then the first husband for them to stand.

“If he take him another wife;
her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage,
shall he not diminish.”

Exodus 21:10

The first consideration is this: if a man has been married and been abandoned by his wife, I believe it is God’s desire for him to remain unmarried.

“Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.”

1 Corinthians 7:27b

I am very concerned for you spiritually. Now, as single, Christ, is your only authority. You are free to do everything He wishes and to glorify Him with your entire being. When you become married, now you will have worldly responsibilities. Although I dare not forbid marriage, I must uphold God’s ideal that marriage be as God intended in Genesis, not as Moses permitted in Deuteronomy.

I dare not forbid marriage, but should we not uphold the very holiness of God, as living examples, separated to Him for holiness, not compromising any standard, not seeking His permissive will, but that which will glorify Him the most? And if God desires for you to be married then praise the Lord, but do you really think God’s very best is to offer you a divorced man?

“But she is happier if she remains as she is,
according to my judgment—and I think I also
have the Spirit of God.”

1 Corinthians 7:40

Whatever you might think of my decision or however it appears, God knows my heart (1 Samuel 16:7b, John 7:24), and He is the one I must answer to. Although I cannot change your decision, not coming to your wedding allows me to continue walking in faith, not that I have already attained, and not that I know completely His will concerning everything about why He would not want me to go.

your brother in Christ,
Christian

Example: King Herod's unlawful remarriage

¹⁴And king Herod heard [of him]; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. ¹⁵Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. ¹⁶But when Herod heard [thereof], he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead. ¹⁷For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. **¹⁸For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.** ¹⁹Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: ²⁰For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. ²¹And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief [estates] of Galilee; ²²And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give [it] thee. ²³And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give [it] thee, unto the half of my kingdom. ²⁴And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. ²⁵And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. ²⁶And the king was exceeding sorry; [yet] for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. ²⁷And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, ²⁸And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. ²⁹And when his disciples heard [of it], they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb." *Mark 6:14-29*

Note: parallel passages can be found in Matthew 14:1-12 and Luke 3:19-20.

Is your marriage adulterous?

The problem with remarriage in most every case is that it is adulterous. And the problem with adultery is that it is abhorrent to God.

“Whosoever putteth away his wife,
and marrieth another, commiteth adultery:
and whosoever marrieth her that is putteth away from her
husband commiteth adultery.”
Luke 16:18

Therefore, it is prudent to honestly seek God to ask Him if the remarriage is adulterous in His eyes. However, I believe that most people know in their hearts whether this in fact is the case “their conscience also bearing witness” (Romans 2:15). I must make this explicitly clear, if you are married to a wife that has been divorced (and her husband is still alive) you are committing adultery (Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:9 [only in KJV and NKJV], Luke 16:18). Moreover, husbands, if you put away your wife to marry another, you are committing adultery (Mark 10:11, Luke 16:18). Wives, if you put away your husbands and married another, you are committing adultery (Mark 10:12).

“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”
Romans 7:2-3

Furthermore, if you have divorced your wife, except it be for “pornea” (fornication), and married another, you are in an adulterous relationship.

“But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to [her] husband: and let not the husband put away [his] wife.” *1 Corinthians 7:11*

What if I’ve already remarried?

In the issue of divorce and remarriage the one question that is probably the most difficult is:

What if I’ve already remarried? Now, what do I do?

This is a very difficult question, and not one that we feel comfortable to give a blanket statement on what you should do. However, we would like to look at several relevant passages in the Scriptures related to this topic, and help equip you to search the truth for yourself. These are verses that investigate what people did in the Scriptures in the case where they were in a marriage that they were not supposed to be. Ultimately, we each need to go before the throne of Grace (Hebrews 4:16), and obtain grace and mercy from God. We need to have a heart to do whatever it is that He would have us to do: it is only when we are in this state that we can truly know what His will is, no matter what the subject.

Moreover, the Lord promises if you will receive his words, and put His words in your heart, and if you cry out to Him for knowledge, and seek it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God (paraphrase of Proverbs 2:1-5).

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

James 1:5

4. To the already remarried

Love worketh no ill to his neighbor

“And he saith unto them,
Whosoever shall put away his wife,
and marry another,
committeth adultery against her.”

Mark 10:11

One day as I was studying “unity”, a verse was shown unto me that illuminated my understanding of the phrase that Jesus made when He said “**commiteth adultery against her**” in Mark 10:11. I was reading Ephesians 1:10

“...that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.”

Ephesians 1:10

This phrase “he might gather together in one” comes from the Greek word *anakephalaiomai* which is translated only one other place as “briefly comprehended” in Romans 13:9.

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.
For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery,
Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal,
Thou shalt not bear false witness,
Thou shalt not covet;
and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.
Love worketh no ill to his neighbor:

therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Romans 13:8-10

Therefore, the heinous sin of remarriage in most cases is that the spouse that leaves the marriage is not loving the spouse of his/her covenant, but is rather “working ill to his neighbor”. In Moses and the Prophets, this is called “dealing treacherously” (from the Hebrew word *bagad*) as in Malachi 2:14:

“Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet [is] she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.”

Malachi 2:13-14

This Hebrew word *bagad* is translated in Exodus 21:8 as “dealt deceitfully” and in Psalm 78:57 as “dealt unfaithfully”. In Jeremiah *bagad* is used four times in Jeremiah 3:8, 3:10 and twice in 3:20.

“Surely [as] a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD.”

Jeremiah 3:20

When a wife puts away her husband then remarries, not only does she commit adultery, but also she “works ill” to her first husband (Romans 13:10); she becomes as “rottenness in his bones” (Proverbs 12:4). In the case of a husband that puts away his wife, Jesus says he “committeth adultery against her”. He sins against her, and the wife that leaves sins against him. But they are sinning against their own flesh. As it is written:

“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.”

1 Corinthians 6:19

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:”

Ephesians 5:28-29

When it comes to a husband and a wife, the wife is considered his own flesh. Therefore, the husband that puts away his wife and remarries, sins against his own flesh. Likewise, the wife that puts away her husband sins against her own flesh. Even the wife that has been put away, if she remarries, she sins against her own flesh.

If we are going to ask the question “what are we do with couples that are already remarried (and in most cases in an adulterous situation)?” we must also consider the question “If continuing in adultery is *dealing treacherously* with my spouse, how are we going to stop dealing treacherously?” If husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the church, we can have an idea of the LORD’s mercy to Israel from Jeremiah and Hosea:

“Return, ye backsliding children,
and I will heal your backslidings.”

Jeremiah 3:22

Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

Hosea 3:1

Paul gives the following instructions to the church: