



Scriptures and Doctrine :: Divorce and Remarriage

Divorce and Remarriage - posted by narrowpath, on: 2015/10/29 15:22

It is very common nowadays that we have couples in our fellowships that have been divorced for various reasons and then join a new fellowship. I know this is a very contentious issue but we need to face it.

Marriage is an institution designed by God to with the intention bless us with stable and loving families for raising a godly offspring. He hates divorce but there are circumstances where separation poses the lesser evil. In former days divorce was very uncommon and people stuck it out together in an unhappy marriage if not for love sake then at least for the sake of the children, relatives and economic reasons.

Satan has worked very hard to break down society, family and marriage. Now we even go so far as to re-define it. We exchange vows before God that we will not part until death parts us. Even in evangelical circles many assume that divorce and remarriage is a right they can exercise at will.

A lady just called me who came to faith while married to a husband who is an alcoholic, abusive, violent and unfaithful. She filed for divorce and stayed unmarried for a long while. Now she wants to marry a believer who is divorced, too. She asked me if it is legitimate to re-marry. Her pastor states he would not conduct such a wedding ceremony but would welcome them into the fellowship as a couple. This is probably the same stand I would take.

I cannot see any clear indication in the bible that allows for remarriage while the divorced spouse is still alive. The only verse that touches on the issue is

1 Cor 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.

I see that this verse states that the bond of marriage is no longer in place when the unbeliever departs, but how about remarriage? I cannot see that this verse condones remarriage to a believer in such cases; otherwise the bible would have said so.

The question that arises from here is:

How should we treat remarried couples in our fellowships?
Should we conduct re-marriages with the blessing of the church?

And how about 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1:6
Should re-married men be exempt from offices like eldership or deaconate?

I know this is a very loaded subject and some of you may be personally affected by it. How do we speak the in truth and love when it comes to divorce and remarriage? Speaking the truth in love Ephesians 4:15 and love your brother in the truth 3 John 1:1.

May I kindly ask you to back up your opinions by scripture.

Re: Divorce and Remarriage - posted by TMK (), on: 2015/10/29 15:26

A couple of preliminary questions:

- 1). Do you think remarriage is improper even if the divorce is legitimate
- 2) the verse you quoted talks about the abandoned spouse not being under bondage; what do you think the bondage is that is being referenced?

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2015/10/29 16:21

1) This is answered in Mark 10:11-12

Mark 10:11 So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.
Mark 10:12 And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

2) I see the bond of marriage is no longer binding when the unbeliever departs, but nothing explicitly allows remarriage otherwise it would say so.

On the contrary, the bible warns:

Luke 16:18 "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery."

The only situation where we can safely assume that the bible condones remarriage is after a spouse died.

Romans 7:3 So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

See also 1 Timothy 5:14

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2015/10/29 16:21

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Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2015/10/29 16:46

I wish I could use italics on the word "tend". :)

I tend to agree with how narrowpath reads the scriptures here. But, I have one difference of view regarding Romans 7. There, Paul was not teaching a point on marriage; he used the Law of Moses about marriage as an example of the applicability of the Law to believers. (Carefully, I avoid the whole antinomian debate.....). He spoke there to those who knew the law, presumably Roman Jews who had come to Christ, and said that when Jesus died bodily it effected their death to the law (no longer married to it) so that they were free to belong to (i.e., married to) another (Jesus) who was raised from the dead. He used the powerful image of marriage and the effect of a spouse's death on the freedom of a widow to marry. What I don't THINK we can safely do is stretch the application of that very narrow point to use it as a prohibition against remarriage in the face of a legitimate, biblically allowed divorce.

People do stretch Romans 7:1 like that all the time but I cannot follow them there. If Paul intended to address that issue, it would have detracted from his argument. Several other reasons within the structure of Romans to support this but I will let it rest lest I, too, become a castaway and hijack the thread. :)

You can reasonably conclude that the Lord prohibits remarriage and to an equally strong point see that He does not forbid it in cases of adultery-based divorces --- all without appeal to Romans 7.

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Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2015/10/29 19:49

That was my point- Jesus seems to allow divorce in the case of adultery. The one "adulterated" against is free to divorce and remarry.

Re: Divorce and Remarriage:::::(hummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm - posted by dohzman (), on: 2015/10/29 23:04

I do not like to open these types of Pandora s boxes, personally ..only thing I would say is that when you read something like ICor 7: 15 you need to read the whole context and not just site a text out of the context because it is just that.....out o f context, for instance vs 15 can not be understood with out the rest of the chapter including verses 27 and 28 and the co ncluding verses..I believe I Tim 3 addresses qualifications for the office or administration of the ministry as does Titus 1: 6 an argument can be made here but I would think that perhaps there could be some variables involved.

For instance: what do you do with a man or woman who was divorced, than came to Christ than got married? I can site s everal different circumstances but it may take away from your opening page so I'll be quiet:)

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2015/10/30 3:46

Divorce is not permitted in New Covenant under any condition. Jesus answered it plainly saying that due to the hardnes s of heart God through Moses permitted Divorce in Old Covenant(Matthew 19:8). But under new covenant we have hear t of flesh. Hence we can forgive our spouse and live peacefully with them. So Divorce is not for new covenant believers. Now this will kindle questions like what about women in abusive relationship? In India here, many women come to Jesus from Hindu background, their husbands will mistreat them for their faith. We advice these women to be faithful to Lord in things concerning the Lord and to be faithful to Husband in things concerning submission to husband. Now if the torture i n unbearable then the women can separate for a while. But divorce is not advised.

What about people who got divorce before coming to the Lord? The answer is Lord overlooks the time of ignorance and forgives them. Now it better for them to live as single and not marry again. But if the urge for physical relationship is unc ontrollable then it is better to remarry a believer than to die in Lust. Though there is no Biblical answer to this one, we kn ow by discernment that this is better solution than to struggle with lust all through life.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2015/10/30 7:57

Sree-

Not sure how you can say that when Jesus himself permitted divorce in the case of marital unfaithfulness.

Of course divorce is never preferred and spouses can forgive etc but if Jesus named an exception to the general prohibit ion not sure why you say it is never permitted.

Re: Divorce and Remarriage - posted by Lysa (), on: 2015/10/30 8:16

Quote:
-----narrowpath wrote:
It is very common nowadays that we have couples in our fellowships that have been divorced for various reasons and then join a new fellowship. I kno w this is a very contentious issue but we need to face it.

What is there to face? You love them. They come to you broken, do you want to break them down further? Or maybe have sections in the church for them? Those who are divorced sit over there, those who are remarried get the very back row!? Maybe the man who has been married only once (but hits his wife), gets to sit on the front row!! Yeah! (I know sa rcasm)

(edit) You bring up this topic but(/edit) What is it exactly that you purpose to tell remarried people in your church to do?

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2015/10/30 9:57

Even if we're granted a divorce from a Judge, are we really divorced? Can a Judge separate you, God said let no man separate.

"What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."Mark 10:9

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2015/10/30 10:55

Bill- doesn't Jesus allow for a divorce in adultery situations?

Am I missing something?

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2015/10/30 12:14

What's the objective for raising this topic - to ensure outward purity - or to see a move towards integrity, spiritual maturity, the fruits of the Spirit? Can God not work through whatever situation a person/couple is in, as broken as it may be, whatever choices were made? And are not the "prostitutes and tax-collector" types among those most repentant and submissive to Christ? - including the ones with the big red "D" hanging from their necks?

What about those who are married legitimately - but who are not truly committed to the relationship regarding money management, availability, care of children, emotional loyalty, and so forth That's the kind of stuff that's ripping our society apart - but it's the kind of stuff that is perpetually overlooked! And the next generation takes that with them.

The family breakdown is a crisis of our culture. The question should be this: How can we, as ministers of reconciliation, draw on Christ to encourage and facilitate well-being in marriages - however they are configured now?

We might start with hospitality - inviting those with second marriages to our home and getting to know them - seeing their lives through their eyes - not just through our judgments!

Diane

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2015/10/30 12:20

Todd, not all marriages are joined together by God, hope this helps. The ones that are "really" joined together by God are probably still joined together. I had a marriage joined together by God, and I we stayed together for 38 years, until she passed. I really think this is deeper, because God said himself, if your marriage is truly joined together by him, let no man separate, this leads me to believe you will never divorce. Just because one says we had a marriage joined together by God, was it really?

God declares the man and woman to be permanently united together as "one flesh." This is a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual oneness. Paul further explained that the death of one partner is the only thing that dissolves the permanent, "one flesh" relationship of marriage in God's sight: "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; ... So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Romans 7:2,3; cf. I Corinthians 7:39).

Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2015/10/30 14:03

Prevention and proactive fellowship are where the church has to stand up, IMO. We're reduced to either just swinging the door open for any and every proffered reason for divorce and remarriage (which is not biblical), or we ignore it (which may in fact be better than the first one in some logical sense, but is still not biblical and does nothing about the problem), or we can knit ourselves tightly together so we equip ourselves for marriage-for-life and for holding ourselves accountable to each other (I'm thinking Matthew 18) when we refuse the biblical counsel of multiple elders.

That does not cure the problems we now have, but it would go a long way toward lessening the number of situations that arise because the church fails families and families fail themselves.

I don't know that a body of believers would have the authority to discipline someone who comes to Christ and to them in a remarried state even if the divorce was not biblically grounded. I have an exegetically tough time finding where someone in such a remarriage but repents of his past sins and yields to the Lordship of Jesus in commitment to Him is not accepted by the Lord at that moment, and if Jesus accepts Him then how can we not?

I know that does not cover nearly all of the situations people arrive to us from on this, and I don't have all the answers. Great discernment (and I don't mean the kind of discernment that is just the patient doing of nothing until doing something is just too inconvenient) is needed in each assembly and for each situation. If we who helped create this mess have no better options than a wink and a "sure come on in" or a frown and a "you can't be with us", then we maybe ought to seek God and see if there is any repentance left for us.

Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2015/10/30 14:39

Quote:
-----roadsign wrote
We might start with hospitality - inviting those with second marriages to our home and getting to know them - seeing their lives through their eyes - not just through our judgments

That would be interesting statistics, to see those who judge divorced/remarried people harshly if they would actually invite them to their home to get to know those poor wicked sinners, without any hidden agenda.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2015/10/30 15:25

Sister Diane,

I find allot of heavenly wisdom in your words:)

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2015/10/30 16:30

Quote:
-----Diane....We might start with hospitality - inviting those with second marriages to our home and getting to know them - seeing their lives through their eyes - not just through our judgments

That's easy for me, I think all my friends are on their 2nd-3rd and my sister is on her 4th.

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2015/10/30 17:09

Well expressed, MrBillPro,

Granted, Paul does not primarily talk about marriage here but about the new life. Nevertheless, he makes a strong point from a view universally accepted by the Jews and Christians in his day and age to illustrate his point about freedom from the law of sin and death. We can therefore conclude that this was the accepted view of marriage among first century Christians.

My point is not to condemn divorced and remarried people, but to tell them the truth in love. Yesterday I talked to that sister on the phone for almost an hour.

If we advise people, if your marriage does not "work out" or "breaks down" just get divorced and marry someone else and join a different fellowship, we may be sympathizing with them but one day they have to face the very words from Jesus who loves us more than anyone.

A broken marriage is very painful and we do not need to add more pain to that. I would welcome them into the fellowship without reserve just like anyone else, but when they start advising others to divorce and remarry, I will remind them what Jesus said.

Actually we had just a believing re-married couple join our house fellowship. They are true believers with a strong testimony.

In bygone centuries divorce was not an option. How come that it has now become an option? Were our ancestors wrong?

When we exchange marriage vows it is a commitment to each other, to family, to future children, to society and most of all, before God.

Condemning then is not in the spirit of love, condoning it is not in the spirit of truth.

100 years ago you would not find a single pastor who would conduct a wedding for divorcees. Were they all wrong and judgmental those days? Were they not rather conscience-bound?

Well we live in the 21st century where many of these formerly commonly accepted morals have been cast overboard. We need to face the fact that an ever increasing number of people are divorced and remarried or come from broken families and will be prone to end up with a broken marriage themselves - if the Lord does not heal from the inside out.

When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? cried David in Psalm 13.

We are so used to the destruction caused by broken families.

With all the 21st century luxuries, I think it is more than offset by our moral poverty. Why do we have capitulate in fatalistic resignation?

We need to teach that marriage is not just a man and a woman in love but a sacred union sanctified by God. My son got married in China last month. He does not (yet) walk with the Lord and neither does his wife. I told him solemnly that they only have one go at marriage and that divorce and re-marriage is not a "fall back" option in case it does not work out.

At the wedding ceremony my wife and I recited 1.Cor 13. Our son told us that many of the guests had tears in their eyes.

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Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2015/10/30 19:16

An emphasis on this noble standard in itself can become a burden. It can create serious problems in Christian marriages - esp if a partner perceives the marriage to miss this lofty mark. That person may become distressed and ashamed over it. The result can be guilt, pride, controlling behaviors, anger, blame, giving up.... The partner may not care, may hide in work, hobby, an affair, etc.

Many Christians know far more about high standards than about nurturing spiritual/emotional/mental growth and healing in relationships.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2015/10/30 23:57

Quote:

Not sure how you can say that when Jesus himself permitted divorce in the case of marital unfaithfulness.

Jesus never permitted divorce. In Matthew 19 Jesus clearly answers that divorce is not God's purpose. But when the Jews asked him, why Moses then permitted divorce, he answered them saying because of hardness of heart. But even with hard heart Moses permitted divorce only in case of adultery. So Jesus here was answering why Moses permitted divorce and under what condition it was permitted by Moses. The Jews understood what Jesus meant clearly and that is why they asked Jesus why Moses permitted divorce while you do not. It is sad that even so called born again Christians cannot understand what Jesus meant in Matthew 19 as those unconverted Jews. That is why even today some Christians say that Jesus permitted divorce. It is a shame.

Re: Sree - posted by proudpapa, on: 2015/10/31 0:58

RE: ///Jesus never permitted divorce. In Matthew 19 Jesus clearly answers that divorce is not God's purpose. But when the Jews asked him, why Moses then permitted divorce, he answered them saying because of hardness of heart. But even with hard heart Moses permitted divorce only in case of adultery.///

I do not think that a Bill of divorce was needed in the case of adultery in the day of Moses

'And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.'

The Jews in Matthew 19 was referring to Duet 24 :

1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.

3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;

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

add: The reason : The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

Was because of what Jesus had previously said back in Matthew 5:31 and 32, It seemed to them to contradict Duet 24.

They did the same thing as we do to day they justified themselves and condemned others with the Law. So Jesus expounded the Law to them.

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2015/10/31 13:07

Many Christians know far more about high standards than about nurturing spiritual/emotional/mental growth and healing in relationships.

That is so true, Husbands Love you wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.....

I knew this would be a Pandora s box but I believe that when we get to Heaven we will be surprised by who we see is there and who is not there. The thing is most of these arguments only happen in the good Ole' USA or places where there is a relative degree of peace, that is about to change in this Country for the Christian Church.

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2015/10/31 14:06

Sree, You can say you do not agree with someone over an issue, but why would you go so far as to doubt their conversion over such an issue?

Today we had breakfast with a group of 6 men and 1 of them was divorced the other remarried. Both regretted their divorce and wished I could have worked out.

Though I hold the conservative view that remarriage is nowhere found in the bible, I do accept the brothers and encouraged them to live their life as it is. I did not tell the re-married brother that he should divorce his second wife and I will not do it in future. I would probably not attend a remarriage wedding. If anyone asks me, as the sister yesterday if remarriage is legitimate, I will tell them that I do not find it in the bible. If they go ahead and do it regardless, I would accept them - in most cases. If they were formerly married as Christians and rejected reconciliation or got divorced and remarried out of an adulterous relationship that would be quite another story, but each case is different.

Therefore I would advise a couple to avoid divorce at all cost, unless the unbelieving spouse wants to depart or when adultery is involved. Even then, I do believe it is better for the believing spouse to remain unmarried or get reconciled.

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

When husband and wife are both believers I believe Jesus can heal every single marriage if both are only willing to engage in the process of reconciliation.

In everything speak the truth in love but do not compromise one for the other.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2015/11/2 4:28

Quote:

Was because of what Jesus had previously said back in Matthew 5:31 and 32, It seemed to them to contradict Duet 24.

Deuteronomy 24 is the only place where Divorce laws are very clear and a bill of divorce is needed. So the Jews obviously referred to Deuteronomy 24. Matthew 5:31 and 32 has nothing contradicting to Deuteronomy 24. Here Jesus only said the vice-versa statement of Deut 24, which is a man divorcing a woman without any case of adultery. So I don't know how the Jews found them contradicting.

Irrespective of what the Jews asked, the answer given by Jesus is very clear in Matthew 19, he clearly did not permit divorce. That is why they asked him second time, then why did Moses permit. Which Jesus replied promptly as due to hardness of heart.

Quote:

They did the same thing as we do to day they justified themselves and condemned others with the Law. So Jesus expounded the Law to them.

There are two things, one is holding the Law as it is, 2nd is condemning others. I never condemned anyone, I never asked anyone to give up their second marriage. In fact I said it is better for someone to remarry than to burn in lust.

Now in the pursuit of showing mercy we many times lower the standard of law. This is wrong. What the scripture says is correct and should not be twisted for the sake of showing mercy or personal gain. If you take John 8, Jesus showed mercy to the women caught in adultery, but he also upheld the law and asked the man without sin to throw the first stone. He never said let us twist the law.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2015/11/2 4:33

Quote:

Sree, You can say you do not agree with someone over an issue, but why would you go so far as to doubt their conversion over such an issue?

I never doubt anyone's conversion nor do I believe everyone who considers himself born again are truly born again. It surprises me how the Jews understood the words of Jesus better than those who claim to be born of the Spirit, because the main function of Spirit is to explain the teachings of Jesus to us.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2015/11/2 9:44

Sree-

Jesus is making an affirmative statement in Mt. 19:8. There is separation in thought between v 8 and vs 9.

In vs 8 he explains why Moses did what he did. In v 9 Jesus plainly says that marital infidelity makes divorce permissible.

Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2015/11/2 10:31

RE:///Deuteronomy 24 is the only place where Divorce laws are very clear and a bill of divorce is needed. So the Jews obviously referred to Deuteronomy 24.///

agree

RE: /// Matthew 5:31 and 32 has nothing contradicting to Deuteronomy 24. Here Jesus only said the vice-versa statement of Deut 24, which is a man divorcing a woman without any case of adultery. So I don't know how the Jews found them contradicting.///

I disagree

as I said a bill of divorce was not needed under Moses for adultery : it was a death sentence.

Deut 24. is not talking about adultery.

Wesley's Notes for Deuteronomy 24:1

24:1 Some uncleanness - Some hateful thing, some distemper of body or quality of mind not observed before marriage: or some light carriage, as this phrase commonly signifies, but not amounting to adultery. Let him write - This is not a command as some of the Jews understood it, nor an allowance and approbation, but merely a permission of that practice for prevention of greater mischiefs, and this only until the time of reformation, till the coming of the Messiah when things were to return to their first institution and purest condition.

RE: ///Irrespective of what the Jews asked, the answer given by Jesus is very clear in Matthew 19, he clearly did not permit divorce. That is why they asked him second time, then why did Moses permit. Which Jesus replied promptly as due to hardness of heart.///

To divorce a spouse whom has committed adultery is not an act of a hard heart. Read Deut 24 a little closer.