

## Articles and Sermons :: Not Under Bondage—Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage -taylor

Not Under Bondage—Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage -taylor - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/6/27 11:32

### Not Under Bondage—Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage (Part 4)

by Dean Taylor

A few days ago I was at work when a nurse handed me a newspaper and pointed to a small article asking me what I thought about it. The article was about a radio station in West Virginia that boasted that it was “giving away a free divorce.” The article from the Associated Press read:

A Charleston radio station is observing Valentine’s Day with a reminder that Cupid sometimes misses his mark. WKLC-FM, better known as Rock 105, is giving away a free divorce. Valentine’s Day isn’t all hearts and flowers, says WKLC Program Director Jay Nunley. There is a darker side, he said, “where maybe you despise your spouse and resent the entire day.” Through 4 p.m. on Thursday, Valentine’s Day, applications for the free divorce will be accepted on the classic rock station’s website, and the winning name will be drawn at 5 p.m. Nunley cautions that this is a real divorce and people shouldn’t enter if they aren’t serious. Also, people expecting a long, drawn-out legal battle should hire a lawyer because the Rock 105 contest is for a relatively uncomplicated divorce. Charleston attorney Rusty Webb will handle the actual filing. “Sure, we can give away concert tickets, and we do,” said Nunley. “That’s going to make you happy for a little while. This is the chance to make someone happy for the rest of their life.”

That last line really got me, “This is the chance to make someone happy for the rest of their life.” The sad fact is that in most cases, this is the furthest thing from the truth. Not even considering eternity for a moment—the damage, misery, suffering and child-neglect that has resulted from the epidemic proportion of divorce in the last century is nearly incalculable.

#### Jesus Has A Better Way

Sometimes the way of Christ seems hard, unapproachable, or even out of touch. We try to better ourselves and our society with new ways, new ideas and new solutions to our problems. Often it takes a lifetime, or sometimes even generations to realize that serious mistakes have been made. Even though His way is often very challenging, Jesus told us that He supplies the ability to perform anything He is asking us to do. He said, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Surprisingly, in the end we always find there is joy in His way. Jesus said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 11:16:33).

In the last three articles on marriage and divorce we primarily focused on the teachings of Jesus. We saw that in these teachings, like many other teachings of the New Testament, Jesus made radical changes in the way things were done under the Old Covenant. Many things concerning marriage were affected. In the Old Testament, polygamy was allowed and divorce was permitted. Divorce and remarriage often went on in rapid numeration, with very few restraining circumstances, particularly for the man. A man could commit adultery only by taking another man’s wife; and unfaithfulness to his own wife was only considered fornication.

But then Jesus came, and in the Sermon on the Mount, right there alongside anger, war, lust, law suits, public prayers, storing up treasures, etc., Jesus made radical changes in the way we understand divorce and remarriage. When the teaching of Jesus was looked at in total, it became evident that the essence of His teaching was that marriage, by definition, is actually a miracle from God, whereby two people are made into one indissoluble union. His teaching can be summarized in His words, “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh” (Matt. 19:6).

Summarizing Jesus’ teaching, we saw that:

Divorcing a wife and marrying another is adultery (Mark 10:11-12).

Marrying someone who has been divorced is adultery (Luke 16:18).

Divorcing a spouse for any reason except for fornication is to be guilty of causing your spouse to commit adultery (Matt. 5:32, 19:9).

We took special note of this last point. The teaching of causing your spouse to commit adultery is often quickly passed over in our reading of this passage. This teaching should put a special check on our hearts when we begin to contemplate divorce—these are indeed challenging words. We saw in the last issue however, that Jesus did give one exception to the guilt of causing your spouse's future adultery, and that was if they were an adulterer already. Albeit, even in the case of adultery, where separation was permitted, remarriage still was not granted. This would have meant to live the rest of your life single. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we saw that even with such difficult teachings as these, we were not to accomplish them in the flesh but to trust God, who has promised the needed grace to accomplish what He has called us to.

Jesus' teachings are not popular today, and unfortunately, numerous different interpretations abound, turning the words of Christ into nonsense. Modern interpreters disagree on how to interpret the words of Christ. Over the centuries, Jesus' teachings have grown increasingly figurative. Interestingly, the further you go back in history, the more literal you find the Church on the subject of divorce and many other controversial teachings.

### What Did The Apostle Paul Think?

The writings of Paul give us the priceless opportunity of having an infallible interpreter of the words of Jesus. It takes the burden of interpreting these passages away from us and puts it onto Paul. The seventh chapter of first Corinthians is vitally important in the understanding of the teaching of Jesus on divorce and remarriage, because many topics discussed there provide actual real-life examples of the teachings of Jesus. The points most contested by modern interpreters are dealt with directly in his writings.

The book of first Corinthians is actually a letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthian church in reply to many questions that they were asking him. We don't have that original Corinthian letter, but throughout the book, little clues and phrases such as, "now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me," supply us with a glimpse of what the Corinthians were asking him. Chapter 7 is particularly helpful because it deals with several contemporary concerns such as:

The permanence of the marriage bond.

A summary of Jesus' teaching on divorce, and what is permissible after divorce.

How we should consider our marriage bonds made before conversion.

Serious considerations dealing with young people in courtship or betrothal situations.

Finally, Paul caps off the chapter with his final dictum on divorce and remarriage to avoid any misunderstanding.

### The Context

Coming into Chapter 7, Paul has just finished a difficult and heated rebuke to the men of the church for going to prostitutes. From the context, flowing into Chapter 7, it would appear that Paul may also be correcting overly-strict chastity standards by the Corinthian wives, implying that this may partly be a cause for the failure of their husbands. Whatever the case, it is safe to say that they were dealing with some very difficult, real-life situations there in Corinth. Paul was taking Christianity to the formerly pagan, idol-worshipping, unlearned, and often illiterate Gentiles. This was clearly a clash of two worlds and a clash of two ways of life. But Paul had faith that the ways of Christ had answers for their lives.

One of the most important things to do when reading first Corinthians is to pay special attention to Paul's textual markers. All throughout the book, Paul uses phrases like, "now concerning," "I say therefore," "and unto," "but to the rest speak I." Each of these phrases is given to present a new thought, or to address a separate point of the Corinthian letter.

### Paul's Summary Of The Teaching Of Jesus On Divorce And Remarriage

After addressing the question of marital abstinence and Paul's preference for the single life, Paul introduces Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage, underlining its importance by exhorting them that this is not merely a suggestion but rather a command, "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband." This passage is important because he is saying here that this is the teaching of Jesus. In other words, Paul's understanding of Jesus' teaching, simply put, is that a person should not divorce their spouse. Consistent with the Gospel accounts, Paul does not soften the message for the Gentiles, nor does he try to explain it away. This is about as straightforward as you can get.

However, the question remains: what do you do if the divorce happens beyond your control? Or even following in line with the teachings of Jesus, what do you do if a separation occurs because of fornication? Paul taught that Jesus did not let

ave us to wonder. He finished this command of Christ saying: “But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.” Very simply put, Paul is telling the Corinthian church that Jesus taught:

Divorce is not allowed.

If a divorce or separation should occur, only two options are open to us: reconciliation or remain single.

Marriage To An Unbeliever

After quoting these teachings from Jesus to the married, Paul begins to discuss the curious problem of unequally yoked marriages. What do you do when you’re a Christian but your spouse is an unbeliever? What if you got into this marriage even before you were a Christian? Should you take into account Paul’s teaching about not mixing with the world, and separate from your ungodly spouse? Paul starts the discussion by telling them that he does not have a specific teaching from Jesus dealing with this topic. That should not diminish these teachings for us, but it does again underline the point that what he was saying above in verses 8-11 was explicitly from his understanding of the teachings of Christ.

Concerning these unequally yoked marriages Paul said:

“But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.”

Paul lets them know that their relationship with God actually shields them from spiritual defilement. Furthermore, Paul says that if their spouse is willing to stay with them, then they should not leave them or send them away. Interestingly, he encourages them that their faith provides a spiritual cleansing or sanctifying protection over their children, even when an unbeliever is living in the house. He concludes by saying that if the unbelieving spouse is willing, then they should do everything they can to make the marriage work and stay together.

But What If They Are Not Pleased To Dwell With You And They Demand That They Are Going To Divorce Or Leave?

This was a difficult situation for the Corinthians because Jesus said that divorce, even without remarriage, was wrong. Remember that Jesus taught that to separate from a spouse for anything other than adultery was to actually cause your spouse’s future adultery. “Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery” (Matthew 5:32). What were these new Corinthian believers to do if their unbelieving spouses left them or demanded a divorce?

In this case Paul tells them that they do not need to fret and fight with them to keep them at home. He releases them to let their unbelieving spouse go. “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. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?” (Vs. 15-16).

Modern Views Of “Not Under Bondage”

Some have taken Paul’s words “not under bondage” or especially the NIV translation, “is not bound in such circumstances,” to imply that because the spouse left home or rather “deserted,” that the marriage bond is now broken and the person is free to marry again.

However, the overall context of this chapter does not support this view. Considering what Paul said a few verses before this, and even a few verses after these verses, where Paul is specifically addressing the permanence of the marriage bond, the view that the divorcee is free to remarry is particularly misleading. It would seem extremely unlikely that in verse 11, when the context might possibly even be dealing with fornication, as Paul says, “but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband:” that he would now give the complete opposite counsel on the matter and say that you don’t have to remain unmarried, and you don’t need to worry about reconciliation! The clear language of what to do after divorce was already clearly established, “remain unmarried or be reconciled.” Why stretch this passage to say something that it simply does not say?

What About The Greek Word For Bond? Is This The Same Word In Greek As The Marriage Bond?

Many modern interpreters have also made an argument based on Paul's wording for "marriage bond," suggesting that it is linked with Paul's words, "not under bondage," or again as the NIV reads, "is not bound in such circumstances." They suggest that the words are similar in origin and share some kind of root word similarities. With this thought they once again conclude that the marriage bond is broken and the person is free to remarry. This is also an unfortunate teaching. While it is true that these words are close in English, and may even share some kind of Greek "root family" similarities, the actual words used in the Greek are very different. John Piper makes these observations about the use of these Greek words:

The word used for "bound" (doulou) in verse 15 is not the same word used in verse 39 where Paul says, "A wife is bound (deo) to her husband as long as he lives." Paul consistently uses deo when speaking of the legal aspect of being bound to one marriage partner (Romans 7:2; I Corinthians 7:39), or to one's betrothed (I Corinthians 7:27). But when he refers to a deserted spouse not being bound in I Corinthians 7:15, he chooses a different word (doulou) which we would expect him to do if he were not giving a deserted spouse the same freedom to remarry that he gives to a spouse whose partner has died (verse 39). The last phrase of verse 15 ("God has called us to peace") supports verse 15 best if Paul is saying that a deserted partner is not "bound to make war" on the deserting unbeliever to get him or her to stay. It seems to me that the peace God has called us to is the peace of marital harmony. Therefore, if the unbelieving partner insists on departing, then the believing partner is not bound to live in perpetual conflict with the unbelieving spouse, but is free and innocent in letting him or her go.

John Piper concludes this controversial passage: "1 Corinthians 7:15 does not mean that when a Christian is deserted by an unbelieving spouse he or she is free to remarry. It means that the Christian is not bound to fight in order to preserve togetherness. Separation is permissible if the unbelieving partner insists on it."

#### What If All This Happens Before Conversion?

This discussion about unequally yoked marriages brings up a serious question about the marriage bond itself. The argument is often made today that Jesus and Paul might have taught against divorce and remarriage but all of that counts on only if it happened after what is considered to be a true conversion. They say "If all of this happened before my conversion, then I conclude that it no longer applies to me." These people feel that since the sin happened before their conversion then it can be forgiven like any other sin. Andrew Crones directly addresses this common misconception by pointing to the very essence of the marriage bond:

It is frequently stated in Christian circles today that the teaching of the New Testament on the subject of divorce and remarriage only applies to those who become Christians before or during their first marriage.... This argument, which one meets very frequently among contemporary Christians, makes a number of very serious mistakes. Most important of all, it assumes that it is the sin (of divorce) which prevents remarriage. If this sin can be removed, by forgiveness, then no barrier to remarriage remains. This view is so obviously flawed that it is amazing how tenacious it is. If sin is really the barrier, what does the time of conversion to Christ have to do with it? Surely sin committed after conversion can be fully forgiven and removed? ... Jesus does not base his prohibition of remarriage on the sin of divorce. He bases it on the fact that remarriage would be legalized adultery. In other words, He bases it on the fact that the marriage bond continues to exist despite the divorce. It is not the (sin of) divorce which makes remarriage impossible for the Christian; it is the (original) marriage. Only death dissolves the marriage bond, and therefore only death sets a person free to remarry" (Divorce & Remarriage, pg. 246-247).

#### To The Unmarried And Betrothed

In verse 25 Paul is clearly beginning a new section, making the statement, "Now concerning virgins." As mentioned before in dealing with unequally yoked marriages, Paul tells them that he has no direct commandment from Jesus on this issue, "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." In this section, from verses 26-38, Paul is addressing what betrothal couples should do during the difficult times that they were experiencing. Paul had just made the argument that everyone should remain in the state in which they were called. He also lifted up the single life, even rivaling that of married life as respects devotion to God. Now, concerning "the present distress," the natural question that had arisen in Corinth was what to do with couples that had established betrothals and arranged marriages already. In these verses Paul again lifts up the single life, but he makes it clear that these couples are not sinning if they go ahead and get married. This entire section reads very naturally as a discussion addressing these courting couples.

#### Modern Confusion

Some have ignored the indications that this is the beginning of a new section (Now concerning virgins) and have tried to turn the words, “Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned”, into a license to remarry. They again attempt to tie this passage back to the previous verses dealing with the “deserted”. They insist that Paul is still addressing the issue of the deserted spouse from the preceding section and thereby conclude that Paul is making yet another argument for remarriage. Some support this argument by saying that the word “wife” in this passage demands that this section refers to a married person. While this point might be substantiated in English language, it must be taken into consideration that the word “wife” in the Greek is simply the word “woman” and does not make a distinction. Furthermore, when considering the totality of the passage, pressing the word beyond this becomes a big stretch.

These are all unfortunate interpretations of this passage. A natural reading of the passage, coupled with Paul’s subject marker “now concerning virgins,” makes this whole argument pretty unlikely. With this in mind, verses 26-38 read very naturally from start to finish concerning the marriage of people involved in a betrothal or prearranged marriage. Do not forget, instructions as to what to do if a married person divorces had already been specifically and explicitly addressed back in verses 10-16. To say now that the divorcee is free to remarry would completely contradict all the instruction given back in the previous passage.

### The Betrothed Couple

A small, but significant point worthy of mention here, is the wording “and if a virgin marry” from verse 28. Andrew Cornes brings out that in the Greek, Paul uses the definite article “the parthenos” which is properly translated “the virgin,” not “a virgin”. As the Young’s Literal Translation reads, “But and if thou mayest marry, thou didst not sin; and if the virgin may marry, she did not sin.” The way it is worded currently almost implies two completely separate subjects. This doesn’t necessarily change the section all that much, but the proper wording would make the flow even clearer. The discussion is clearly about the betrothed couple, not two different subjects.

### Paul’s Final Word On The Marriage Bond

Concluding this whole section Paul, or rather the Holy Spirit through Paul, wanted to make sure that no one misunderstood this chapter. Once again he proclaimed his final dictum concerning the marriage bond and remarriage in very simple, clear and concise words: “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.”

Interestingly, a very similar statement was made to the Romans when the topic being discussed had nothing to do with divorce and remarriage at all. In Romans, it came instead from a discussion about the Law. There, Paul said:

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 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 7:1-3).

Paul made some pretty strong statements here. He once again spoke in unmistakable clarity that the marriage bond was for life, and that only death made a person free to remarry. It would be hard to wiggle out of this statement and start looking for loopholes and exceptions. However, as clear as his words are, the Romans passage is usually quickly dismissed because the context under discussion here in Romans 7 is the use of the Law, not divorce and remarriage. For the most part, I would agree with this reasoning and dismiss the statement as well. However, the fact that Paul repeats almost the exact same thought over in I Corinthians makes it difficult for me to completely dismiss the Romans passage altogether. Whatever the case, there can be no doubt that in I Corinthians 7:39 Paul is specifically dealing with remarriage, and there he distinctly states that the marriage bond is for life and that only the death of a spouse makes a person free to remarry.

### Conclusion

At the beginning of his discussion on marriage and divorce, Paul summarized the teaching of Jesus:

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she dep

art, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.” (1 Cor. 7:10-11)

Now at the end of the chapter Paul summarizes all his teaching as:

“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 Cor. 7:39)

Paul begins and ends his discussion on marriage and divorce very succinctly:

The marriage bond is for life; therefore any divorce in the eyes of man is merely a separation. Therefore, if a divorce occurs only two options are open to us: reconciliation or remain single.

As I have tried to stress in each article, I realize that these teachings are hard. Divorce is not just a doctrine or an argument; it affects real people with real lives, in real painful situations. Nevertheless, the Church is called to minister in every painful situation. Admittedly, mopping up the mistakes of hundreds of years of deep-seated precedent and preconceived ideas is a challenge for any serious-minded church today. However, we cannot just turn our back on them, malign them, or wish they would just go away. We must start with the words of Scripture, without compromise, and pray for direction. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). At times this all may seem like majoring on a minor point of Scripture. I hope this is not the case. However, let’s not forget Jesus’ initial words to us at the beginning of The Sermon on the Mount, “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:19). Holding on to every word of God’s truth, we can count on God’s promises to bless, provide and guide our way. ?

If this is your first issue and you would like a copy of the previous 3 parts in this series on “Marriage, Divorce & Remarriage”, call Charity Ministries at 800-227-7902 or go to [www.charityministries.org/theremnant](http://www.charityministries.org/theremnant) and click on “Archives” on the left.

**Re: Not Under Bondage—Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage -taylor - posted by EmilyRuth (), on: 2009/1/18 16:34**

I apologize for ignorance of how to and where to comment and get information on this forum. I wanted to say thank you for this post and also to ask if there are any forums anywhere of people who have walked through repentance of marriage, divorce and remarriage - I mean their stories, etc. Actually, a website <http://wayofmarriage.googlepages.com> tells of our experience. I would like to meet others in similar situations and see how God leads others in this area. It is an earth shaking thing that God is wanting to do. Please pray that I am faithful enough in this area and do not miss the perfect will of God at this time. Thank you.

**Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/1/18 16:53**

EmilyRuth,

Try this site:

<http://www.marriagedivorce.com/index.htm>

ginnyrose

**Re: - posted by HomeFree89 (), on: 2009/1/18 19:57**

Greg,

Thanks for posting that article on SI. It holds much truth.

**Re: - posted by passerby, on: 2009/1/18 20:31**

How about the case of a multiple divorcee married to another multiple divorcee having children as well as communal assets and responsibilities that complicates the matter.

1. Should they separate and remain single.
2. Should they separate and seek reconciliation of their first marriage.
3. Should they remain as is.
4. other options.

Are you ready to give support, shelter, finances, and other needs in case they follow option 1 or 2.

**Re: Marriage was made for man not man for marriage - posted by savannah, on: 2009/1/19 16:16**

On Remarriage After Divorce

by John Owen

It is confessed by all who accept Scripture as their authority that adultery is a just and sufficient cause for divorce between married persons. However, a difference of opinion exists as to the extent of the effects of this divorce. Is the divorce a full separation from the bond and mutual obligations of marriage, or is it only a separation from the mutual obligations of marriage?

Some teach that divorce consists in an absolute dissolution and termination of the bonds of marriage and thereby allows the innocent party the freedom to marry again.

Others teach that this divorce is only a separation "from table and marriage bed" and therefore the divorce does not actually dissolve or terminate the marriage relation. Instead, it merely relinquishes one from the duty of providing physically and sexually for their spouse.

I am convinced of the first opinion. I will show that the second view is unthinkable and unscriptural because of its many weaknesses and also give three reasons why the first view is true.

The second view is not true for the following reasons:

First, this divorce "from table and marriage bed" is not a true divorce according to the light of Scripture and the law of nature. This position is a late invention in the history of mankind. Even those in the Roman church that assert it is true grant that in the Old Testament and in other ancient cultures divorce was always a termination of the marriage bond. Yet the moral duties and God-honoring relations of the Old Testament are not abrogated by the New Testament, rather their motives and purposes are more clearly defined.

Roman Catholics come to this position because of their unbiblical view that marriage is a Christian sacrament and therefore since it carries the status of sacrament it is indissoluble. But if this is true, then marriage should only take place among believers and have no authority over non-believers and this is clearly not true. Marriage is a creation ordinance and thus is to be practiced by all mankind, not merely believers.

Secondly, a divorce which remains perpetually "from table and marriage bed" is hurtful and destructive to mankind. If this were true it would establish a new state of being, unknown to Scripture. In this new state a man would lawfully be obligated to have a wife and simultaneously obligated to not have a wife. Every man that is capable of marriage is and must be in one (and only one) of these two situations--whether he would like to be or not. God does not call any man into the state where he is bound by conscience to not receive back the adulterous partner and at the same time to not take another as his wife due to this divorce.

This unnatural and unlawful and unknown condition may--and probably will--cast a man under a necessity of sinning. This

s is what I mean when I say that this view is hurtful and destructive to mankind and to righteousness. For suppose that a man doesn't have the gift of celibacy. If this is the case then it is the express will of God that he should marry for his relief. Yet, if he does marry, he has sinned; and if he doesn't marry, he will sin.

Thirdly, this view is unlawful. For if the bond of marriage remains then the relation still continues. This relational bond is the foundation of all mutual duties and obligations in marriage. Therefore, while the bond remains, no one can lawfully refrain from carrying out the proper duties of marriage, nor prohibit their performance. In marriage, each partner has certain duties and obligations to each other that they are required to perform so that each partner is not their own, but one another's. Thus each partner may claim the duties of marriage from the other partner lawfully. They may separate for a time by mutual consent and this may hinder the actual execution of certain marital duties for a time. But to make such an obligation to one another completely void while at the same time the marriage relation continues is against the law of nature and the law of God.

Fourthly, the very light of nature and common grace among the nations never pointed to this kind of divorce. Marriage is a creation ordinance given by God and is thus practiced by all mankind. No mere man would ever have ordained such a relation. Yet in all of history there is never any mention made of a divorce that is merely "from table and marriage bed." The case has always been that those who justly divorce their wives might marry another. Some cultures, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, even allowed the husband to kill the adulteress. This was later changed by the Romans, but the offense still remained a capital offense. In these cases, divorce took place to purposely allow the innocent person the freedom to marry again. Therefore, the view that divorce is merely "from table and marriage bed"--from the duties and obligations of marriage alone and not from the bond of it--is a false view.

The first view--that divorce absolutely dissolves the marriage bond and allows for remarriage--is the true view. There are three reasons for this.

First, that which dissolves the structure (union) of marriage and thus destroys all the practices (obligations) of marriage does therefore dissolve the bond of marriage. If you take away the inherent structure and purpose and end of any moral relation, the relation ceases to be. And this is what is done by adultery and therefore calls for divorce. For the structure of marriage consists in this: The two persons become "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6). But this union is dissolved by adultery, for the adulteress becomes one flesh with the adulterer (1 Cor. 6:16). Thus she is no longer one flesh in union with her husband, but rather she absolutely breaks the bond and covenant of marriage. And when she breaks the bond she also absolutely destroys all the obligations and duties which accompany that bond. For how can one talk of a bond that exists if at the same time it is broken? Is that still a bond? Or how can one speak of a bond that doesn't bind? But isn't this what the second view teaches?

Secondly, if the innocent party of a divorce is not at liberty to marry again then two things ensue:

1. The innocent party is deprived of their freedom by the sin of another. This is against nature. This gives the wicked great power over the righteous for every wicked and unfaithful spouse then has it in their power to deprive their partner of their natural rights and freedoms.
2. The innocent party, if not allowed to remarry, is exposed to sin and judgment because of the unfaithfulness of another. Our Savior allowed divorce in the case of adultery as an option to the innocent party to allow for their liberty, advantage, and relief. But if one is not allowed to remarry, this liberty would be no liberty at all, but would only prove a snare and a yoke to them. For if one does not have the gift of celibacy, then he is exposed to sin and judgment.

Thirdly, our blessed Savior gives express direction in the case of adultery. "And I say unto you, whoever shall divorce his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery" (Matt. 19:9). Thus it is evident and is the plain sense of the words that the opposite is also true: "He who puts away his wife for fornication and marries another does not commit adultery." According to Jesus, the bond of marriage is in the case of adultery dissolved, and the person that puts away his wife is at liberty to marry again. While Jesus teaches against divorcing the wife and marrying again for any cause whatsoever, the exception of adultery allows the husband to both divorce and remarry.

Every exception is a particular case that is contradictory to the general rule. The rule here in general is: "He that divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery." The exception here is: "He that divorces his wife because of fornication and marries another does not commit adultery." This could be stated another way. The rule in general: "It is not lawful to divorce a wife and marry another; it is adultery." The exception: "It is lawful for a man to divorce his wife for fornication, and marry another."



It is of no use to argue that the other gospel writers, Luke and Mark do not include the exception clause in their gospels (Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). For even though they do not comment on it, it is used twice by Matthew (Matt. 5:32; 19:9) and therefore was certainly spoken by our Savior. Also, every good interpreter knows that where the same thing is reported by several writers, the briefer and shorter expressions are to be measured and interpreted by the fuller and longer accounts. And every general rule in Scripture is to be limited by any exception attached to it in another place of Scripture. Know for certain that there is hardly any general rule of Scripture that does not admit of an exception.

It is even more vain to argue that our Savior speaks here with respect to the Jews alone so that the exception clause only has application to them. In Jesus' answer to the Pharisees he refers back to the law of creation and the original creation ordinances which have authority over all mankind and not merely the Jews. He declared that the original institution of marriage was prior to the law of Moses and therefore is not limited to the Jews alone. This is a law, therefore, that is applicable to all mankind.

Also, when the Pharisees inquired of Jesus concerning divorce, they inquired of a divorce that was absolute and provided liberty to marry following the divorce. They had never heard of any other type of divorce. They had never heard of a mere separation "from table and marriage bed" in the Old Testament. Our Savior answers their query according to their understanding and therefore refers to the bond of marriage and not merely a separation from the duties and obligations alone. Therefore, Jesus denies the causes of divorce which the Pharisees allowed and then asserts fornication to be the only just cause of divorce. He therefore teaches that this divorce, of which they inquired about, was an absolute divorce from the bond of marriage. This is how the Pharisees would understand it and we cannot assume that Jesus does not answer them according to their understanding.

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul clearly states that the innocent party who is maliciously and obstinately deserted by their partner is set free to marry again. This affirms that the Christian religion does not remove the natural right and privilege of men in the case of divorce. "If the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases" (1 Cor. 7:15). If a spouse departs--whether due to religious differences or otherwise--and refuses to live together with a husband or wife, the deserted party is at liberty to marry again. The deserted spouse is at liberty because all the purposes and obligations of marriage are frustrated by this condition of desertion. Therefore, what shall a brother or sister that is a Christian do in the case that they are deserted? The apostle says, "They are not in bondage, but are free and thus at liberty to marry again."

This is the constant doctrine of all Protestant churches in the world.

**Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/1/19 18:58**

Savannah,

Thank you for posting this. He is not near as dogmatic as some people are.

Thanks again,

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2009/1/19 19:18**

Greetings Greg

Thank you so much for posting this article it was wonderful to see someone willing to teach the truth on this subject matter. I hope you will share the next part here as well. I will be sharing this article with my sister in law who professes to be a Christian and yet is planning to remarry soon. I pray she will be open to hearing the truth.

God Bless  
MJ

**Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/19 22:27**

No offense to anyone but thank God for some compassionate sound reasoning by John Owen and thanks to Savannah for posting it.

The sad thing is the fact that some are so zealous to strain out a gnat but swallow camels.

It is so easy to bind others to something that you have never been unfortunate to have happened to you.

I am thankful to have been faithfully married to one woman over 24 years but God has also taught me not to be legalistic to those who have been less fortunate.

Paul said it well in:

1Co 7:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

1Co 7:2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

I don't care how you look at it nor how long you study until you are mad but these two scriptures is for those who do not have the gift of celibacy. God has given marriage for those who don't have the gift of celibacy and God would rather have a person married in a commitment to one person to avoid fornication.

Blessings to you all!

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2009/1/19 23:25**

Greetings rbanks

I was going to respond to your post in which you wrote: It is so easy to bind others to something that you have never been unfortunate to have happened to you.

I have prayed about this, at this time not wanting to respond out of my flesh I will only say its interesting that you assume those of us who support this teaching that Greg shared have never had these kinds of things happened to them.

God Bless

Mj

**Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/19 23:42**

Quote:

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rbanks wrote:

No offense to anyone but thank God for some compassionate sound reasoning by John Owen and thanks to Savannah for posting it.

The sad thing is the fact that some are so zealous to strain out a gnat but swallow camels.

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Blessings to you all!

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Hi rbanks,

I was just curious to see if you considered a higher divorce rate in the church than in the world, straining out gnats?

Paul also said:

Romans 7:1-3

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 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.

1 Cor. 7:10-11

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 Cor. 7:39

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.

We must follow the word of God in spite of our circumstances, His word must prevail.

Each one must work this out with the Lord, not according to mans opinions or our feelings, but according to the word of God.

IMHO

In His Love  
pastorfrin

**Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/19 23:44**

Quote:

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MaryJane wrote:  
Greetings rbanks

I was going to respond to your post in which you wrote: It is so easy to bind others to something that you have never been unfortunate to have happened to you.

I have prayed about this, at this time not wanting to respond out of my flesh I will only say its interesting that you assume those of us who support this teaching that Greg shared have never had these kinds of things happened to them.

God Bless  
Mj

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If anyone has who supports the teaching of legalism then I want you to know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin and that God can put your sins into the sea of his forgetfulness never to remember them no more. If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

God does not expect you to undo your past nor does he expect you to live in guilt. He is the God who makes all things new and he can give you a brand new beginning, praise his name!

**Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/19 23:48**

Quote:

pastorfrin wrote:

Each one must work this out with the Lord, not according to mans opinions or our feelings, but according to the word of God.  
IMHO

In His Love  
pastorfrin

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Amen! I agree, but I also do not agree with beating a person when they are down and to condemn a person for their past  
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**Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/20 0:29**

Quote:

rbanks wrote:

Quote:

pastorfrin wrote:

Each one must work this out with the Lord, not according to mans opinions or our feelings, but according to the word of God.  
IMHO

In His Love  
pastorfrin

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Amen! I agree, but I also do not agree with beating a person when they are down and to condemn a person for their past.  
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Brother,

Over the years I have counseled many couples who wanted to get a divorce. There were several whose reason was not adultery, abuse, but we do not love each other any more. These were men and women who claimed to be Christians and were members of the church, who were willing to totally ignore the word of God. No amount of persuasion would change their mind and they eventually divorced.

If you were the pastor on the other side of town and one or all of these started attending your church after being divorced and came to you for counsel to get married to someone else; how would you counsel them?

If the word of God is not our standard, then we will continue to have a divorce rate in the church that equals or surpasses

s the world because the church has become just like the world.

In His Love  
pastorfrin

**Re: Not Under Bondage—Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage -taylor - posted by narrowpath, on: 2009/1/20 7:18**

How then should we treat former divorced and remarried couples who come into a congregation?

Of those, some were remarried when still sinners, and some remarried after their conversion, ignorant of what the bible taught.

There is quite a number of those in churches nowadays. I know of Christian divorcees who remarry and then just join another church.

Should we admit them unconditionally?

Should we admit them but make it very clear that we do not endorse what they did lest they set an example?

Should we see their new marriage as valid and sanctified though it was done contrary to the word of God?

Should we not admit them at all?

Should we exclude the man from any form of leadership and teaching?

These are tough questions every eldership has to face nowadays.

**Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/1/20 10:03**

Quote:

-----pastorfrin wrote:

If the word of God is not our standard, then we will continue to have a divorce rate in the church that equals or surpasses the world because the church has become just like the world.

I do not want to sound like a heretic but have mercy and listen.... The word of God is not a standard to follow legalistically because ***the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.***

Quote:

-----4 And such trust have we through Christ to God—ward:

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; **but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.**

7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

12 ¶ Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.

16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

17 **Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**

2 Corinthians 3

The problem is not the divorce rate, the problem is the hearts of men. After a person gets divorced and remarried (and over and over again)... I know this goes all over people who have stayed by the stuff when they didn't want to but we must look at the fruit of the divorced person's life (the fruit of the Spirit). Jesus said we shall know them by their fruit.

I understand that all who get a divorce may not be fit to pastor or teach anymore (that is understandable) but I also know that there are those out there with good fruit (finally) in their lives. This is what "I" am speaking of; those who God has finally gotten down inside their souls.

What does the Spirit now say about them, have you prayed and asked God about them? In Acts 9.11, Ananias didn't want to go anywhere near Saul but God said, "Behold, he prays now!"

My heart breaks for the church of the living God because they no longer live by the Spirit or walk by the Spirit only by the letter which is killing good people that God loves.

**Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/20 11:13**

Quote:

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pastorfrin wrote:

Brother,

Over the years I have counseled many couples who wanted to get a divorce. There were several whose reason was not adultery, abuse, but we do not love each other any more. These were men and women who claimed to be Christians and were members of the church, who were willing to totally ignore the word of God. No amount of persuasion would change their mind and they eventually divorced.

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By your own words you admit your failure at keeping them from getting a divorce. Then you go and say that someone else across town is supposed to keep them from getting married. Are you saying that you believe in controlling people and making them obey the Law? I know you love God and want people to live right before God because if you didn't you wouldn't even know God yourself. We can't make people do something they don't want to do. The apostle Paul said in:

1Co 2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.  
1Co 2:2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.  
1Co 2:3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.  
1Co 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:  
1Co 2:5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

He did not try to use persuasive speech but in the demonstration of the Spirit and power of God. He did not want people to have their faith in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. Many of the people who are walking away from their marriage and getting a divorce are not born of God and walking in his Spirit. When the word of God is preached in the power of the Spirit then it is the Spirit that does the work in a person's heart.

I believe in preaching the whole counsel of God. I believe in being led by God to work with a person according to their situation by the Spirit of the living God and not by the letter of the Law. The bible says that the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life.

Every situation you encounter is different and God hates legalism as much as he hates liberalism. There is a lot in the article that is fine, as well as what you said in your post, but what is not the word of God is what I disagree with. We are not to add to nor are we to take away.

I know of two ministers filled with the Holy Spirit preaching the blood and the cross reaching a harvest for Jesus. I will never forget what God showed me concerning one of them who has now preached in others countries in places few would go and has seen God save many.

I remember the day he got saved and I called and talked to his wife and she told me that he didn't know if he could join our church because he had been divorced...she also told me that she was his second wife of 10 years. The spirit immediately sent me to Hebrews to tell him that it was under the blood and that all his sins he would remember no more. I went on

n talking to her and praise is to God, this day that brother's whole household is saved his wife and children. God is blessing this brother like few I have seen. How I could have messed things up if I had stuck to the letter and not allowed the Spirit to minister life to one of God's children.

The psalmist David said that if the Lord marked our sins who would be able to stand. I will not place any sins higher than the blood of Christ. How many people today have been divorced and remarried but are not saved? These people need to be saved and they can't undo their past but they can be washed and sanctified to live a holy life before the Lord and know that all their sins are forgiven. They also need to know that they have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

I love the truth but I don't love condemning people for something the Lord forgives. Have you ever wondered why someone who had a past failed marriage but to a legalistic view they are living in adultery...either needing to go back to their first marriage or divorce again to remain single. What about those who have slept with so many partners but never married...they don't have anything to worry about because they never tried to make a commitment in the first place. This is all nonsense, where does it end...I'll tell you where it ends at the cross through the blood of his everlasting covenant. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Blessings to all!

**Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/20 11:39**

Quote:

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narrowpath wrote:

How then should we treat former divorced and remarried couples who come into a congregation?

Of those, some were remarried when still sinners, and some remarried after their conversion, ignorant of what the bible taught.

There is quite a number of those in churches nowadays. I know of Christian divorcees who remarry and then just join another church.

Should we admit them unconditionally?

Should we admit them but make it very clear that we do not endorse what they did lest they set an example?

Should we see their new marriage as valid and sanctified though it was done contrary to the word of God?

Should we not admit them at all?

Should we exclude the man from any form of leadership and teaching?

These are tough questions every eldership has to face nowadays.

-----  
Hi narrowpath,

The problem is, it is not being faced it is being ignored.

If one reads the entire teaching from Charity Ministries, this is covered and I would recommend all to do so.

This may sound very cold and I will be accused of following the law and not the Spirit of Christ, but the answer is found in Ezra 9 & 10. If you read the way this was accomplished and the oneness and brokenness of their spirits, we see how if we truly took this to the Lord and were willing to sacrifice, truly hurt and suffer with one another; how this could be accomplished. It would take much prayer and much loving support for those affected. Actually this would involve the whole church coming together in repentance and prayer and would affect all of the church for quite some time. The results though would bring the church of Jesus Christ back in line with the word of God and the benefit would far outweigh the sacrifice.

Will it happen? No, we as a people are so polluted by the spirit of this age that we are not willing to sacrifice in small matters let alone one as large as this. Instead we will continue to discuss the issue and the world will continue to wax worse and worse taking a majority of the professed church with it because they refuse to obey the words of Jesus Christ.

John 14:15-24

If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

In His Love  
pastorfrin

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2009/1/20 11:49**

Greetings pastorfrin

you wrote:Will it happen? No, we as a people are so polluted by the spirit of this age that we are not willing to sacrifice in small matters let alone one as large as this. Instead we will continue to discuss the issue and the world will continue to wax worse and worse taking a majority of the professed church with it because they refuse to obey the words of Jesus Christ.

I agree with you 100%. Its so sad but completely true.

God Bless you dear brother  
MJ

**Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2009/1/20 13:12**

Hi Pastorfrin,

I checked their site but could not find any free material. If this is to be done according to Ezra 9-10, do you say that we should tell them to dissolve these marriages and join the church as single mothers or fathers with children?

Would that not mean another divorce ?

I am just asking, because this question has troubled me for a while. Has that ever happened?

narrowpath

**Re: Not Under Bondage - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/1/20 13:24**

Hello Everyone,

I humbly ask you to read this. The **root** of this teaching, to me, is not Scripture based. On the outside, I admit, it seems so but when people think they cannot go to church anymore because they are divorced then an error has occurred, imho. My pastor met a man while introducing himself to the neighborhood and invited him to church. He was a 65 year old man who sadly said that he could not possibly go because he had been divorced and Jesus wouldn't want him. He is one of the walking wounded this teaching has left in its wake.

*Faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love;* 1 Corinthians 13.13. The last year or two, love has become the basis of my teachings. Jesus has enough preachers and teachers; what He needs is laborers of love. I'm just asking tho



se of you who believe in the letter of the law to temper it with the greatest of these: love.

Pastorfrin, I'm not trying to tell you that you are wrong or that anyone else is. But can you admit that we only know in part and the other half has not been told to us? I ask this because your side has Scripture to back you up and they are valid but the other side does as well. Know this; **the truth of one Scripture cannot and does NOT rule out the truth of another Scripture.**

And it's in this where the whole counsel of God lies.

Re: , on: 2009/1/20 15:26

Regretfully, I am one of those people being spoken of here. I was born and raised Catholic and was very religious as a child. I loved God as much as a young kid could praying often and in constant wonderment of God and Christ... and yes at that time 'the saints'. Being athletic I played sports as a young kid through college. I lost touch with God and fell into the 'jock scene' which, as we all know, is not a righteous life. I was never mean or malicious to anyone, just very wayward. I waited a long time to get married because I wanted to get it right the first time. Still not saved, I started getting a lot of flak from people saying that I was too picky, or stubborn concerning dating others. People would set me up with their friends etc.. but if it didn't seem right I never pursued the situation. Finally there was a girl at my work who was going through a divorce... we had a good working relationship and she approached me about dating at some point. At first I resisted but I thought that maybe other's were right in that I was the problem and too picky. We dated and eventually married. We divorced about two years later and I was remarried and have been for seven years. About a year later, I was born again on the floor of my bedroom when I told the Lord that I was never good at running my own life and needed His help. Having serious back problems as well I pleaded His name and wanted to give my life over. At one moment I saw Christ on the Cross pleading for the Father to forgive the Roman soldiers for 'they know not what they do'. I got the impression that He speaking not only in that moment but for future sinners as well (I read an eerily similar testimony by a Pastor in Ireland on victoryoversin.com) At that very moment I was enlightened to the Romans ignorance of Christ as the Son of God because they were part of the world. I instantly became aware of the blindness of the world to Christ and instantly had Christ revealed to me in my inner spirit as my Savior. I have never been the same since. After this moment I was zealous for the Lord.... threw all of my past sports scrapbooks and awards away... threw away old college party pictures etc... (not that I was any less born again if I had kept them but it was a symbolic gesture of ridding myself of the old man) . I have been an avid reader of Scripture and have written much in a personal diary on my revelations and my walk with the Lord. Even though I have my battles and struggles I am a completely changed from what I used to be. I love to pray and my favorite book is E.M. Bounds on Prayer. My Irish Catholic family has yet to figure out what has gotten into me. I pray they will... in much the same way.

I see all the debates here about marriage, divorce and so forth. I admit it is an epidemic and am against divorce as someone who has been through one and someone who loves the Lord. However I cannot understand how I came to that place on my bedroom floor if all of my sins were not forgiven of me when I cried out in desperation for forgiveness. I believed in my spirit through revelation that at that very moment my past was forgiven and my current situation was restored by Christ as if I was beginning anew... remarriage and all. I remember an incredible moment of total purging of who I used to be and that I belonged in a place much different than anyone else around me. I felt like a stranger in a strange land for a few months. I don't know the answer to a lot of the debates here but I do know that when I read what some people say I instantly become discouraged and weighted about my past, as having some kind of scarlet letter tattooed on me. I find myself saying I'm sorry to God about the past and wanting to make it right. There is soooo much information on this that it seems impossible to undo what has been done in my past and reconcile my situation in complete restitution to the Lord. It's as confusing as I'll get out with the litany of perspectives and eighteen part manifestoes on this. But I do know one thing.... I do love my wife, my kids, my God-my Savior, and my neighbors. And I do know what happened to me on that great day when everything changed for me.. when I felt renewed in my inner spirit. Nothing can take that away even if some of the doctrine here is technically correct. I don't know the answers to every problem and I don't know all there is to know about Greek, Hebrew, and their meticulous meanings and context. I just know that I'm not who I used to be and I know that it had nothing to do with me...that is the man who had a wayward life that included divorce and remarriage. It was The One who heard my plea and gave me forgiveness and restoration. I'm glad I didn't know the meticulous contexts and scholarship of Scripture... had I know what I know now I would have never pleaded for forgiveness. I either would have lived under a cloud of doom the remainder of my life, or relentlessly sought the advice of those who could have gotten me to complete restitution by rewriting my past and somehow undoing what I had done.

As it stands, that moment in my lowly ole' bedroom when God heard a pleading sinner wanting a change of heart and the subsequent joy in transformation from what I was to who God would like me to be, will have to suffice.

**Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/20 15:43**

Hi narrowpath and Lysa,

We need to see this from the right direction. No one is asking anyone not to attend church because they are divorced, or to divorce their current mate.

In Ezra chapters 9 & 10 they were given a choice to obey the word of God. Now this is important that we get this part. They chose to be obedient to the word of God, even though the cost was great, they chose from a heart that was yielded to the Lord and they obeyed His word.

If we as the church of Jesus Christ will teach the word of God, of course in LOVE, and teach that His word does not accept any less than obedience as these scriptures show.

Romans 1:5

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Romans 5:19

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Romans 6:16

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Romans 16:19

For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

Romans 16:26

But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

1 Cor. 14:34

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

2 Cor. 7:15

And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

2 Cor. 10:5-6

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

Philemon 1:21

Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

Hebrews 5:8

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

1 Peter 1:2

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

We will see the Holy Spirit move in the hearts of God's children and there will be a voluntary obedience unto the Lord.

For this to happen we must teach the truth and stop making excuses for our sins.

John 8:31-32

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

In His Love  
pastorfrin

**Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/20 15:58**

Quote:

ccrider wrote:

I see all the debates here about marriage, divorce and so forth. I admit it is an epidemic and am against divorce as someone who has been through one and someone who loves the Lord. However I cannot understand how I came to that place on my bedroom floor if all of my sins were not forgiven of me when I cried out in desperation for forgiveness. I felt that at that very moment my past was forgiven and my current situation was restored by Christ as if I was beginning anew... remarriage and all. I remember an incredible moment of total purging of who I used to be and that I belonged in a place much different than anyone else around me. I felt like a stranger in a strange land for a few months. I don't know the answer to a lot of the debates here but I do know that when I read what some people say I instantly become discouraged and weighted about my past. I find myself saying I'm sorry to God about the past and wanting to make it right. There is sooooo much information on this that it seems impossible to undo what has been done in my past and reconcile my situation in complete restitution to the Lord. It's as confusing as I'll get out with the litany of perspectives on this but I do know one thing.... I do love my wife, my kids, my God-my Savior, and my neighbors. And I do know what happened to me on that great day when everything changed for me.. when I felt renewed in my inner spirit. Nothing can take that away even if some of the doctrine here is technically correct. I don't know the answers to every problem and I don't know all there is to know about Greek, Hebrew, and their meticulous meanings and context. I just know that I'm not who I used to be and I know that it had nothing to do with me...that is the man who had a wayward life that included divorce and remarriage. It was The One who heard my plea and gave me forgiveness and restoration. I'm glad I didn't know the meticulous contexts and scholarship of Scripture... had I know what I know now I would have never pleaded for forgiveness. I either would have lived under a cloud of doom the remainder of my life, or relentlessly sought the advice of those who could have gotten me to complete restitution by rewriting my past and somehow undoing what I had done.

As it stands, that moment in my lowly ole' bedroom when God heard a pleading sinner wanting a change of heart and the subsequent joy in transformation from what I was to who God would like me to be, will have to suffice.

Dear ccrider,

This is powerful testimony of the grace of God. I hope you read all my posts. The very reason I came on this thread speaking the way I did is because of the truth you have stated in your post.

Brother whom the Son makes free is free indeed. God loves your wife and children also and is not in the business of breaking up homes over your past sins. They are under the blood. Thank God he does give you a new beginning.

There is no sin that the blood of Jesus can not make atonement.

Blessings to all!

**Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/20 16:13**

Dear Brethren,

Just because someone believes we shouldn't be legalistic toward those who have been married before does not mean as some accuse that he/she doesn't believe in keeping the Lord's commandments.

I believe without holiness no man shall see the Lord and that if we love him then we are to keep his commandments. Jesus delivers us from all sin and those who are truly born of God cannot continue in sin willfully.

God hates divorce and he also hates all sin. The scriptures concerning Jesus' teachings on marriage and divorce are taken to heart and I have been faithful to my wife and she has to me because of our relationship to the Lord.

I would dare say how many who have not committed adultery some time in their life. Jesus said that if you look at a woman

an to lust after her you have committed adultery in your heart.

Jesus brought the Law of God to man's heart. There is a higher standard for heart righteousness under grace than there was under the law. Jesus even said unless our righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees we shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven. It is clear that man must be born of God having the nature of Christ in order to keep his commandments.

God has nothing to do with all the people committing adultery nor does he put all those marriages together. The people living in sin did as their natures were leading them to do. Most of these people are in rebellion to God, so we know that God is not putting their marriages together.

When a person is truly born again and in right relationship with God having repented of their sins, they are forgiven cleansed by the blood of Jesus. We make things right where it is possible to do so. Jesus has never told anyone to divorce to go back to a previous marriage or to remain single in the new covenant.

I heard a preacher one time tell about Jesus at the well with the woman who had 5 husbands and living with a man not her husband...he said that Jesus told her to go back to her first husband and he would give her eternal life. I search the scriptures and found no such thing. I fear more today of misleading someone concerning the word of God than ever. The bible says that Jesus revealed to her that he knew that she, over her life, had 5 husbands and the one who was living with her now was not her husband. He had already told her that if she knew who he was, that she would have asked him for living water.

Two wrongs can not make a right. Divorcing again after you are saved, because you were married & divorced before you got saved, will not make you any holier nor pleasing to God, neither will you find it in the new covenant.

We are not saved by works of righteousness that we did but by his mercy and grace.

Blessings to all!

Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/1/20 17:07

Quote:

-----pastorfrin wrote:

We need to see this from the right direction.

-----

Would that be **your** direction of understanding?

Quote:

-----No one is asking anyone not to attend church because they are divorced, or to divorce their current mate..

-----

I think you missed my 2nd sentence... "***The root of this teaching, to me, is not Scripture based.***" It is the root and it's many offshoots that are causing people to think that they are not worthy to go to church or that Jesus doesn't want them because they are not good enough.

And my point is that if the root is bad, then it isn't based on Scripture but man's assumptions and so the rest is bad.

**Re: Not Under Bondage—Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage -taylor - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/1/20 17:09**

pastorfrin,

This caught my eye....

Quote:

-----pastorfrin wrote:

Now this is important that we get this part. They chose to be obedient to the word of God, even though the cost was great, they chose from a heart that was yielded to the Lord and they obeyed His word.

I know you said no one was asking but I'm wondering if someone came to you as their pastor and said, "I want to obey the word and put away my second wife." What would you tell them?

**Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/1/20 17:12**

ccrider,

Praise God brother for what the Lord has done in your life.

Quote:

-----As it stands, that moment in my lowly ole' bedroom when God heard a pleading sinner wanting a change of heart and the subsequent joy in transformation from what I was to who God would like me to be, will have to suffice.

Amen!! When God speaks to you, you know it! Don't let no man steal your crown!!!

God bless,

**Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/20 18:38**

Brothers and Sisters,

Here is the five part teaching on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.  
Just click on the link you wish to listen and may the Holy Spirit teach you  
And guide your decision.

Quote from Pt. 3 The Exception Clause

“As the modern Church has drifted so far from this ancient teaching, the sight of such a far-off resolve can seem almost a fantasy. Many Christians may find themselves in situations which seem hopeless; or they may feel there are no answers to their discouraging situations. And as we said before, once many of these truths are realized, people or churches may differ as to how to deal with each case. However, I think it has been proven well enough through the centuries that turning a blind eye and ignoring the situation has only made matters worse. The first step toward recovering lost ground is to come to grips with the words of Christ, Himself—to truly take Him at His Word, by faith. After that...remember, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6).”

Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage  
By Dean Taylor

Pt. 1 <http://www.charityministries.org/theremnant/2007/May/theremnant-May2007-covenant.a5w>

Pt. 2 <http://www.charityministries.org/theremnant/2007/July/theremnant-July2007-one-flesh.a5w>

Pt. 3 <http://www.charityministries.org/theremnant/2008/1Q/theremnant-2008-1Q-exception-clause.a5w>

Pt. 4 <http://www.charityministries.org/theremnant/2008/2Q/theremnant-2008-2Q-bondage.a5w>

Pt. 5 <http://www.charityministries.org/theremnant/2008/3Q/theremnant-2008-3Q-divorce.a5w>

**Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/20 21:34**

Dear Brethren,

Let's look at the scriptures:

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 (KJV) 10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

The apostle in these two verses of scripture is talking to believers who are married not to depart from one another but if they did for some reason, they were to remain unmarried or be reconciled.

Paul now is going to deal with mixed marriages.

1Co 7:12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

1Co 7:13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

1Co 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

1Co 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.

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

The apostle Paul here is telling believers not to leave the unbelievers if they were pleased to dwell with them because they maybe saved and that is God's heart to save the lost. They knew the apostles teaching on not being yoked together with unbelievers and that they were only to marry in the Lord. Paul did not want them to leave the unbeliever if they were pleased to dwell with them because it might cause them to be saved.

Paul also tells them that if they will not dwell with them peacefully and they want to depart let them because God wants them here to be peace. He goes on to tell them that if the unbeliever departs that a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.

Study the scriptures and one can clearly see that God does not want believers yoked with unbelievers because what fellowship hath light with darkness. Paul is only telling the believers in Christ to remain unmarried or be reconciled to their spouse if they were to depart.

Think about this, if Paul tells those believers in mixed marriages not to depart from the unbelievers when they are pleased to dwell with them and also that if they did depart they were not under bondage...why would we as preachers today tell a saved man or woman to divorce their spouse and leave their children to go back to a marriage when they were in sin. The scriptures never say this; only people who are ignorant to the riches of the mercy of God.

The scriptures are silent concerning the past marriage of those who were in sin and who were not believers in Christ because when you confess your sins and get saved all your past sins are forgiven and cleansed by the blood. God who is merciful and kind says he will not remember them any more. He makes you a new creature and can even save the family that you are presently in and will not tell you to do anything to hurt someone else. If your unsaved spouse that you are presently with is pleased to dwell with you then they may get saved because of what God did for you. The scripture never tells a born again believer to go back to a marriage when he was living in sin without Christ. In the new covenant there is never a command to divorce your spouse to be single neither is there a command to go back to a former marriage.

I guess you could say I feel passionate about not condemning someone for their past. I don't want my Lord Jesus to be misrepresented concerning the power of the blood of His cross.

Blessings to all!

**Re: Not Under Bondage—Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage -taylor - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/1/20 23:33**

Quote:  
-----In other words, He bases it on the fact that the marriage bond continues to exist despite the divorce. It is not the (sin of) divorce which makes remarriage impossible for the Christian; it is the (original) marriage  
-----

This is so true. Ask anyone about their marriage and inevitably if there was a divorce, they will tell you about it and if you listen closely to their tale, you can easily detect the bond that still exists there.

I was also struck with how our son-in-law was released from the bond he had with our daughter. She had died, leaving behind two children. He remarried and it was not long until I saw that bond he had with her was gone, absolutely gone. I do not know how often this happens, but he was now again in a God ordained marriage and he had work to do, like providing for this family and making this marriage work.

Oh, and how did I feel about that loss of bond with our daughter? He was good to her while she lived but she is now in a better place and while he still lives here, he needs to make a life for his children so he better get with it.

My thoughts...

ginnyrose

**Re: - posted by hulsey (), on: 2009/1/21 2:42**

Here's something else to consider. A little further in the 1Cor. passage it says this:

Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you marry, you have not sinned;  
1Cor.7:27-28a

The Greek word for released (loosed in the KJV) means divorced.

**Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/21 3:45**

Quote:  
-----  
hulsey wrote:  
Here's something else to consider. A little further in the 1Cor. passage it says this:

Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you marry, you have not sinned;  
1Cor.7:27-28a

The Greek word for released (loosed in the KJV) means divorced.  
-----

Hi hulsey,  
This whole section goes together and is talking about virgins.

From the article posted,  
Quote:

"To The Unmarried And Betrothed



In verse 25 Paul is clearly beginning a new section, making the statement, “Now concerning virgins.” As mentioned before in dealing with unequally yoked marriages, Paul tells them that he has no direct commandment from Jesus on this issue, “Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.” In this section, from verses 26-38, Paul is addressing what betrothal couples should do during the difficult times that they were experiencing. Paul had just made the argument that everyone should remain in the state in which they were called. He also lifted up the single life, even rivaling that of married life as respects devotion to God. Now, concerning “the present distress,” the natural question that had arisen in Corinth was what to do with couples that had established betrothals and arranged marriages already. In these verses Paul again lifts up the single life, but he makes it clear that these couples are not sinning if they go ahead and get married. This entire section reads very naturally as a discussion addressing these courting couples.

#### Modern Confusion

Some have ignored the indications that this is the beginning of a new section (Now concerning virgins) and have tried to turn the words, “Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned,” into a license to remarry. They again attempt to tie this passage back to the previous verses dealing with the “deserted.” They insist that Paul is still addressing the issue of the deserted spouse from the preceding section and thereby conclude that Paul is making yet another argument for remarriage. Some support this argument by saying that the word “wife” in this passage demands that this section refers to a married person. While this point might be substantiated in English language, it must be taken into consideration that the word “wife” in the Greek is simply the word “woman” and does not make a distinction. Furthermore, when considering the totality of the passage, pressing the word beyond this becomes a big stretch.

These are all unfortunate interpretations of this passage. A natural reading of the passage, coupled with Paul’s subject marker “now concerning virgins,” makes this whole argument pretty unlikely. With this in mind, verses 26-38 read very naturally from start to finish concerning the marriage of people involved in a betrothal or prearranged marriage. Do not forget, instructions as to what to do if a married person divorces had already been specifically and explicitly addressed back in verses 10-16. To say now that the divorcee is free to remarry would completely contradict all the instruction given back in the previous passage.

#### The Betrothed Couple

A small, but significant point worthy of mention here, is the wording “and if a virgin marry” from verse 28. Andrew Cornes brings out that in the Greek, Paul uses the definite article “he parthenos” which is properly translated “the virgin,” not “a virgin.” As the Young’s Literal Translation reads, “But and if thou mayest marry, thou didst not sin; and if the virgin may marry, she did not sin.” The way it is worded currently almost implies two completely separate subjects. This doesn’t necessarily change the section all that much, but the proper wording would make the flow even more clear. The discussion is clearly about the betrothed couple, not two different subjects.

#### Paul’s Final Word On The Marriage Bond

Concluding this whole section Paul, or rather the Holy Spirit through Paul, wanted to make sure that no one misunderstood this chapter. Once again he proclaimed his final dictum concerning the marriage bond and remarriage in very simple, clear and concise words: “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.”

Interestingly, a very similar statement was made to the Romans when the topic being discussed had nothing to do with divorce and remarriage at all. In Romans, it came instead from a discussion about the Law. There, Paul said:

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 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 7:1-3).

Paul made some pretty strong statements here. He once again spoke in unmistakable clarity that the marriage bond was for life, and that only death made a person free to remarry. It would be hard to wiggle out of this statement and start looking for loopholes and exceptions. However, as clear as his words are, the Romans passage is usually quickly dismissed



because the context under discussion here in Romans 7 is the use of the Law, not divorce and remarriage. For the most part, I would agree with this reasoning and dismiss the statement as well. However, the fact that Paul repeats almost the exact same thought over in I Corinthians makes it difficult for me to completely dismiss the Romans passage altogether. Whatever the case, there can be no doubt that in I Corinthians 7:39 Paul is specifically dealing with remarriage, and there he distinctly states that the marriage bond is for life and that only the death of a spouse makes a person free to remarry."

**Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2009/1/21 7:23**

For those who want to be legalistic, consider this:

1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, 2 when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife, 3 if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, 4 then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance." (Deuteronomy 24 v 1-4).

It would seem that this is saying that anyone who has divorced and re-married CANNOT go back to their first husband or wife as it would be an ABOMINATION TO GOD. This includes if the second spouse dies or divorces the person.

So anyone encouraging people to divorce their second spouse and return to their first is encouraging them to commit an abomination.

And in my view anyone that has re-married should not divorce to remain single. God HATES divorce and to do this a second time to try and correct the first is just madness and TWICE as grievous to the LORD.

**Re: - posted by murrcoir (), on: 2009/1/21 8:37**

Here's my testimony.....

When I was a teenager my Mother. I wasn't a Christian, however my Mother was. One night she came into my bedroom and woke me up. I asked what was wrong. She said "God has spoken to me and that he wanted me to know something" I replied what was it he wanted me to know and she told me. (I will not tell you what was told me) After this she was about to leave and asked did God tell you anything else. She replied "You'll be married to a woman who was married and has two children".

Today I am married to that woman that I was told about when I was a teenager. I know it's God will for me to be married to her full stop.

When I read all these posts and debates all I can do is shake my head in disbelief at what I read. The God that I met is a God of Grace a God that forgives a sinner and makes him new creation.

Romans 8v1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God , they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 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.

I know the God who waits for the adulteress at the well, I know the God who sits with the tax collectors and the publicans. I know the God of Mercy.

But beware there are professing Christian people, who are determined to bring you under their religious thumb. They are bent on making you a slave of their conscience. They have built a tidy religious box, without biblical justification, and strive to stuff you inside and make you conform to its dimensions. They are legalists, and their tools are guilt, fear, intimidation, and self-righteousness. They proclaim God's unconditional love for you, but insist on certain conditions before including you among the accepted, among the approved elite, among God's favored few.

I'm talking about Christian legalists whose goal is to enforce conformity among other Christians in accordance with their personal preferences. These are life-style legalists. They threaten to rob you of joy and to squeeze the intimacy out of your relationship with Jesus. They may even lead you to doubt your salvation. They heap condemnation and contempt on your head so that your life is controlled and energized by fear rather than freedom and joy and delight in God.

Rarely would these folk ever admit to any of this. They don't perceive or portray themselves as legalists. If they are reading this they are probably convinced I'm talking about someone else. They'd never introduce themselves: "Hi! My name is Joe/Julie. I'm a legalist and my goal is to steal your joy and keep you in bondage to my religious prejudices. Would you like to go to lunch after church today and let me tell you all the things you're doing wrong?"

Jesus said in Mathews Gospel go and learn what this means "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice"

I have a question what will you do if the man who God chooses to lead the next move of God is married to a divorcee and her ex-husband is not dead?

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/21 9:24**

As among those of us that have been through divorce and remarriage and are battle scarred from this topic here on Sermonindex may I offer a few cents worth of wisdom?

I have heard your arguments. I have likely read the passages more times than you have because my soul and the people involved in my life's souls are also at stake. The glory of God is at risk. Selah.

With an open heart before God and with all these matters present in mind I have desired above all things to do HIS will. I have been *there* and I have been through situations that would probably stagger most people's minds. I am speaking from deep and soul scarred experience. This is not theoretical or doctrinal- it is practical and existential.

Each person must be FULLY persuaded in his/her own mind about these matters. Just as there are those here that would disqualify from salvation any one divorced and remarried I also know those that would tell you:

1. If you do not speak in tongues you are not saved.
2. If you do not pay 100% of your tithe to God you are not saved.
3. If you watch TV you are not saved.
4. If you wear pants as a woman you are not saved.
5. If you were not baptized in the name of Jesus Christ you are not saved.
6. Etc. and etc.

How long will individuals that name the name of Christ set against their brothers and sisters and be the source of unbearable discouragement and un-edification? Away with your footnotes about sounding harsh, etc. It is evil and it is sinful and God is keeping a record. You will answer to God for being a stumbling block to anyone trying to come to Christ with a whole heart under difficult circumstances.

Where is the edification in all these things? This biting and devouring and consuming? Adulteress and adulterers under the Law were to be stoned to death. Shall we look to the Law for answers? Shall we look to Ezra for an answer? Shall we look to Malachi and say Christians are cursed for not paying tithes? What madness and nonsense? The extent to which I have watched people compromise their own integrity to prove unconditional matrimony has staggered me on more than one occasion. There is simply no changing their minds no matter what. They will dig through any resource they can find to prove their point. And all it does is bring discouragement and unedification to the people involved. That is all it has ever done.

So as reluctant as I am to even engage again in this battle; with scars on top of scars to prove my record, let me say that GOD is my judge and YOU are not. To my own Master I stand or fall and I have been held up. God has made me to stand.

And yes I will answer to Him on that great day of judgment. And in the mean time I will try to ignore the constant badgering and friendly fire that has led me into despair more than once. If you want to answer to God some day for having been in the cause of my stumbling or some other precious soul for whom Christ died stumbling then just keep on with it. You have been warned. God will remind you of it.

**Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2009/1/21 9:55**

And here's my testimony.....

My wife and I will have been married 21 years this year. We married as Christians when she was divorced with two young girls. I was a bachelor.

Her husband had committed adultery and left her for this woman and then married the woman and had another family. He has subsequently divorced that one and married again.

I knew what I was taking on with an instant family and we had many difficult times, being on the receiving end for the girls' hurts, being the 'step dad', etc. But we prayed and worked at it and did all we knew to bring them up right. We made many mistakes, but God is gracious. During their teenage years they rebelled against the LORD and us (they won't mind me saying this) and got into a mess. But we stuck with it and prayed and prayed... Now they are grown up and walking strongly with the LORD. They really love the LORD and seek to serve Him with all their hearts. One married (a Christian man) last year and the younger is getting married this March to a Christian man. Praise the LORD for His mercies endure forever!

We all meet together regularly (as we live near by) for bible study and supporting one another. I have a wonderful relationship with these girls and all the difficult years just make what we have now even more wonderful and fulfilling. God's grace is amazing!!

**Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/21 10:27**

Thanks to all you brethren that have come on here with your testimonies.

I just now have come on here and read them and they have brought tears to mine eyes. I praise God for his grace in your lives.

I have had an almost perfect marriage to the same woman over 24 years, whom I love today more than ever, but God has saved me from being legalistic to those who haven't.

Some of the most spirit-filled God loving people I know have been through a divorce or remarriage.

Thanks again for your testimonies!

**Re: , on: 2009/1/21 20:17**

Quote:  
-----1. If you do not speak in tongues you are not saved. 2. If you do not pay 100% of your tithe to God you are not saved. 3. If you watch TV you are not saved. 4. If you wear pants as a woman you are not saved. 5. If you were not baptized in the name of Jesus Christ you are not saved. 6. Etc. and etc.  
-----

Sounds like a set of more laws doesn't it?

I have observed that the people that do the most judging are those that are NOT married. And those that are married and have judged other marriages they themselves are divorced.

I think that when you use the word of God as a law against people and it doesn't matter if it's the Torah or Paul's writings, we are placing ourselves as judge over man's affairs and we do not know a man's heart let alone our own.

We should ask ourselves the question, are we to practise the law in regards to divorce and remarriage? If yes, then how can grace fit it into this?

If yes, what other Old Testament laws are we under?

Now we have to remember that if we obey the law in part, we are a debtor to the whole law.

We have to think like a mind that has been renewed by the grace of God to fully understand how to treat each case, otherwise we'll end up crucifying everyone that comes against our theology.

**Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/21 21:32**

rbanks wrote:

Quote:

“Dear PastorFrin,

I am glad that you love the Lord and have been faithful to him. I appreciate your stand for the truth.

Just suppose though in your past before you got saved, you experienced a divorce. Since this time you were saved, filled with the Holy Spirit and remarried to a good Christian woman also blessed with wonderful children. Let's just say you had a calling on your life to do a work for the Lord. Now you join a fellowship with some people who really seem to love the Lord and they give you a study on divorce and remarriage. Now you love God and really want to do his will. Are you going to go home and tell your wife and children that you are going to have to divorce your wife whom you love and God has blessed with salvation also because this group said that you were living in adultery...because your first wife was still living. They also told you that nothing not even the blood of Jesus and his cross could free you from your past marriage.

Is this the kind of truth you believe...I sure do hope not. This kind of teaching only condemns people for their past sins and mistakes. I am for the truth but when you use truth to lead into error and teaches something not found in the true gospel then I'm against it wholeheartedly. How can anyone with any spiritual understanding and compassion believe that teaching something that condemns Christians because of their past sins (including marriage/divorce) forgiven by God can be called promoting true revival is beyond anything I have ever heard in my life.

Blessings to you all!Â”

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Hi rbanks,

I have never in all these years of ministry encouraged anyone to get a divorce for any reason. I have spent years of ministry teaching couples not to divorce, so no, I would not tell anyone to divorce.

My dear wife and I have been married for close to fifty years. During our years of marriage there were reasons she could have divorced me and I her according to the standards that are being taught today.

Brother, may I ask you a few questions?

Do you know what it meant to live with a husband and father who was too busy trying to be a good shepherd to his sheep that he neglected his family?

My wife did and according to some of the teachings today she should have divorced me.

Do you know what it meant to live with a man who was suffering from PTSD, who was so overcome with his own ghost from the past that his family was left alone?

My wife did and according to some of the teachings today she should have divorced me.

How about living with a wife and mother of your seven children, five who were five and under and your wife was too tired to meet your needs?

I did and according to some of the teachings today, I should have divorced her.

I could go on and on with reasons for us to get divorced according to some of the teachings today. We have not because the love of Jesus Christ has made us one flesh.

One flesh cannot be separated except and only by death.

Christians who marry become one in Christ Jesus and you cannot separate oneness.

We have polluted the teachings of Jesus Christ and we now have pastors, elders, friends and family encouraging divorce among Christians and it must stop.

How many families have been broken because of these devilish liberal teachings on divorce?

Ministers must teach the truth as stated in God's word and the only harm that it will cause is to the kingdom of Satan. But oh, how severe will be the judgment, by His word, against those who have made it easy and in too many cases encourage Christians to divorce.

In His Love  
pastorfrin

**Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/21 22:04**

Quote:

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pastorfrin wrote:

Hi rbanks,

I have never in all these years of ministry encouraged anyone to get a divorce for any reason. I have spent years of ministry teaching couples not to divorce, so no, I would not tell anyone to divorce.

-----  
Thank you dear pastorfrin,

I have also never in my life encouraged anyone to get a divorce. I have always encouraged reconciliation. I fear God and pray that I would never knowingly disobey his word.

I am thankful you finally answered me and I would not agree with anyone who does not hold up the standard of holiness and truth.

I must say that God delivered me from going down the path of legalism. I agree with most of the truth you were promoting from the article on this thread but I could not stand by and agree with the legalism that was also in their writings. In the final analysis from their teaching they were condemning the Christian for a past marriage with no grace or way of escape except another divorce.

We must be defenders of the gospel of grace if we are to please God and that grace will teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts...to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. That grace will also free us from the guilt of our past.

Blessings to you!

**Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/21 22:56**

Quote:

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rbanks wrote:  
Dear Brethren,

Let's look at the scriptures:

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 (KJV) 10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:  
11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.  
The apostle in these two verses of scripture is talking to believers who are married not to depart from one another but if they did for some reason, they were to remain unmarried or be reconciled.

Paul now is going to deal with mixed marriages.

1Co 7:12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

1Co 7:13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

1Co 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

1Co 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.

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

The apostle Paul here is telling believers not to leave the unbelievers if they were pleased to dwell with them because they maybe saved and that is God's heart to save the lost. They knew the apostles teaching on not being yoked together with unbelievers and that they were only to marry in the Lord. Paul did not want them to leave the unbeliever if they were pleased to dwell with them because it might cause them to be saved.

Paul also tells them that if they will not dwell with them peacefully and they want to depart let them because God wants there to be peace. He goes on to tell them that if the unbeliever departs that a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.

Study the scriptures and one can clearly see that God does not want believers yoked with unbelievers because what fellowship hath light with darkness. Paul is only telling the believers in Christ to remain unmarried or be reconciled to their spouse if they were to depart.

Think about this, if Paul tells those believers in mixed marriages not to depart from the unbelievers when they are pleased to dwell with them and also that if they did depart they were not under bondage...why would we as preachers today tell a saved man or woman to divorce their spouse and leave their children to go back to a marriage when they were in sin. The scriptures never say this; only people who are ignorant to the riches of the mercy of God.

The scriptures are silent concerning the past marriage of those who were in sin and who were not believers in Christ because when you confess your sins and get saved all your past sins are forgiven and cleansed by the blood. God who is merciful and kind says he will not remember them any more.

He makes you a new creature and can even save the family that you are presently in and will not tell you to do anything to hurt someone else. If your unsaved spouse that you are presently with is pleased to dwell with you then they may get saved because of what God did for you. The scripture never tells a born again believer to go back to a marriage when he was living in sin without Christ. In the new covenant there is never a command to divorce your spouse to be single neither is there a command to go back to a former marriage.

I guess you could say I feel passionate about not condemning someone for their past. I don't want my Lord Jesus to be misrepresented concerning the power of the blood of His cross.

Blessings to all!

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Hi rbanks,

How many homes have been split apart by this teaching that you give here?

Are you sure Paul is saying what you say he is, sure enough to leave children without a father or mother?

Are you not telling a christian it is ok for them to divorce and to seek another mate?

Will you take the responsibility for their souls?

I believe Paul finishes off the chapter with exactly what he wanted to say.

1 Cor. 7:39

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.

How can one make it fit any other way?

This why I fear ever telling a Christian that it is ok for them to divorce and remarry.

In His Love  
pastorfrin

**Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/1/21 23:27**

Quote:

-----I must say that God delivered me from going down the path of legalism.  
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rbanks, do you define legalism as one who is obedient to the WORD?

ginnyrose

**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/21 23:29**

Quote:

-----Pastorfrin wrote:

We have polluted the teachings of Jesus Christ and we now have pastors, elders, friends and family encouraging divorce among Christians and it must stop. How many families have been broken because of these devilish liberal teachings on divorce?

Ministers must teach the truth as stated in God's word and the only harm that it will cause is to the kingdom of Satan. **But oh, how severe will be the judgment**



judgment, by His word, against those who have made it easy and in to many cases encouraged Christians to divorce.

Amen, and Amen.

Divorce has run rampant in my family. The damage has been severe and there is no end in sight. It seems to be self perpetuating.

Life gets tough, and our flesh is pressed, and we scream "will someone get me out of this!" Marriage is one of our proving grounds. If we can not stand in covenant with someone that we have professed to love, how can it be that in the end, when things get tough, that we will stand in covenant with the Lord for someone that we do not even know and have every earthly right to hate?

If we are defending other peoples "right to divorce" in order to justify our own past sin, or the sin of someone we love, we are being foolish indeed, for in so doing we are proving that we have not repented of that sin and instead are committing an even greater sin by encouraging others to do the same. I am not sure if this would be considered as committing a sin unto death, but if someone else is encouraged to sin, or will not repent because of our example, and then goes to hell as a result - well that seems to me to be a sin unto death.

On a personal note, I am divorced "just" because my first husband did not love me. I really do not care what anyone else has to say about it because I have brought it before the Lord, and have NO doubt that I have been forgiven. He has also shown the path that I am now to take. But I will tell you that I HATE divorce - and if I had any idea how the Lord felt about it at the time I got divorced - I NEVER would have even considered it. It is one of the most destructive forces that I have ever seen. While I have been forgiven for my sin, there has been a price to be paid - and it is still being paid - unfortunately by others.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/22 0:00**

Quote:  
-----But I will tell you that I HATE divorce - and if I had any idea how the Lord felt about it at the time I got divorced - I NEVER would have even considered it. It is one of the most destructive forces that I have ever seen. While I have been forgiven for my sin, there has been a price to be paid - and it is still being paid - unfortunately by others.  
-----

I also hate divorce with a deep passion and grieve deeply more than the news of a death when I hear of divorce. I have strongly withstood people that were contemplating divorce even when their spouse had had multiple affairs. But the parties involved did not repent and severe violence was nearly the result. Divorce is truly a sadness to me more than death itself, maybe that is why I counseled them to stay together?

The issue for me is simple; listen to the whole counsel of God when it comes to marriage, divorce and adultery. Listen to Ephesians 5 that tells us to love and respect each other. Listen to the multitude of warnings about adultery in Proverbs and how Solomon told such extensive stories to make the points. Adultery is a very very serious sin. Proverbs tells you that you are likely to be killed for committing it. It was the death penalty under the law, but Proverbs says that jealousy is the rage of a man and he will not spare in the day of judgment though you gave him many gifts.

William Tyndale translated the Greek term for adultery as "breaketh wedlocke". So beware of your actions. Can a Christian lie with Allah and be saved? Can a Christian lie with Buddah, Baal, Astaroth and Molech and be saved? Can a Christian claim a covenant with God and serve Idols? We need to take Idolatry seriously and adultery seriously. Preaching unconditional eternal matrimony is NOT the solution. Repentance from unfaithfulness is.

The laws against adultery were instituted to protect a man's progeny; so his seed is his seed and not some spurious offspring. This is serious business. If a woman comes home pregnant by another man it will be of no consequence to call upon Hosea. So REPENT now while you still have a marriage if you contemplate and entertain such thoughts. It may just save your soul and your life. That is, if you really take your bible seriously.



**Re: Rome's doctrine or Christ's - posted by savannah, on: 2009/1/22 1:54**

Quote: "How many homes have been split apart by this teaching that you give here?"

Ans. None. No law, whether it be the Law of God or a law of man, can or does cause one to sin or cause one to sin not. 'For through law is a knowledge of sin'.

"And we have known that as many things as the law saith, to those in the law it doth speak, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may come under judgment to God; wherefore by works of law shall no flesh be declared righteous before Him, for through law is a knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3:19,20)

Homes have been split apart by men's wicked and hard heart.

Jer. 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Matt. 19:8 "He said to them: Moses, on account of the hardness of your heart, permitted you to divorce your wives: but from the beginning it was not so."

Mark 10:5 "Jesus answered and said to them: On account of the hardness of your heart, Moses wrote you this precept."

Quote: Are you sure Paul is saying what you say he is, sure enough to leave children without a father or mother?

Ans. As in the other quote (question) above this is an argument of psychological nature imposing guilt by manipulating one's emotions, as if man is the chief end, rather than the glory of God in the salvation of men by grace through faith. Also, this same person used Ezra to justify breaking up all remarriages whether children be involved or not. Therefore, using a double standard for his convenience. Ezra is being used out of context by this poster as a proof text for this Roman view. May we read it in its context and apply it soundly and consistently.

John 1:17 "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Quote: Are you not telling a Christian it is ok for them to divorce and to seek another mate?

Ans. No. Only what God through Moses, Jesus, and Paul has said. When sin is no longer an issue neither will divorce be. In Lawful (see Ezra 10) cases divorce is the remedy for the sin rather than the sin.

Quote: Will you take the responsibility for their souls?

Ans. This is yet another quote (question) which is a psychological play on one's emotions. A Christian will not tempt Christ by sinning against his brother because he knows that Christ commanded that we forgive 70x7 times a day. Neither will he divorce or encourage others to even if the plain teaching of Scripture is that it is Lawful in some cases.

Noteworthy it is that most (not all) who hold to the Roman view (indissolubility of marriage) on this issue also hold to the view that one born of God and in Christ, that is joined unto the Lord and is one spirit (not merely 'one flesh') with Him (1 Cor. 6:17), may be unjoined from Him and cast away from Him into an eternal hell.

So making a flesh union between relations which are temporal, greater than that union by which God has eternally covenanted Himself with us through His Son.

"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 to God." (Rom. 7:4)

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." (2 Cor. 11:2)

May those who hold both (indissolubility of marriage and loss of salvation) these erroneous and damnable lies in their left hand be given eyes of grace to see their inconsistencies and their graceless deception.

Eph. 6:24 Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

**Re: - posted by wind\_blows, on: 2009/1/22 2:41**

Hey

I have been following this thread for awhile and thinking about if I should post or not, but then decided that maybe I should speak up this time, not take the easy way out, so for what its worth here goes.

When I was seventeen my dad walked out on my mom. They had been married for thirty years at the time. She was completely shocked and devastated by it. She knew that there were problems but she always thought that if they were both willing they could work things out. I watched as she begged and pleaded with him not to leave, but he did anyway. He moved out and later moved in with a much younger woman, she was six years older than I was. My mom got really depressed, stopped eating, and had to be put into the hospital. She was suicidal and it killed me to watch her day after day as she slipped further and further away from us. I tried to talk to my dad, to get him to see the pain and heartache he was causing the entire family. I shared with him from the Bible that what he was doing was wrong and that he needed to repent and come back home and take care of my mother, that he needed to keep the promise he had made thirty years ago to love, honor, and cherish until death do us part. I still remember what he said to me, "You don't understand. I was young when I got married to your mother and things change. I just don't love her any more. After all don't I deserve to be happy to?"

I am ashamed to admit that I did not stand my ground that day. After he told me how he had talked with the pastor and that he was assured what he was doing was for the best. The pastor explained to him that the Bible allowed for divorce and that leaving my mom was at least being honest with her about his feelings and that in the end that would be healthy for the entire family because he would no longer be living a lie. So I gave up, I told him that I thought he should be happy to, and he left for good. So many times I wish I could go back to that conversation and change what I said to him, tell him that he was wrong, and his friends were wrong, and so was that pastor! Divorce is a sin and that by doing what he was, he was throwing his entire family away. There are times I still deal with the grief and guilt of that day. I still feel like I let my mom down even though she assures me that I didn't.

A few years have passed since then and my mom did with much prayer get better. She lives alone now and has no intention to ever remarry, she still sees herself as my dad's wife. My dad is another story, even though he still professes to be Christian, he has been married two more times since my mother. His second wife left him for someone else not too long after they married. She wanted children, he didn't. He is now with his third wife. I don't hear from him very often, he does not like it when I try to share the truth with him. I do pray for him though.

I guess the reason I wanted to share all of this with you guys is to warn you of some of the things you're saying. You might not mean for it to but some posts almost sound a lot like that pastor who talked to my dad several years ago. Please just think about the fact that some people look at what you write and are just looking for any one to give them a reason to clear their consciences so they can walk in sin and self.

Just the late night thoughts of someones whose parents are divorced.

**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/22 3:50**

wind\_blows,

do not feel guilty about that which you did not know. Maybe you didn't stand up back then, but you are standing up now - and who knows how many people might read the words that you have written - and who knows how many children might be able to keep their family just because of the words that you have written.

While your family here on earth is broken, rest assured that in heaven we will have a family that is whole.

Recently someone gave me a picture of my family before the divorce. It is the first one that I have ever seen of the four of

f us together. As I look at it I realize just how mixed up my sense of family is - no wonder I am having so much trouble seeing the body of Christ as a "unit."

Before you get married, make sure that the person you marry is the one that God has picked out for you - you probably already know this, but I wanted to tell you just in case because it is of utmost importance. Only He knows who will be a perfect fit - that the two of you may truly become one.

What you have said makes my heart hurt. May God bless you for your courage.

**Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2009/1/22 4:16**

I think there is a need to try a clear up all the mis-understanding and confusion through mis-applied accusations in some of these threads.

Those (and I include myself) who are defending grace and liberty to ones who are 'victims' of divorce ARE NOT saying divorce is acceptable or OK. I have not read one who says this. I choose the word 'victim' deliberately. By this I mean those who have suffered divorce as the result of another's sin or through their past sin as an un-believer or ignorance.

Let's be clear 'ALL DIVORCE IS WRONG'. However if you become a 'victim' of divorce as described above, you are not to be held in a state of bondage for the rest of your life. Will there be consequences? Absolutely and this will depend upon each circumstance and what degree of responsibility each individual had regarding the divorce. That is between them and God and those who know them well.

So I DO AGREE with a lot of what those such as Pastorfin say. Please continue to speak against divorce and against those who say it is OK to divorce. But in doing so, DO NOT paint every person and situation with the same brush. Be careful not lay heavy burdens on folk that God never intended them to carry! What people like me are objecting to is not that you say divorce is wrong, but what you say to ALL who are now 'victims' of divorce.

Before anyone pulls me up on using the term 'victim'. I am NOT diminishing sin and our guilt before God. We are all victims of sin, that being our own sin and the sin that is in the world through others. We are responsible for our own sin before God. It's how we deal with the result of sin (our's and other's) that is the issue.

**Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/22 9:35**

Thanks Savannah for replying to the post that was twisting the truth that I was trying to convey. I was not on here to reply to those unjust accusations and I thank you for doing that.

Also thanks to heydave for trying to clear up confusion and for portraying accurately in your post my position precisely and the very reason I came on this thread in the first place.

I do want pastorfin and others who seem to agree with him that I am not accusing you of anything but only stating that the teaching that has been promoted on this thread is tainted with legalism that condemns God's children whom Christ died for.

If you want to accuse me of anything falsely then that's your choice but I will stand with the good company of my Lord Jesus who was also accused falsely.

To wind\_blows, I am very sorry for your mother and family. I would never justify what your Dad did. I do pray that he will repent. My writings were never to justify any wrongs that are done but only to clear those of bondage or guilt to their past sins under the blood and also to show the freedom from the bondage of being responsible to one who has walked out on them.

I would have told you... to not give up on praying for his repentance and salvation. Our strong faith in God can cause him to do things that are impossible for us. I would have also and even now tell your mother that Jesus will never leave her and will be everything that she needs for this life and the next. Jesus says we are to love him more than our spouse. God wants our faith and Love to be so strong in him, although other people can hurt us that nothing becomes more important to us than walking in fellowship with God. I have seen people lose their faith because of what someone else did and that is putting too much faith and Love in something or someone other than Christ. I do hope your mother is walking with Christ and enjoying fellowship with Him. He can fill every void and heal every pain. There are none married in heaven

nor given in marriage. The only marriage will be at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Praise his holy name!!!

This may be my last reply on this thread. I uphold marriage as a sacred institution ordained by God and not to be entered into lightly. If anyone thinks that they can sin by committing adultery or divorcing your spouse then you better hope you get the fear of God in your heart because the wages of sin is death. The bible says that you will reap what you sow.

God condemns all sin but does not condemn those who are justified in Christ walking in the light for what they did in their past or what someone else did to them. This is the purpose for all my posts and can easily be read on this thread

Blessings to all!

**The truth is hard to hear, but still true! - posted by Llewellyn (), on: 2009/1/22 16:56**

The Lord has made it clear and so did His Apostles, the question is how to convey those truths, and how to apply them.

He said that arms and eyes are worth casting away when it binds us to sin. To repent from drugs or immorality is always understood as a separation and turn away from the particular sin. None would think a pastor or brother tainted with legalism when they call for repentance from sodomy, why then infer this on those who seek to help men and woman alike in the snare of adultery. A snare it is, to fall in sin before or after once conversion is always a snare, and the call is always the same, turn from our wicked ways, Repent.

Never to make friends and condone that which our Lord calls us to repent from. Many things can be said in objection, but God is not a humanist. That is to say His ways are not primarily the happiness of man but His own Glory. Praise to God His glory is to make His Son manifest in us, and it seems that many hurtful and painful things work together to bring us to the end of our self.

The Christian walk is not the nice comfortable way but the narrow way of the cross, that means many unpleasant things unto death of self. The scripture says "he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" Repentance seems to always bring a measure of suffering in the flesh.

Throwing away responsibility is not what repentance is. I trust that the Lord has considered all things before He said what He did in the Gospels and else were concerning this painful truth. Yet the unwillingness of the Christian world to stand on the truth of God's Word has made this unrepented sin a strong hold of Satan.

Almost like giving false hope to those in this snare. You see it is not forgiveness that is in question, but when does God forgive?

God is Holy!

**Re: The truth is hard to hear... Job's counselors? - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/22 21:53**

Quote:

-----You see it is not forgiveness that is in question, but when does God forgive?  
-----

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (I John 1)

God forgives at the moment we *acknowledge* our sin. God forgave David at the moment he confessed and that was long before Psalm 51:

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. (I Samuel 12:13)

Confession? I have sinned against the LORD

God's response? The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

The saddest thing about some of the attitudes I see in these type threads is the ongoing willingness of some to paint themselves righteous so as to leave others that have been divorced with families without hope of salvation unless they abandon their wife and children. That has to be the most satanic teaching I have ever come across and it dances across the pages of these forums almost unthwarted. Amazing! Astonishing! Beyond my comprehension.

If *that* is your christianity my friend, you can keep it. One would be better off eating and drinking for tomorrow we die (I speak as a fool). And this is just another of those radical teachings that end up making God into the devil like the ones that damn from eternity souls without any hope of salvation. That is the devil my friend, not God.

Quote:  
-----The Christian walk is not the nice comfortable way but the narrow way of the cross, that means many unpleasant things unto death of self. The scripture says "he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" Repentance seems to always bring a measure of suffering in the flesh.  
-----

It sounds oh so spiritual doesn't it? Rat poison is 90% good corn; it is the 10% strychnine that makes it deadly. Carrying the cross does not mean that a sinner seeking repentance must divorce his wife or husband and leave his wife/husband and precious children to hell and the devil. With so-called Christians like this- why do we need demons? Why do we need cults? these people will destroy their own selves if you give them time.

Get this, it was Job's counselors that tried to counsel him in a difficult situation from which there was no real straight forward answer or solution. Listen to these men for chapter after chapter going back and forth using their wisdom and stating facts and even truths, seeking to *condemn* Job. They forced the man almost into conflict with God in provoking him to defend himself before God. This is a terrible consideration that needs to be considered. Why?

Because time and again I have listened to the unconditional matrimony crowd until I was almost angry at and distrusting God. I'm not playing around here. This is serious business. I began to question why a loving God would allow a person to do me such a way knowing in advance what was going to happen. I felt like He should have warned me. And just as those thoughts tried to take root in my heart God touched me and I realized that it was NOT He that was calling me to the carpet for failing when I was sifted near to the point of suicide, it was the unconditional matrimony crowd. Amazing how much deception and discouragement these people can wield in the name of Christ!

So for you that continue on in this vein- let me clue you in on what you are doing. You are playing the judge in uncertain matters that ought to be left to the conscience of the individuals and the grace of God. You are effectively driving people away from God and causing them to stumble. I know, I'm one of them.

I'm talking about people that love God. I'm talking about people that have lived pretty righteous lives and have been kept from a host of sins that others confess having been involved in. And because of that one impasse of a sin- they are set apart not and treated as sinners. That is truly stunning.

In 2005 I went into such a depression feeling rejected by my fellow brethren that I almost could not function or minister. And it was 90% caused by these types of threads. That is a horrific thing to consider, because there are a lot of people that watch our lives. I know people personally that cannot come on these forums or sermonindex because of the condemnation and ongoing suggestion that they are not forgiven and cannot be forgiven until they forsake their family.

And that, when I sincerely sought the Lord in my case and DID send away my present wife in 1991 to find God's will; since then, when I felt God give me direction, I had not thought of the issue hardly once seriously. I came to terms with my impossible situation. God began to Bless and I was filled with His Spirit. He walks and talks with me since. He deals with me about my actions and sometimes my sin. But He never brings up my past.

Today I have 6 children and 2 grandchildren. Life has not always been easy. It can be complicated. If God damns my soul on judgment day I will go into eternity screaming, "Jesus, I really loved you!" But in the mean time I'm going to continue

e to train my children up in the way they should go. I'm going to do my best to make sure my wife and kids are shielded from the snare of Satan. How easy it would be to follow the counsel of the naysayers and just send them child support each month. I wish some of you would call somebody before playing God like you do. Get some advice from someone that knows what going on. Will you?

My wife has had congenital Congestive Heart Failure since 2000 (her mom passed at 55 years in 2003 from the same illness) and thyroid Cancer in 2007. I have prayed that God would allow her to see our children grown. How easy it would have been to abandon her? But I chose to stick around and pray and fast (I speak as a fool) for her and take care of her. I have not abandoned my post as pastor of my family. When my kids acted it and rebelled- how easy it would be to roll out and leave them all behind. I could have even used some of these demonic excuses to look spiritual doing it.

I have much more to say, but again it will fall on deaf ears. Their minds are made up. And as God stays silent they just keep on talking and discouraging folk to the brink of backsliding. They bite, devour and consume.

**O Lord help us! - posted by Llewellyn (), on: 2009/1/23 3:41**

Job had only one wife, He was called righteous by God. His friends were guessing, but when some one is in adultery there is no guessing.

Get this, they confess they have sinned, but hey true repentance is nowhere to be seen. God has not changed, read Ezra 9-10. O, they say it is satanic, well it seems to me very biblical for God to say to man: "separate your self from those wives that are against my Word";

The cross is obedience to God, so to take up our cross means to obey God at any cost, and if that means to die on a cross then so be it.

I am seeing sparks flying and great big stones being thrown at him that speaks the truth. Why not just cut the chapters out of the Bible that God spoke. Than the contention will cease, yet it seems that even that won't help. I mean you tell some one what you read in scripture and they tell you to stop playing God. My friend I weep and tremble at these things, no playing here, I know all too well of all the pain and hurt. But I have a hope that my Lord knows what He is doing and I will not let my emotions question Him.

I know of many that live in a false peace. I even meet Hindus and other that would contend with me for hours about the peace they have and the love they feel from God. They pray and he answers their prayer. There is a way that seems right unto man but it leads to: "I never knew you go away from me ye workers of iniquity. But Lord you spoke to me; I prophesied and saw miracles in my life. Go away!";

I did speak to many, I did fast for many days, I did count the cost, I did weep and wail and I did find the truth.

If my understanding is wrong, please forget what I said. But if right;

**Re: The truth is hard to hear ~ Amen Brother - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/1/23 5:09**

Llewellyn,

The truth of one Scripture will NEVER nullify the truth of another Scripture. Period.

You are correct: God is Holy!

I'm adding this because you said the following:

Quote:

-----I did speak to many, I did fast for many days, I did count the cost, I did weep and wail and I did find the truth.

I try to be careful NOT to put an "all-knowing answer" from God onto myself because each one of us can say, "I sought God thus and such" and here is what He told "me." We each need to search our hearts and ask God if what we heard was truly Him. I am learning to do that. Look here in Ezekiel:

Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; **I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;**  
Ezekiel 14:4

Sometimes we get the answer we pray for because we had a set belief going into the prayer closet and we just know God is on our side.

Quote:

-----If my understanding is wrong, please forget what I said.  
-----

Here we stand getting two different answers, still brothers and sisters in Christ. The answer is found in 1 Corinthians 13. We are under the New Covenant, that is where I set my tent facing my Jesus and not my accusers.

#### **Romans 10.1 - 11 - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/1/23 5:27**

- 1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.
- 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.
- 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.
- 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.
- 5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.
- 6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)
- 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)
- 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;
- 9 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.
- 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
- 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.**

Romans 10

-----  
This is my last post on the matter.

#### **Re: O Lord help us! - posted by Heydave (), on: 2009/1/23 6:27**

Llewellyn wrote:

Quote:  
-----Get this, they confess they have sinned, but hey true repentance is nowhere to be seen. God has not changed, read Ezra 9-10. O, they say it is satanic, well it seems to me very biblical for God to say to man: "separate your self from those wives that are against my Word."

I'm sorry, but I have to say you speak big words, but show great ignorance and lack of knowledge of what you speak.

If you want to apply Ezra 10 as a blanket 'law' to all people today then let us look at what it DOES say and what it DOES NOT say.

It DOES says that they were to put away the 'Pagan' wives. So if we try and apply that today (as you want to) then it is very clear that would mean any Christian that is married to an unbeliever should put her and the children away! I don't think you would suggest that this should happen do you? We already know that Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians that you should NOT put away the unbelieving wife.

What it DOES NOT say in Ezra is that they had to put away any wives that they may have married subsequently to divorce as prescribed by Moses, ONLY the pagan wives.



Now consider two prominent women in the bible. Rahab the Caananite prostitute and Ruth the moabitess. Both of these were taken as wives by Israelites and more strikingly God chose them to be channels through which Messiah Jesus would come.

So the Ezra 'principle' does not even apply here and in fact God in His wisdom choose them to be in the lineage of His Messiah!! So we must conclude that this was something that applied to them at this time due to the great problem of mixing with the Pagan culture and other gods corrupting the true religion of God. It was never intended to be a blanket 'law' to apply to every person and situation regardless of their faith in God. See, what was important was not that Ruth or Rahab were from pagan races, but that they had faith in the true God and followed Him. This is the principle and this is what God looks at.

One other is again of interest and that is Bathsheba. We know the great sin that king David committed here and that the son born of that adultery died at God's hand. However David found forgiveness through repentance (Psalm 51), but he did NOT put Bathsheba away and again God in His wisdom brought His Messiah Jesus through the lineage of Bathsheba, through Solomon.

So are you more righteous than God? I would counsel you to have great fear about how you expound the things you do, as you do not know what you are saying.

"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge".

"There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another"? (James 4 11-12).

**Re: O Lord help us! - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/23 6:44**

Quote:  
-----Job had only one wife, He was called righteous by God. His friends were guessing, but when some one is in adultery there is no guessing.  
-----

I'm not even going to bother explaining to you my point about Job's counselors. It had nothing to do with Job.

Quote:  
-----Get this, they confess they have sinned, but hey true repentance is nowhere to be seen. God has not changed, read Ezra 9-10. O, they say it is satanic, well it seems to me very biblical for God to say to man: "separate your self from those wives that are against my Word."  
-----

Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, 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.

Those women they separated from were pagans that tried to lead the people into Idolatry like they did Solomon. Notice the irony here. The people were in danger of committing adultery against God (idolatry). Yet under the New Covenant Paul said what?

And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. (I Cor. 7\_

This ought to shock the unconditional Matrimony crowd, but it don't. God in the New Covenant would not allow an Ezra situation to go down. In fact, the woman is commanded not to leave if he be pleased to dwell in peace. How many of those that desired to teach the Law and understood not what they taught- were teaching the Corinthians to leave their unbelieving wives and husbands?



Quote:

-----I am seeing sparks flying and great big stones being thrown at him that speaks the truth.  
-----

I am familiar with this doctrine as it is essentially what we see here in Missouri from the Mennonites. They post billboard s on the issue along highways in the southern part of the state from time to time. I play the ball and not the man. At some risk I have tried to share a very small portion of the grief and discouragement that these type of teachings have brought into my life. *Somebody* has to say something. But what would it profit me to be silent and then become a casualty of the ongoing discouragement it causes? If that happens my reputation and friendships would matter little, wouldn't they?

Quote:

-----But I have a hope that my Lord knows what He is doing and I will not let my emotions question Him.  
-----

So you are saying that the doctrine strikes at the very heart of right and wrong in your conscience doesn't it? It's not your emotions- it's your God given conscience rising up.

Quote:

-----I know of many that live in a false peace. I even meet Hindus and other that would contend with me for hours about the peace they have and the love they feel from God. They pray and he answers their prayer. There is a way that seems right unto man but it leads to: "I never knew you go away from me ye workers of iniquity. But Lord you spoke to me; I prophesied and saw miracles in my life. Go away!"  
-----

The peace of God comes about when the love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. The love leads to joy and the joy to peace and so on. NOTHING I have ever heard of in Christian circles is more contrary to love than to walk out and leave your family in the name of repentance. Truly a sinner can see that that is not love by any definition.

Quote:

-----I did speak to many, I did fast for many days, I did count the cost, I did weep and wail and I did find the truth. If my understanding is wrong, please forget what I said. But if right?  
-----

If you made such a decision that is your prerogative. I personally have never met a person that had biological children and a wife that they left behind in order to repent. We all have to give an account to God some day. And that is all I ask, for individuals caught in these horrible situations to be able to come before God with all the passages in hand for a word of His grace. If someone arrives at a different conclusion than I do- so be it. We all have to give an account to God.

**Not Under Bondage—Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage -taylor - posted by Llewellyn (), on: 2009/1/23 10:16**

Quote:

-----And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. (I Cor. 7\_

Does not speak of second but first marriages, please bring one verse that brings God's blessing on second or any other marriage apart from the first. I am not saying divorce from unbelievers is what God wants, but repentance from an adulterous marriage.

The Scripture clearly say he that **marry** another mans wife commit adultery doesn't it?

Let me quote Taylor

Quote:  
-----Summarizing Jesus's teaching, we saw that: Divorcing a wife and marrying another is adultery (Mark 10:11-12). Marrying someone who has been divorced is adultery (Luke 16:18). Divorcing a spouse for any reason except for fornication is to be guilty of causing your spouse to commit adultery (Matt. 5:32, 19:9). We took special note of this last point. The teaching of causing your spouse to commit adultery is often quickly passed over in our reading of this passage. This teaching should put a special check on our hearts when we begin to contemplate divorce; these are indeed challenging words. We saw in the last issue however, that Jesus did give one exception to the guilt of causing your spouse's future adultery, and that was if they were an adulterer already. Albeit, even in the case of adultery, where separation was permitted, remarriage still was not granted. This would have meant to live the rest of your life single. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we saw that even with such difficult teachings as these, we were not to accomplish them in the flesh but to trust God, who has promised the needed grace to accomplish what He has called us to do. Jesus's teachings are not popular today, and unfortunately, numerous different interpretations abound, turning the words of Christ into nonsense. Modern interpreters disagree on how to interpret the words of Christ. Over the centuries, Jesus's teachings have grown increasingly figurative. Interestingly, the further you go back in history, the more literal you find the Church on the subject of divorce and many other controversial teachings.  
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When looking at the context of this thread one can conclude

Quote:  
-----Conclusion At the beginning of his discussion on marriage and divorce, Paul summarized the teaching of Jesus: "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 Cor. 7:10-11) Now at the end of the chapter Paul summarizes all his teaching as: "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 Cor. 7:39) Paul begins and ends his discussion on marriage and divorce very succinctly: The marriage bond is for life; therefore any divorce in the eyes of man is merely a separation. Therefore, if a divorce occurs only two options are open to us: reconciliation or remain single.  
-----

Thank you for your attention.

**Re: Not Under Bondage—Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage -taylor - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/23 10:19**

Quote:  
-----Does not speak of second but first marriages, please bring one verse that brings God's blessing on second or any other marriage apart from the first. I am not saying divorce from unbelievers is what God wants, but repentance from an adulterous marriage.  
-----

I'll bring that when you give me just ONE New Testament example of repentance ever requiring a marital breakup? When divorce was rampant why is there silence?

**Re: woman at well, on: 2009/1/23 10:51**

I have the following questions:

The woman at the well had five husbands which obviously means that she was remarried five times. If remarriage itself is a perpetual state then Christ would have no authority to forgive that. The fact that she divorced from all her marriages would serve irrelevant from some of the logic here. She remarried... that's it. Unless, of course, the sin of divorce would now right the wrong of the sin of remarriage?

Will anyone argue that the woman at the well was forgiven because she technically wasn't remarried because of five divorces and as such, divorce was her "last sinful state according to the law"..... OR because Jesus said she was forgiven and had that authority regardless of her past or present circumstance?

Could Jesus only forgive her because she was technically not remarried since she was divorced from her last marriage according to the law and therefore, as it stands, divorce is the only forgivable state Jesus could forgive?

In this situation, is Jesus acting on His ability and authority to forgive as a Savior regardless of the law, OR was He bound

d by a legal technicality that allowed Him to forgive her?

What reigns in this scenario of Christ's mercy? Does He have Sovereign authority or was His forgiveness only allowable by law?

**Re: Not Under Bondage—Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage -taylor - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/23 10:51**

Quote:

-----The Scripture clearly say he that marry another mans wife commit adultery doesn't it?  
-----

We have hashed this over into such a depth in the past I can better serve you by pointing you to the SI search engine. I have written very extensively on it from every angle any of us could think of. Truly I think the issue has been taken down to the smallest particles.

In short, adultery is definitely grounds for divorce, always has been and always will be. It was the death penalty in the Old Testament. Just as surly as if a Christian lies with Allah is *idolatry* a man that lies with another man's wife has broken wedlock (William Tyndale's definition of Adultery). It does not have to result in divorce, but nothing can possibly be more plainer than this. David understood the seriousness of what he had done and it's why he killed Uriah the Hittite after trying unsuccessfully to deceive him.

Although I have met and respect Dean I disagree with Him on this. The full counsel of God tells us plainly in two places in Matthew that fornication is grounds for divorce. Moreover, I will not be drawn into conflict with Dean either as I consider him a dear brother. I think we can disagree on this subject so long as folk don't start calling everyones souls into judgment; that is biting and devouring. Paul says if we bite and devour each other we run the risk of consuming each other.

When someone calls my marriage an *adulterous marriage* it is 'biting' me. When I'm around folk that are of that persuasion I am always discouraged. I wonder what they are thinking and saying about me. It's like being a convicted felon or something. And I know I speak for many others here also because I have been fielding e-mails and phone calls.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/23 11:01**

Quote:

-----Could Jesus only forgive her because she was technically not remarried since she was divorced from her last remarriage according to the law and therefore, as it stands, divorce is the only forgivable state?  
-----

If I recall our discussion of this in the past the Jews did not recognize a person on the 5th marriage. This could be why she was not married to the man. Bear in mind that the Greek uses the term for 'man' in place of husband. As in - the one you are with is not your *man*.

Jesus gave this woman no direction at all. We do not know what He told her to do. Truly there was no practical answer to her situation that would fulfill the requirements of all the law. And in an evil and adulterous generation as existed in that time, there is absolutely no mention of mass marital breakups, etc. This goes back to my point about Job. It takes the counsel of God to speak to some situations and not someone trying to figure it out based on their limited knowledge of the scriptures and the facts at hand. We are simply not called to sit in judgment of each other like that.

**Re: , on: 2009/1/23 11:26**

Understood Robert. But I guess my question is: What allowed Jesus to forgive the woman at the well? Was it the law that allowed Jesus to forgive (meaning that the woman fit a legal technicality or loophole that could not constrain His authority) or was it His sovereign authority and mercy?

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/23 12:21**

Quote:  
-----CCrider: Was it the law that allowed Jesus to forgive (meaning that the woman fit a legal technicality or loophole that could not constrain His authority) or was it His sovereign authority and mercy?  
-----

I will try to answer this last question and I must leave off. These conversations simply do not edify the body. It is serious discouragement on my end. But the reality is, there was no way for the woman to right her wrongs. She was married 5 times meaning she was probably unchaste or very hard to live with. Jews could divorce for any reason. Jesus challenged that. She could repent and confess her sins and trust Christ to take her from where she was at and into holiness.

But would it be reasonable for Jesus to tell the woman to go back to the first man? Not under the Law because that would have been an abomination because she was married after they divorced. There was no real solution that would satisfy everyone. This is what grace and mercy is about. Christ forgave because God is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He is just to forgive because the penalty was paid in full at Calvary.

As Christians we have to decide if we are going to preach the Gospel or something else. If there is no hope for this evil generation and for folk like myself then what is all this about? What are we preaching for? There are a lot of twisted lives out there. They need the good news. There is simply nothing good about news that there is no forgiveness or hope for those in families that had previous marriages. But there is good news in knowing that God loves us and desires us to be saved.

**Re: , on: 2009/1/23 12:36**

RobertW.... thank you for your input. I know you have wrestled tremendously in these areas with an open mind and open heart. I too wrestle and am glad I am not alone in these things.

**Re: - posted by utilizer001 (), on: 2009/1/23 16:56**

I must thank Greg for posting this message by Brother Dean. After intense study, and seeking God's will, the position Brother Dean has taken is the one that I have come to believe.

There is always the measure of grace when it comes to God's relationship with humanity, and while some may not be able to handle the best that God has for them due to hardness of their hearts, that does not mean that God won't show them mercy.

As for me, when my wife left me for another man, God used that to turn me to Him. I asked Him, Lord, what is your will in this? How is this destruction of a marriage covenant, glorifying to you? Do you have someone else for me, was this marriage out of your will the whole time? And through multiple means God resoundingly said, that the marriage vows made still stood. And that if I truly wanted the best, then I must learn to not just say I trust Him, but to really trust Him. That I must wait upon Him, and watch what He does. Through scripture God lead me to know that for me, regardless of what anyone else says, that for me I must remain single, until He moves a mountain of sin and adultery and reconciles my wife and myself.

Then, in an absolute moment of breaking me of some pride, God showed me how what I had done to Him by living my life the way I had been was the same as the adultery my wife was now committing against me. If He could forgive me, then I could forgive her.

And finally, for this posting anyway, he asked if I loved her. I honestly told God yes. He asked if I was willing to let her slip into hell, because no one else was willing to pray for her as I would be. The Bible makes it very clear that adulterers have no place in the Kingdom of God, and unless she repents and is saved, she will spend her eternity in Hell. I told God I didn't think that would bring Him the glory that saving her and restoring a broken marriage would. That I wasn't willing to do nothing and let the woman I loved so much as to marry go to hell simply because my ego was hurt by her adultery.

So, as one living the situation at hand out, It is not easy to not "move on with your life" as so many recommend. It means lonely nights and much heartache. It also means much prayer and drawing closer to God. For those facing this situation, My recommendation is to think about what your vows were you made, do you hate your spouse so much as to willingly not pray for their souls, and above all else, in honest prayer, seek God and His will. And if you so choose to stand and fight for your spouse and the covenant you made between God and your spouse, know that you are not alone. You are in the minority, but there are others out here like you, and we'll stand beside you in prayer and any other way we can.

Praying for the reconciliation of broken marriages,

Jason Smith  
Oregon

**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/23 17:32**

This matter has been heavy on my heart as I did not understand how the Lord could require something that seems so impossible.

These are the verses that He brought forth this morning as I prayed:

John 4:16-18 (the woman at the well)

Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

John 8:10-11 (the woman caught in adultery)

When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Luke 14:25-26

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

But above all, it was these words that struck deepest:

What the Lord requires, He will also provide.

If we turn our heart towards Him in obedience, **He** will make the way.

And I can attest that in my life, time, and time again, He has done precisely that - provided for that which He has required - many times before the requirement ever arose. That we would believe He would box us in a corner, with no way out, must cause Him much grief. He has the answer ready, if we would but only believe.

Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/23 19:17

Dear Brethren,

I just couldn't stay away. Here is a website that I recommend on marriage over all others. It is the most biblical on marriage I have seen. The website is [www.covenantkeepers.org](http://www.covenantkeepers.org) and here is a brief excerpt on divorce/remarriage.

(3) You should not divorce because of the extreme harm it causes to everyone involved. Divorce is as hurtful and destructive as ripping a person's body apart while they are still alive. The Bible declares that a marriage begins when two people are united as "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). This phrase literally means one body or one person. Therefore, if you divorce you rip apart something that God has joined together. Remember, "What God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19:6).

Even though I have never been divorced, I do have personal experience with the devastation of divorce. I grew up in a family where I saw my father leave my mother, and I watched the anguish, tears, and destruction first-hand. I know what it's like being used as a bargaining chip between parents. I know the struggles of growing up in a single parent family with no father. I've personally lived through this destruction. I can say without a doubt, that it is a cruel and harmful experience that you don't want. God knows that divorce is not just one person's problem, it's an entire family's crisis.

My point is this, God calls us to keep our commitments. I know some of you are in difficult marriages right now. But remember, Paul declared, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). I quote this passage often when I do marriage counseling. Notice again, Scripture always makes your personal responsibility the primary issue. Paul says, "as much as depends on you." In other words, you are responsible to do all you can to honor your commitments. Are you taking heed to your spirit? Are you doing all that is within your power to live peaceably with your spouse? Are you seeking God for His grace to keep your vow of love?

However, there is a balance within this passage. Paul also said, "If it is possible." That phrase obviously implies that sometimes it is not possible to live at peace with someone. That is a sad situation, but it happens. Let me make this clear, it takes two people to make a marriage work. If you are reading this and your spouse has run off with someone else and divorced you, I don't want you to feel condemned by these statements. All you should consider is, did you do all you could to save the marriage? Remember, God only holds you responsible for your actions. If your spouse chooses to resist reconciliation there is very little you can do about it. However, whenever I make statements like this, people usually ask, "Are you saying that there are some cases where divorce and remarriage may be permissible?" My answer is, yes, there are reasons given in Scripture for divorce and remarriage. Then people say, "But isn't this a contradiction of what you've just said?" No it isn't. Let me explain.

Let me give you two biblical reasons for divorce and remarriage. Jesus gives the first reason when He answers the Pharisees' question in Matthew 19: "The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?' " (vs. 3). The question is, can someone divorce for any reason. Jesus plainly teaches that you can't divorce for any reason, because God's desire from the beginning was for one woman to be married to one man for life (vs. 4-6). The Pharisees responded with another question. "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" (vs. 7). Jesus explains that Moses did not command people to divorce; it was only permitted or allowed because of the hardness of men's hearts (vs. 8). Jesus admits that divorce is permitted in Scripture. Then Jesus gives the reason it is permitted: "I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (vs.9).

Note that Jesus is the one who gives the exception to the rule, not me. He said, "except for sexual immorality." This exception is not a command; it's an allowable release. I have seen many couples where adultery took place, and the offended partner chose not to divorce because of the humility and repentance of the offending spouse. Many of these marriages have reconciled and become stronger as a result of their reconciliation. However, when a person continues to practice sexual immorality and refuses to repent of his or her offense, or he or she runs off to marry into the adulterous relationship, I believe that this is evidence of a hardened heart -- the reason Jesus gave this exception.

Regardless, there are many Christians who believe that there are no exceptions allowing divorce. I believe that this position is indefensible based on the teachings of Christ in Matthew 19. Judging from the letters and e-mails I get from people on this topic, many Christians are confused about what Scripture teaches. For any teacher to deny the exception of sexual immorality as an option for a Christian, I believe, is to take away from God's Word. Scripture clearly states that adding to or taking away from His Word is a very serious offense (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19).

Paul also gives a second reason for divorce and remarriage: when an unbeliever abandons and wants to divorce a believing spouse. We will cover this issue later in this study. This reason is found in 1 Cor. 7:15.

However, before we go any further I know many people reading these words are having problems with the idea of exceptions. Many people have said to me, "When you give an exception to the marriage covenant, you give people an easy out. They look for a loophole and simply run from their responsibility. They take this option as their first choice instead of as a last resort."

First, let me say that divorce never offers an easy out. It harms and scars all concerned because it rips apart a marriage and a family. Unfortunately, I have to agree that some people do look for loopholes and don't take responsibility for themselves and the commitment they have made. This is his or her own loss. But, I can't change God's Word and remove an option because I want to force someone to be responsible. No one has the right to put his or her own opinions into Scripture just because he or she has gone through a messy divorce. Yes, I do believe you should work with everything you have to seek reconciliation with your mate. But, if he or she refuses to reconcile, continues in an adulterous relationship, or determines to abandon you, divorce is an available option.

Others say, "But shouldn't you continue to strive to make the marriage work?" Yes, you should strive for reconciliation, but there is a point at which you can strive contrary to reality. Even God Himself has said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever" (Gen. 6:3). God saw the reality, "that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). God made this statement concerning mankind and then brought the flood upon the earth. The Lord took the same action with the Jews who were unfaithful to Him. He pursued them, striving to bring them to repentance. But, when it was clear that they would not turn from their idolatry, He sent them into captivity and turned away from them (2 Chronicles 36:16; Deut. 32:15-20). There are husbands and wives just like the Jews, who harden their hearts and stiffen their necks, who will not respond. No matter what overture of love you make toward them, they reject it. In these situations you need to understand that you can't force someone to do what they will fully refuse to do.

#### The Command To Christians Who Do Divorce

Paul now turns his attention to Christians who do choose to divorce without biblical grounds. He declares, "But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife" (vs. 11). Paul first states the ideal in verse 10 that Christians should not get divorced, but then turns right around and acknowledges that he knows some will depart from each other.

If you have divorced without the biblical grounds of adultery or the abandonment of your unbelieving spouse, what does Scripture command you to do? Paul makes it absolutely clear that you have only two options: You must remain unmarried or be reconciled to your mate. Notice again that this instruction continues to communicate the overall biblical priority of being faithful to your marriage vows.

What should you do if you have already disobeyed this command and have divorced your spouse and remarried another? This question is usually followed by two additional questions. Have I committed an unpardonable sin and should I divorce the new spouse and remarry my previous partner?

Let's deal with the second question first. Should you divorce your new spouse and remarry the one you divorced? Absolutely not! This would be total confusion and would only tear apart more lives. You should simply ask God for His forgiveness and remain in the marriage you're in now. Let me explain the biblical principles upon which I base this counsel.

(1) Remain in the state you are in. After Paul explained the principles of marriage and divorce in 1 Cor. 7:1-16, he then encouraged all believers not to try to escape their present circumstances. He gave two examples: That of circumcision and being a servant of another person. He concluded with the general principle: "Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called" (1 Cor. 7:24). Paul then applied this same principle to marriage. "I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress--that it is good for a man to remain as he is: Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife" (1 Cor. 7:26-27). In other words, Paul was explaining that they should simply stay in whatever relationship they were in.

(2) In the Old Testament, Moses commanded the people not to return to a wife they had divorced after marrying another because that would be an abomination. "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand



and, and sends her out of his house, when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife, if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD" (Deut. 24:1-4). People often ask if this concept can or should be brought into the New Testament. I believe that you should accept this principle because this is the same passage Jesus used to allow someone to divorce in Matthew 19. Therefore, if Jesus used this passage to allow for divorce due to moral uncleanness in a wife, shouldn't you also consider the rest of the passage concerning returning to a previous marriage partner?

To answer the second question: When people divorce and marry another without biblical grounds, is this an unpardonable sin? It surely is sin, but it is not an unpardonable sin. Jesus said, "Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men" (Matt. 12:31). I would emphasize the word every in this text. I bring this issue up because there are those who would deny forgiveness for this sin. However, I can not do that! If I did declare this sin was unforgivable, then I would be adding to the Word of God again. Let me be absolutely clear. There is only one unpardonable sin, which is the rejection of the Spirit of God and the testimony concerning Christ until the day of a person's death. That is the only unpardonable sin. See Heb. 10:29 and 1 John 5:10-16.

Consequently, when I make these statements about forgiveness people have said to me, "With this philosophy of forgiveness, you are giving people the license to sin." My response is this: If someone takes God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness and uses it as a license to sin that would obviously be wrong. I can't keep people from doing that. However, I will not give people incorrect or unbiblical counsel to try and keep them from sinning or scare them into obedience. That would be equally wrong on my part.

In addition, if you were divorced and remarried before you became a Christian, then you can also be assured that you have a new and cleansed standing in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Paul declared, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). He does not say some things become new, but all things become new. All your failures and sins are washed away and you have a new start with God. Praise Him for His grace.

Blessings to you all!

**Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/23 19:44**

Divorce & Remarriage: A Position Paper

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By John Piper July 21, 1986  
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Note (added May 5, 1989): Readers of this paper should be sure to consult the official position paper of the Council of Deacons of Bethlehem Baptist Church entitled, A Statement on Divorce and Remarriage in the Life of Bethlehem Baptist Church. That document, dated May 2, 1989, represents the position on divorce and remarriage that will guide the church in matters of membership and discipline. The paper you hold in your hands is NOT the official church position on divorce and remarriage. It is my own understanding of the Scriptures and therefore the guidelines for my own life and teaching and ministerial involvement in weddings. But I intend to respect the official statement (having written the first draft myself) as our guide in matters of membership and discipline. I make this paper available so that the basis for certain statements in the official paper can be readily obtained.

#### Background and Introduction

All of my adult life, until I was faced with the necessity of dealing with divorce and remarriage in the pastoral context, I held the prevailing Protestant view that remarriage after divorce was Biblically sanctioned in cases where divorce had resulted from desertion or persistent adultery. Only when I was compelled, some years ago, in teaching through the gospel of Luke, to deal with Jesus' absolute statement in Luke 16:18 did I begin to question that inherited position.

I felt an immense burden in having to teach our congregation what the revealed will of God is in this matter of divorce and remarriage. I was not unaware that among my people there were those who had been divorced and remarried, and those who had been divorced and remained unmarried, and those who were in the process of divorce or contemplating it as

a possibility. I knew that this was not an academic exercise, but would immediately affect many people very deeply.

I was also aware of the horrendous statistics in our own country, as well as other Western countries, concerning the number of marriages that were ending in divorce, and the numbers of people who were forming second marriages and third marriages. In my study of Ephesians 5 I had become increasingly persuaded that there is a deep and profound significance to the union of husband and wife in "one flesh" as a parable of the relationship between Christ and his church.

All of these things conspired to create a sense of solemnity and seriousness as I weighed the meaning and the implication of the Biblical texts on divorce and remarriage. The upshot of that crucial experience was the discovery of what I believe is a New Testament prohibition of all remarriage except in the case where a spouse has died. I do not claim to have seen or said the last word on this issue, nor am I above correction, should I prove to be wrong. I am aware that men more godly than I have taken different views. Nevertheless, every person and church must teach and live according to the dictates of its own conscience informed by a serious study of Scripture.

Therefore this paper is an attempt to state my own understanding of the issues and their foundation in Scripture. It serves, then, as a Biblical rationale for why I feel constrained to make the decisions I do with regard to whose marriages I will perform and what sort of church discipline seems appropriate in regard to divorce and remarriage.

If I were to give exhaustive expositions of each relevant text the paper would become a very large book. Therefore, what I plan to do is to give brief explanations of each of the crucial texts with some key exegetical arguments. There will be, no doubt, many questions that can be raised and I hope to be able to learn from those questions, and do my best to answer them in the discussion that will surround this paper.

It seems that the most efficient way to approach the issue is to simply give a list of reasons, based on Biblical texts, why I believe that the New Testament prohibits all remarriage except where a spouse has died. So what follows is a list of such arguments.

#### **Eleven Reasons Why I Believe All Remarriage After Divorce Is Prohibited While Both Spouses Are Alive**

##### **1. Luke 16:18 calls all remarriage after divorce adultery.**

Luke 16:18: Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

1.1 This verse shows that Jesus does not recognize divorce as terminating a marriage in God's sight. The reason a second marriage is called adultery is because the first one is considered to still be valid. So Jesus is taking a stand against the Jewish culture in which all divorce was considered to carry with it the right of remarriage.

1.2 The second half of the verse shows that not merely the divorcing man is guilty of adultery when he remarries, but also any man who marries a divorced woman.

1.3 Since there are no exceptions mentioned in the verse, and since Jesus is clearly rejecting the common cultural conception of divorce as including the right of remarriage, the first readers of this gospel would have been hard-put to argue for any exceptions on the basis that Jesus shared the cultural assumption that divorce for unfaithfulness or desertion freed a spouse for remarriage.

##### **2. Mark 10:11-12 call all remarriage after divorce adultery whether it is the husband or the wife who does the divorcing.**

Mark 10:11-12: And he said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.'

2.1 This text repeats the first half of Luke 16:18 but goes farther and says that not only the man who divorces, but also a woman who divorces, and then remarries is committing adultery.

2.2 As in Luke 16:18, there are no exceptions mentioned to this rule.

##### **3. Mark 10:2-9 and Matthew 19:3-8 teach that Jesus rejected the Pharisees' justification of divorce from Deuteronomy 24:1 and reasserted the purpose of God in creation that no human being separate what God has joined together.**

Mark 10:2-9: And some Pharisees came up to Him, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife. 3 And He answered and said to them, 'What did Moses command you?' 4 And they said, 'Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.' 5 But Jesus said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. 6 But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. 7 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, 8 and the two shall become one flesh; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.'

Matthew 19:3-9: And some Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?" 4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 Consequently they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." 7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate and divorce her?" 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another commits adultery."

3.1 In both Matthew and Mark the Pharisees come to Jesus and test him by asking him whether it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife. They evidently have in mind the passage in Deuteronomy 24:1 which simply describes divorce as a fact rather than giving any legislation in favor of it. They wonder how Jesus will take a position with regard to this passage.

3.2 Jesus' answer is, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives" (Mt. 19:8).

3.3 But then Jesus criticizes the Pharisees' failure to recognize in the books of Moses God's deepest and original intention for marriage. So he quotes two passages from Genesis. "God made them male and female. ...For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Genesis 1:27; 2:24).

3.4 From these passages in Genesis Jesus concludes, "So they are no longer two, but one." And then he makes his climactic statement, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

3.5 The implication is that Jesus rejects the Pharisees' use of Deuteronomy 24:1 and raises the standard of marriage for his disciples to God's original intention in creation. He says that none of us should try to undo the "one-flesh" relationship which God has united.

3.6 Before we jump to the conclusion that this absolute statement should be qualified in view of the exception clause ("except for unchastity") mentioned in Matthew 19:9, we should seriously entertain the possibility that the exception clause in Matthew 19:9 should be understood in the light of the absolute statement of Matthew 19:6, ("let no man put asunder") especially since the verses that follow this conversation with the Pharisees in Mark 10 do not contain any exception when they condemn remarriage. More on this below.

4. Matthew 5:32 does not teach that remarriage is lawful in some cases. Rather it reaffirms that marriage after divorce is adultery, even for those who have been divorced innocently, and that a man who divorces his wife is guilty of the adultery of her second marriage unless she had already become an adulteress before the divorce.

Matthew 5:32: But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

4.1 Jesus assumes that in most situations in that culture a wife who has been put away by a husband will be drawn into a second marriage. Nevertheless, in spite of these pressures, he calls this second marriage adultery.

4.2 The remarkable thing about the first half of this verse is that it plainly says that the remarriage of a wife who has been innocently put away is nevertheless adultery: "Everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her (the innocent wife who has not been unchaste) an adulteress." This is a clear statement, it seems to me, that remarriage is wrong not merely when a person is guilty in the process of divorce, but also when a person is innocent. In other words, Jesus' opposition to remarriage seems to be based on the unbreakableness of the marriage bond by anything but death.

4.3 I will save my explanation of the exception clause ("Except on the ground of unchastity") for later in the paper, but for now, it may suffice to say that on the traditional interpretation of the clause, it may simply mean that a man makes his wife

e an adulteress except in the case where she has made herself one.

4.4 I would assume that since an innocent wife who is divorced commits adultery when she remarries, therefore a guilty wife who remarries after divorce is all the more guilty. If one argues that this guilty woman is free to remarry, while the innocent woman who has been put away is not, just because the guilty woman's adultery has broken the "one flesh" relationship, then one is put in the awkward position of saying to an innocent divorced woman, "If you now commit adultery it will be lawful for you to remarry." This seems wrong for at least two reasons.

4.41 It seems to elevate the physical act of sexual intercourse to be the decisive element in marital union and disunion.

4.42 If sexual union with another breaks the marriage bond and legitimizes remarriage, then to say that an innocently divorced wife can't remarry (as Jesus does say) assumes that her divorcing husband is not divorcing to have sexual relations with another. This is a very unlikely assumption. More likely is that Jesus does assume some of these divorcing husbands will have sexual relations with another woman, but still the wives they have divorced may not remarry. Therefore, a adultery does not nullify the "one-flesh" relationship of marriage and both the innocent and guilty spouses are prohibited from remarriage in Matthew 5:32.

5. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 teaches that divorce is wrong but that if it is inevitable the person who divorces should not remarry.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11: To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband 11 (but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband)—and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

5.1 When Paul says that this charge is not his but the Lord's, I think he means that he is aware of a specific saying from the historical Jesus which addressed this issue. As a matter of fact, these verses look very much like Mark 10:11-12, because both the wife and the husband are addressed. Also, remarriage seems to be excluded by verse 11 the same way it is excluded in Mark 10:11-12.

5.2 Paul seems to be aware that separation will be inevitable in certain cases. Perhaps he has in mind a situation of unrepentant adultery, or desertion, or brutality. But in such a case he says that the person who feels constrained to separate should not seek remarriage but remain single. And he reinforces the authority of this statement by saying he has a word from the Lord. Thus Paul's interpretation of Jesus' sayings is that remarriage should not be pursued.

5.3 As in Luke 16:18 and Mark 10:11-12 and Matthew 5:32, this text does not explicitly entertain the possibility of any exceptions to the prohibition of remarriage.

6. 1 Corinthians 7:39 and Romans 7:1-3 teach that remarriage is legitimate only after the death of a spouse.

1 Corinthians 7:39: A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If the husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

Romans 7:1-3, Do you not know, brethren—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only during his life? 2 Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning her husband. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies she is free from that law, if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

6.1 Both of these passages (1 Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:2) say explicitly that a woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. No exceptions are explicitly mentioned that would suggest she could be free from her husband to remarry on any other basis.

7. Matthew 19:10-12 teaches that special Christian grace is given by God to Christ's disciples to sustain them in singleness when they renounce remarriage according to the law of Christ.

Matthew 19:10-12: The disciples said to him, 'If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.' 11 But he said to them, 'Not all men can receive this precept, but only those to whom it is given. 12 For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who

ho have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.

7.1 Just preceding this passage in Matthew 19:9 Jesus prohibited all remarriage after divorce. (I will deal with the meaning of "except for immorality" below.) This seemed like an intolerable prohibition to Jesus' disciples: If you close off every possibility of remarriage, then you make marriage so risky that it would be better not to marry, since you might be "trapped" to live as a single person to the rest of your life or you may be "trapped" in a bad marriage.

7.2 Jesus does not deny the tremendous difficulty of his command. Instead, he says in verse 11, that the enablement to fulfill the command not to remarry is a divine gift to his disciples. Verse 12 is an argument that such a life is indeed possible because there are people who for the sake of the kingdom, as well as lower reasons, have dedicated themselves to live a life of singleness.

7.3 Jesus is not saying that some of his disciples have the ability to obey his command not to remarry and some don't. He is saying that the mark of a disciple is that they receive a gift of continence while non-disciples don't. The evidence for this is 1) the parallel between Matthew 19:11 and 13:11, 2) the parallel between Matthew 19:12 and 13:9,43; 11:15, and 3) the parallel between Matthew 19:11 and 19:26.

8. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 does not legislate grounds for divorce but teaches that the "one-flesh" relationship established by marriage is not obliterated by divorce or even by remarriage.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4: When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house, and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife, and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.

8.1 The remarkable thing about these four verses is that, while divorce is taken for granted, nevertheless the woman who is divorced becomes "defiled" by her remarriage (verse 4). It may well be that when the Pharisees asked Jesus if divorce was legitimate he based his negative answer not only on God's intention expressed in Genesis 1:27 and 2:24, but also on the implication of Deuteronomy 24:4 that remarriage after divorce defiles a person. In other words, there were ample clues in the Mosaic law that the divorce concession was on the basis of the hardness of man's heart and really did not make divorce and remarriage legitimate.

8.2 The prohibition of a wife returning to her first husband even after her second husband dies (because it is an abomination) suggests very strongly that today no second marriage should be broken up in order to restore a first one (for Heth and Wenham's explanation of this see Jesus and Divorce, page 110).

9. 1 Corinthians 7:15 does not mean that when a Christian is deserted by an unbelieving spouse he or she is free to remarry. It means that the Christian is not bound to fight in order to preserve togetherness. Separation is permissible if the unbelieving partner insists on it.

1 Corinthians 7:15: If the unbelieving partner desires to separate, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. For God has called us to peace.

9.1 There are several reasons why the phrase "is not bound" should not be construed to mean "is free to remarry."

9.11 Marriage is an ordinance of creation binding on all of God's human creatures, irrespective of their faith or lack of faith.

9.12 The word used for "bound" (*doulouo*) in verse 15 is not the same word used in verse 39 where Paul says, "A wife is bound (*deo*) to her husband as long as he lives." Paul consistently uses *deo* when speaking of the legal aspect of being bound to one marriage partner (Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39), or to one's betrothed (1 Corinthians 7:27). But when he refers to a deserted spouse not being bound in 1 Corinthians 7:15, he chooses a different word (*doulouo*) which we would expect him to do if he were not giving a deserted spouse the same freedom to remarry that he gives to a spouse whose partner has died (verse 39).

9.13 The last phrase of verse 15 ("God has called us to peace") supports verse 15 best if Paul is saying that a deserted partner is not "bound to make war" on the deserting unbeliever to get him or her to stay. It seems to me that the peace God has called us to is the peace of marital harmony. Therefore, if the unbelieving partner insists on departing, then the believing partner is not bound to live in perpetual conflict with the unbelieving spouse, but is free and innocent in letting him or her go.

9.14 This interpretation also preserves a closer harmony to the intention of verses 10-11, where an inevitable separation does not result in the right of remarriage.

10. 1 Corinthians 7:27-28 does not teach the right of divorced persons to remarry. It teaches that betrothed virgins should seriously consider the life of singleness, but do not sin if they marry.

1 Corinthians 7:27-28: Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek marriage. 28 But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a virgin marries, she does not sin.

10.1 Recently some people have argued that this passage deals with divorced people because in verse 27 Paul asks, "Are you free (literally: loosed) from a wife?" Some have assumed that he means, "Are you divorced?" Thus he would be saying in verse 28 that it is not sin when divorced people remarry. There are several reasons why this interpretation is most unlikely.

10.11 Verse 25 signals that Paul is beginning a new section and dealing with a new issue. He says, "Now concerning the virgins (ton parthenon) I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy." He has already dealt with the problem of divorced people in verses 10-16. Now he takes up a new issue about those who are not yet married, and he signals this by saying, "Now concerning the virgins." Therefore, it is very unlikely that the people referred to in verses 27 and 28 are divorced.

10.12 A flat statement that it is not sin for divorced people to be remarried (verse 28) would contradict verse 11, where he said that a woman who has separated from her husband should remain single.

10.13 Verse 36 is surely describing the same situation in view in verses 27 and 28, but clearly refers to a couple that is not yet married. "If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his virgin, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin." This is the same as verse 28 where Paul says, "But if you marry, you do not sin."

10.14 The reference in verse 27 to being bound to a "wife" may be misleading because it may suggest that the man is already married. But in Greek the word for wife is simply "woman" and may refer to a man's betrothed as well as his spouse. The context dictates that the reference is to a man's betrothed virgin, not to his spouse. So "being bound" and "being loosed" have reference to whether a person is betrothed or not.

10.15 It is significant that the verb Paul uses for "loosed" (luo) or "free" is not a word that he uses for divorce. Paul's words for divorce are chorizo (verses 10,11,15; cf. Matthew 19:6) and aphienai (verses 11,12,13).

11. The exception clause of Matthew 19:9 need not imply that divorce on account of adultery frees a person to be remarried. All the weight of the New Testament evidence given in the preceding ten points is against this view, and there are several ways to make good sense out of this verse so that it does not conflict with the broad teaching of the New Testament that remarriage after divorce is prohibited.

Matthew 19:9: And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.

11.1 Several years ago I taught our congregation in two evening services concerning my understanding of this verse and argued that "except for immorality" did not refer to adultery but to premarital sexual fornication which a man or a woman discovers in the betrothed partner. Since that time I have discovered other people who hold this view and who have given it a much more scholarly exposition than I did. I have also discovered numerous other ways of understanding this verse which also exclude the legitimacy of remarriage. Several of these are summed up in William Heth and Gordon J. Weham, *Jesus and Divorce* (Nelson: 1984).

11.2 Here I will simply give a brief summary of my own view of Matthew 19:9 and how I came to it.

I began, first of all, by being troubled that the absolute form of Jesus' denunciation of divorce and remarriage in Mark 10:11,12 and Luke 16:18 is not preserved by Matthew, if in fact his exception clause is a loophole for divorce and remarriage. I was bothered by the simple assumption that so many writers make that Matthew is simply making explicit something that would have been implicitly understood by the hearers of Jesus or the readers of Mark 10 and Luke 16.

Would they really have assumed that the absolute statements included exceptions? I have very strong doubts, and therefore my inclination is to inquire whether or not in fact Matthew's exception clause conforms to the absoluteness of Mark and Luke.

The second thing that began to disturb me was the question, Why does Matthew use the word *porneia* ("except for immorality") instead of the word *moicheia* which means adultery? Almost all commentators seem to make the simple assumption again that *porneia* means adultery in this context. The question nags at me why Matthew would not use the word for adultery, if that is in fact what he meant.

Then I noticed something very interesting. The only other place besides Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 where Matthew uses the word *porneia* is in 15:19 where it is used alongside of *moicheia*. Therefore, the primary contextual evidence for Matthew's usage is that he conceives of *porneia* as something different than adultery. Could this mean, then, that Matthew conceives of *porneia* in its normal sense of fornication or incest (1 Corinthians 5:1) rather than adultery?

A. Isaksson agrees with this view of *porneia* and sums up his research much like this on pages 134-5 of *Marriage and Ministry*:

Thus we cannot get away from the fact that the distinction between what was to be regarded as *porneia* and what was to be regarded as *moicheia* was very strictly maintained in pre-Christian Jewish literature and in the N.T. *Porneia* may, of course, denote different forms of forbidden sexual relations, but we can find no unequivocal examples of the use of this word to denote a wife's adultery. Under these circumstances we can hardly assume that this word means adultery in the clauses in Matthew. The logia on divorce are worded as a paragraph of the law, intended to be obeyed by the members of the Church. Under these circumstances it is inconceivable that in a text of this nature the writer would not have maintained a clear distinction between what was unchastity and what was adultery: *moicheia* and not *porneia* was used to describe the wife's adultery. From the philological point of view there are accordingly very strong arguments against this interpretation of the clauses as permitting divorce in the case in which the wife was guilty of adultery.

The next clue in my search for an explanation came when I stumbled upon the use of *porneia* in John 8:41 where Jewish leaders indirectly accuse Jesus of being born of *porneia*. In other words, since they don't accept the virgin birth, they assume that Mary had committed fornication and Jesus was the result of this act. On the basis of that clue I went back to study Matthew's record of Jesus' birth in Matthew 1:18-20. This was extremely enlightening.

In these verses Joseph and Mary are referred to as husband (*aner*) and wife (*gunaika*). Yet they are described as only being betrothed to each other. This is probably owing to the fact that the words for husband and wife are simply man and woman and to the fact that betrothal was a much more significant commitment than engagement is today. In verse 19 Joseph resolves "to divorce" Mary. The word for divorce is the same as the word in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. But most important of all, Matthew says that Joseph was "just" in making the decision to divorce Mary, presumably on account of her *porneia*, fornication.

Therefore, as Matthew proceeded to construct the narrative of his gospel, he finds himself in chapter 5 and then later in chapter 19 needing to prohibit all remarriage after divorce (as taught by Jesus) and yet to allow for "divorces" like the one Joseph contemplated toward his betrothed whom he thought guilty of fornication (*porneia*). Therefore, Matthew includes the exception clause in particular to exonerate Joseph, but also in general to show that the kind of "divorce" that one might pursue during a betrothal on account of fornication is not included in Jesus' absolute prohibition.

A common objection to this interpretation is that both in Matthew 19:3-8 and in Matthew 5:31-32 the issue Jesus is responding to is marriage not betrothal. The point is pressed that "except for fornication" is irrelevant to the context of marriage.

My answer is that this irrelevancy is just the point Matthew wants to make. We may take it for granted that the breakup of an engaged couple over fornication is not an evil "divorce" and does not prohibit remarriage. But we cannot assume th



at Matthew's readers would take this for granted.

Even in Matthew 5:32, where it seems pointless for us to exclude "the case of fornication" (since we can't see how a betrothed virgin could be "made an adulteress" in any case), it may not be pointless for Matthew's readers. For that matter, it may not be pointless for any readers: if Jesus had said, "Every man who divorces his woman makes her an adulteress," a reader could legitimately ask: "Then was Joseph about to make Mary an adulteress?" We may say this question is not reasonable since we think you can't make unmarried women adulteresses. But it certainly is not meaningless or, perhaps for some readers, pointless, for Matthew to make explicit the obvious exclusion of the case of fornication during betrothal.

This interpretation of the exception clause has several advantages:

It does not force Matthew to contradict the plain, absolute meaning of Mark and Luke and the whole range of New Testament teaching set forth above in sections 1-10, including Matthew's own absolute teaching in 19:3-8  
It provides an explanation for why the word *porneia* is used in Matthew's exception clause instead of *moicheia*  
It squares with Matthew's own use of *porneia* for fornication in Matthew 15:19  
It fits the demands of Matthew's wider context concerning Joseph's contemplated divorce.  
Since I first wrote this exposition of Matthew 19:9 I have discovered a chapter on this view in Heth and Wenham, *Jesus and Divorce* and a scholarly defense of it by A. Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple* (1965).

#### Conclusions and Applications

In the New Testament the question about remarriage after divorce is not determined by:

The guilt or innocence of either spouse,  
Nor by whether either spouse is a believer or not,  
Nor by whether the divorce happened before or after either spouse's conversion,  
Nor by the ease or difficulty of living as a single parent for the rest of life on earth,  
Nor by whether there is adultery or desertion involved,  
Nor by the on-going reality of the hardness of the human heart,  
Nor by the cultural permissiveness of the surrounding society.  
Rather it is determined by the fact that:

Marriage is a "one-flesh" relationship of divine establishment and extraordinary significance in the eyes of God (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:8),  
Only God, not man, can end this one-flesh relationship (Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9—this is why remarriage is called adultery by Jesus: he assumes that the first marriage is still binding, Matthew 5:32; Luke 16:18; Mark 10:11),  
God ends the one-flesh relationship of marriage only through the death of one of the spouses (Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39),  
The grace and power of God are promised and sufficient to enable a trusting, divorced Christian to be single all this earthly life if necessary (Matthew 19:10-12,26; 1 Corinthians 10:13),  
Temporal frustrations and disadvantages are much to be preferred over the disobedience of remarriage, and will yield deep and lasting joy both in this life and the life to come (Matthew 5:29-30).  
Those who are already remarried:

Should acknowledge that the choice to remarry and the act of entering a second marriage was sin, and confess it as such and seek forgiveness

Should not attempt to return to the first partner after entering a second union (see 8.2 above)

Should not separate and live as single people thinking that this would result in less sin because all their sexual relations are acts of adultery. The Bible does not give prescriptions for this particular case, but it does treat second marriages as having significant standing in God's eyes. That is, there were promises made and there has been a union formed. It should not have been formed, but it was. It is not to be taken lightly. Promises are to be kept, and the union is to be sanctified to God. While not the ideal state, staying in a second marriage is God's will for a couple and their ongoing relations should not be looked on as adulterous.

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