

Have you not Read?

A BIBLICAL STUDY OF A BURIED TRUTH
ABOUT CREATIONAL MARRIAGE AND THE
BEAUTIFUL PICTURE OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH



Casey Whitaker

Have you not Read?

A BIBLICAL STUDY OF A BURIED TRUTH
ABOUT CREATIONAL MARRIAGE AND THE
BEAUTIFUL PICTURE OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

© Faith View Books, August 2009

All rights reserved No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers

ISBN 13: 978-0-9797004-1-5

ISBN 10: 0-9797004-1-8

For additional copies contact:

Faith View Books

4941 TR 616

Fredericksburg OH 44627

Phone: 330.674.0684



Carlisle Printing

OF WALNUT CREEK LTD.

2673 Township Road 421
Sugarcreek, Ohio 44681
phone: 330.852.9922



Table of Contents

Preface..	v
Acknowledgments..	vii
Introduction ..	ix
Chapter 1	Why Focus on One Topic? ..1
Chapter 2	The Warning5
Chapter 3	God Speaks in the Old Testament7
Chapter 4	God Speaks in the New Testament 13
Chapter 5	Ideals?.. 27
Chapter 6	Early Christian Leaders Speak 33
Chapter 7	When Did the Teaching Start to Go Wrong? .. 43
Chapter 8	Common Questions 47
Chapter 9	Paul’s Statements in 1 Corinthians 7 on Marriage 77
Chapter 10	Why is God Serious About Marriage? .. . 85
Chapter 11	Where is the Compassion? 91
Chapter 12	Confused Times in the Church 99
Chapter 13	Isn’t Discipline Unloving? 103
Chapter 14	Salvation by Works?.. 115
Chapter 15	Law and Grace 123
Chapter 16	Is Following and Teaching Legalism?.. . 137
Chapter 17	But I Am Already Saved. 139
Chapter 18	Is It a New Testament Church? 145
Chapter 19	Some Personal Situations 147
Chapter 20	Teaching the Next Generation? 153
Chapter 21	What Do I Do? 161
Chapter 22	The Cost of Discipleship 169
Chapter 23	The Rewards of Discipleship 171
Conclusion .	175
Resources ..	178
Testimonies About Restored Marriages ..	181
Endorsements ..	195
About the Author.	203



Preface

Fifty years ago there would have been no necessity to write this book. The majority of Christians would have been livid if someone would have said marriage isn't permanent. Unfortunately, the past half-century has brought unprecedented upheaval to American society and the American church. Beliefs that were once considered bedrock are now treated as heresy.

Marriage was once considered the foundation upon which a stable family rested. That is no longer the case. Most of the modern church has become sadly silent on the issue of divorce and remarriage. Biblical precepts are ignored in favor of cheap grace. Families are destroyed and children carry the scars of divorce into adulthood.

In the name of understanding and tolerance, modern churches accept remarried ministers, elders, and deacons. The organization that once prided itself on being salt and light now has a higher statistical divorce rate than the unbelieving world it seeks to influence. Who now will speak of the lifelong covenant of marriage? The remarried minister? The remarried elder? Havoc now reigns and there seems to be no remedy.

The church is now at war with itself. We have leaders across this country that know young people need to hear this Biblical truth, yet they acknowledge that teaching these Scriptures will destroy the professing church. Reading Scripture about this issue is now considered to be satanic in some religious circles. In truth, there are now some verses that cannot and will not be read by ministers or teachers in most churches. Some partially brave ministers will say only God can end a one-flesh covenant and say it is a sin to be remarried, but then turn around and say that those who are remarried should stay in that "current marriage." This confuses many people.

These unfortunate facts have led to the creation of this book. It is the result of over two agonizing years of personal stress and intensive research by a man of God who has finally discovered the true cost of discipleship.

The subject of divorce and remarriage is the elephant in the living room that everyone wants to ignore. In one way or another, every family in America is now affected by the lies of Satan. All of us have family or friends in remarriage situations. Some approve it; most ignore it. A brave few try to address it biblically. For their efforts they are called Pharisees, self-righteous, and judgmental. And these words come from “Christian” people.

Yes, there is a cost for following Jesus. Love and grace seem to abound for everyone except those who believe the Bible means what it says. Perhaps at this point a warning should be issued. This book is dangerous because the bulk of this book is God’s Word, which is not very popular in this culture. If you read it, your life will be affected. You may be affirmed in your belief. You may be angered. But you will never be able to be unaffected by its content. The choice is yours.

Michael Jacks



Acknowledgments

I give all thanks to the Godhead who created me for giving me His wonderful inspired words through the prophets and the apostles. They are not burdensome but life-giving and sustaining. Jesus Christ can change hearts and outcomes for everyone who truly submits to His Lordship. I dedicate this small piece of material to Him.

This book is also dedicated to all the children who still hurt from their own parents' divorces and to the next generation who will know more about the truth and have a healthy respect for God's Word for generations to come, if the Lord wills.

My family and church family, I love you and feel wonderfully blessed to have you all. I thank you all for not allowing emotion to rule over God's Word. You began to do intensive biblical research on your own without immediately believing or questioning everything I was saying just because I am your husband, friend, son, grandson, brother, and brother-in-law

My extended family has encouraged me beyond words and includes my closest brothers and sisters in Christ, many of whom have gone through their own personal struggles because of their stand on these Scriptures. I thank God that you realized the responsibility I have as a teacher and have not forgotten to keep praying for me and encouraging me to write this book.

To the adults throughout this country who have been through divorce, and the children of divorce that believe marriage is until death, your encouragement to print this book has spoken volumes to me. I know many of you are tired and weary of reading "other books" that promote "remarriage." I hope this affirms what you already believe. I love you all deeply!

Casey Whitaker



Introduction

“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10).

Over the last several years, I have carried an immense burden that I cannot ignore any longer. I have struggled with the entire divorce and remarriage issue throughout my ministry, and have seen the pain divorce causes for all parties involved. I have counseled people who were still hurt over their parents’ divorce, even after twenty, thirty, and forty years.

As I studied God’s Word, I read some very plain marriage Scriptures which many Christians were ignoring. **1 Corinthians 6** and **Galatians 5**, especially caused conviction in me.

For years, my stance on this issue was that adultery was grounds for divorce and remarriage. Many Christians share this view. Somehow, even the acceptance of adultery as grounds for divorce did not sit well with my spirit, and I had never felt any peace about this subject. As my leaders and I were reviewing our marriage policy, I believe the Holy Spirit led me to some very important “contextual information.” While studying about this one night, I was researching the Jewish betrothal period, when I suddenly realized the reason why only the book of Matthew has the one verse in the New Testament that gives a possibility for remarriage after a divorce if a spouse is still living: Matthew was writing with a Jewish mindset, for people who understood the betrothal laws of marriage (more about this later).

In my research, I discovered that the men who canonized (determined which books were to be used to make up the New Testament) the New Testament agreed that remarriage while a spouse was living was adulterous. I also studied about a man in the 1500s named Erasmus, who is considered “the prince of humanism” and who is largely responsible for the watering down of **Matthew 19:9** and **1 Corinthians 7:15**. When I discovered this in September 2005, as the Word says, “The truth set me free.” All the marriage Scriptures finally fit together like a puzzle. It was clear: MARRIAGE = A COVENANT BETWEEN ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN, UNTIL DEATH.

I felt relief and joy, but was also burdened and convicted because of how this would affect so many people. I did not tell anyone, not even my wife, about this new revelation to me until I did more research. I began a very intense study. With much encouragement from very close family members and dear friends throughout this country, I have finally put a lot of my thoughts down on paper.

I am more comfortable speaking and illustrating than writing about this whole study of marriage. I have tried to protect many people and their conversations that they have shared with me conversations that have played a huge role in my understanding of this topic. I have chosen to leave out many professional situations by name and also many of the discussions I have had with people.

I counseled people who came to me with marriage problems and those who asked me to remarry them. Some needed help for their children’s marriages. Remarried people sometimes shared that they have been convicted for years when I confronted them about this topic or when they opened up to me. The honest convictions that people shared with me in private have helped me to see the marriage Scriptures pop off the page. Once again, I will protect their confidences by not using anyone’s name, but I will not hide some general quotes I have heard from people that give validity to this topic.

I never wanted to cause any division. One night when I was studying I kept thinking to myself, I am going to be called a

troublemaker, division-maker, and a rebel. No one wants to be defined by these terms, especially when they are the farthest things from the truth. I proceeded to glance over a few verses that gave me tremendous peace, as I knew the storm was coming.

“Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, “Is that you, O troubler of Israel?” And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals” (1 Kings 18:17-18).

Who has abandoned the commandments of the Lord on marriage, divorce, and other simple doctrines in the New Testament church? We, as Christians, should want to teach and apply these commandments because we have been commissioned to do so. We have to ask ourselves, “Who is causing the trouble in many of our churches?” Aren’t the true troublemakers the ones that have abandoned the Scriptures and not the ones that are trying to apply the commandments of Christ?

Jesus does not want division, but He knows His Word will cause it. We are not to ignore His Word despite the possibility of loss of family relationships, loss of friends, loss of popularity, loss of comfort, and loss of career. Here are some powerful words from Jesus:

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matthew 10:34-39).

In Jude, I think we had better take notice: *“But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.*

These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit”
(Jude 17-19).

Who is teaching people to follow their ungodly passions? Many do not think they are teaching them. But the validation of “practicing sin” in most of our churches leads people to feel free to follow their ungodly passions. Are we being like the people in Isaiah’s day?

“And to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits” **(Isaiah 30:10).**

God’s word is being covered in dust again. The same is happening today, just as in Josiah’s time:

“Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, “Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us” **(2 Kings 22:11-13).**

Once again, we might not think we are doing this, but when there is no application of the Scriptures, such as implementing church discipline when visible sin happens, all we are doing is just saying words with our lips. It would be like me telling my daughter that she is not allowed to hit another child. But when she continues to hit another child right in front of my eyes and I just ignore it, my word to her will mean nothing and I would be a reckless parent. Accountability is critical. Many churches get irritated with school systems, the criminal system, etc. because of the lack of accountability. Meanwhile, numerous churches throughout this country are doing the same thing in the name of “love” for the sake of attendance and to keep the church “going.” I hope all of us will dust off the Bible in humility and repent for being disobedient people and leaders.

I am not the only minister who believes this way about marriage. Many throughout this country believe the same.

Some speak boldly about this, but some do not let anybody know about their stance because it might hurt their “legacy”, or they are concerned about the cost they might have to pay. Others just have not gone deep into the earliest teachings on this subject and might not know. I have not discovered anything new. I am not loyal to any so-called “restoration movement” or “denomination” but I try to be loyal to and attempt to pursue New Testament doctrine and not “traditions” or “commandments of men.” I still believe in baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and the “priesthood of all believers.” I did not go to just one minister or one professor to form my marriage beliefs. The man I consulted first and foremost was Jesus. I finally saw His words in the Bible very clearly. When reading the New Testament in its entirety about this subject, the Scriptures are plain and clear.

What happens for some people is that we immediately realize we are related to someone, or are friends with someone, in a divorce/remarriage situation and we find ourselves compromising the truth. Or we think, “How could I survive without being married—financially and sexually?” We fear tremendous loneliness. Then the clear instruction becomes muddy.

The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden illustrates how the clear instruction of God became muddied when they focused on their own desires. They thought they could choose not to obey God without any consequences. We are still paying the cost. Remember how Satan said to Eve in **Genesis 3:1**, “Did God really say not to eat of the Tree?” He made Eve question the pure Word of God and she bit into it. We need to be careful that we don’t question Scripture without studying deeply and praying for His will to be done. We dare not allow emotions to rule over the authority of God’s Word.

My earthly father’s influence has had a profound impact on my entire life. There was a specific moment in time when I knew that my father was willing to obey God rather than twist the Word to make him feel better. He told me a lot of good stories about his grandfather, whom he adored. One day he told me that his grandfather was a “good” man by earthly stan-

dards, but never was obedient to many of Jesus' commandments, including the ones regarding marriage. Dad looked at me and said, "I am not Jesus, but I don't think my grandfather is in heaven." Dad could have said that Grandpa was in heaven, but he knew he did not want his boys living that lifestyle and thinking that there would be no consequences to sin. Dad knew that it is *we who are to conform our lives to God's way and not God conforming to our ways*, even if our family members are involved.

I am also very burdened at the thought that another generation will go almost blindfolded into their future regarding marriage and divorce because the established church knows they can't even read or apply these Scriptures because of the upheaval it would cause. *Please pay more attention to the words of Jesus and Paul and the earliest records of the men who helped canonize our Bible than my commentary and thoughts.* Also, be very careful of some leaders, whether it be in churches or Christian schools; many will look through the lens of their personal or family situations and rationalize the Word of God.

Over the course of my "professional" ministry in churches, this subject of divorce, remarriage, and adultery would come up behind closed doors. Many of the leaders ignored it and did not want to practice church discipline because the churches had not taught it or applied it as a whole. Most congregations, as we know them, are not set up to administer discipline without showing partiality.

Although many people do not believe I care about them, and even choose to dislike me, I cannot keep this in my system any longer. Because I love and care for God and His people so deeply, I cannot ignore what Jesus plainly said and what the early church taught and practiced for 1500 years after Christ. The majority of Christian churches in the first half of the 20th century knew this "old teaching" (not "new teaching") but rarely applied it. I am not ashamed of the Word of God. I am glad to know this teaching. I just wish it were 1950 instead of the 21st century, because the teaching on marriage that was so plain then sounds like "heresy" today.

In our study we dug deeply into God’s Word, seeking the truth and only the truth, because we knew it would cause great distress to many people—people whom we dearly love. However, we felt like we had to warn them of the watered down teaching and lack of teaching on this subject. My wife and I knew that standing up for the marriage Scriptures would have a profound effect on many people, such as our family (yes, we have family members involved in remarriage), church, community, and possibly all over the world. We knew there would be a tremendous cost. We also knew some of the people who were our greatest encouragers were in a “remarried state” and we felt that we needed to make them aware of their need for repentance before the Lord. We also felt the need to tell young married couples in order to strengthen their marriages and to help the children/young adults be more serious about whom they select to be their lifelong partners. We knew this was not going to be very popular. We understood that we would be not only up against “the world,” but against many churches that will choose to ignore biblical foundations, especially in the area of repentance, in order to get people through the doors. Who really wants to teach people they need to change from their desperate pursuit of “happiness” to a pursuit of holiness?

We as parents have been commissioned to tell our daughter certain “commandments” that are not popular. We had to tell her “no” when she asked us if she could ride her bicycle in the street at night, even when she cried and promised us she would be careful and wear her helmet. We told her that she needed to trust us and know we love her and are doing what is best for her even if she doesn’t understand. We love her so much that we try to teach her all of Jesus’ commandments and lessons. We have an understanding that one day she will have to give an answer before the Lord and we ask ourselves constantly, “Are we preparing her for that day?”

We would be pathetic parents, and *not full of love*, if we didn’t teach, model, and at times discipline her, to help her on the path that leads to eternal life—heaven. I am not a legalist, Pharisee, or false prophet because I have to give her restrictions or share

with her Jesus' commandments and at times discipline her. I am just doing what the Bible tells me to do. As a father, I have to give my daughter boundaries just as my heavenly Father who loves us gives us boundaries. I care more that my daughter is holy than that she is happy. I hope she will have a happy life but not if it means sacrificing holiness. Ultimately, she has to pursue holiness to be eternally happy. Are we preparing our family, friends, and ourselves to meet the Lord Jesus Christ?

During the last several years I have intensely read many different viewpoints, researched hundreds of manuscripts, and was involved in many conversations and counseling situations. Through these experiences, I believe the Holy Spirit has shown me several things about marriage and divorce and the sin of adultery. I went back to the Scriptures to make sure my thoughts matched up to the Word and that it was His Word that spoke to me and not my human emotions and desires. I have prayed for much wisdom and discernment concerning this issue because I knew my life would never again be the same.

As you read this, you can either become very angry like Herodias when John the Baptist challenged her marriage in **Mark 6**, or you can rip your clothes in humility like Josiah did when they found God's Words buried in dust and realized they had strayed away from God's commandments. On the other hand, as you read this you may be affirmed to know you have rightly divided God's Word all these years. Whatever your reaction, I pray that you read the entire book. You may agree or disagree, but you will be changed.

We care and love divorced and remarried people deeply and that is why I have been convicted to study and research this serious issue we have in front of us. I am convinced that some sincere people just do not know this doctrine because the church has not taught it for fifty years. They have watched other professing Christians and ministers get remarried while a spouse is living and come to the conclusion that it must mean it is okay for them to do it as well.

So as you read what I have written from my heart, I pray that you see good intentions with an eternal picture in mind

and the day of the Lord in view. This book digs intensely into marriage, divorce, and remarriage. But it also gives scriptural backing regarding other deeper truths such as law and grace, church discipline, etc. The questions and frequent thoughts of the people I have counseled have led to a deep study about those doctrines as well.

To the best of my understanding, the teaching in this book is biblical teaching. I am well aware that I am in the minority of ministers who believe that marriage is permanent while a spouse is living. All I ask is that the reader prayerfully consider the thoughts in this book. If the reader comes to the same understanding about the Scriptures, he or she will be reacting to God and His Word. I pray that everyone will look more deeply into the Word of God than any author or preacher's interpretations, including mine. The responsibility for any decisions made will lie with the reader, and not with me or the printer of this book.

**“With each new evidence
of deterioration, we lament
for a moment, and then be-
come accustomed to it. . . . As
behavior worsens, the com-
munity adjusts its standards
to that conduct once thought
reprehensible but is no longer
deemed so.”**

Robert Bork – from the book
Slouching to Gomorrah



Chapter One

Why Focus On This One Topic?

All of us are required to pursue holiness (**Hebrews 12:14**) in all areas of our lives. What happened in our ministry was that I was reviewing my marriage policy. At the same time, the elders were trying not to show partiality when it comes to church discipline, a requirement which few churches practice (**Matthew 18, Acts 5, I Corinthians 5 & 6, 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 1 Timothy 5:20-22, Revelations 3**).

We did not want to discipline in one area and ignore “practicing/willful sin” in another. “Remarriage” while a spouse is living is celebrated and affirmed in many churches without much thought about what God’s Word has to say.

.....
• “Remarriage”
• while a spouse is
• living is celebrated
• and affirmed in
• many churches
• without much
• thought about
• what God’s Word
• has to say.
.....

For example, the typical churches that think same-sex marriage is wrong and is an abomination and sign petitions against this arrangement are the same churches that ignore the topic of divorce and “remarriage.” They want homosexuals to be disciplined with hope of repentance, but not people who clearly go against Jesus’ marriage policy.

Jesus loves all of these people who are in a “practicing sin,” but He requires a change (repentance) in one’s life based on **Luke 13:3** and other Scriptures. We knew that, as leaders, God was going to hold us accountable to teach and apply the whole counsel about the sanctity of marriage and other moral issues. However, with this topic, it is so visible and we are so far from

Have you not Read?

the truth the truth that the lack of biblical teaching has the church in a predicament. And it is worse than most of us realize. There are actually lawsuits here in America because of inconsistencies in the church when it comes to the loving discipline which we are told to do in the New Testament. The same-sex marriage movement is well aware of this double standard, and they are right (**Romans 2:1-3**).

Some people knew the truth but remarried anyway. Some never knew the truth. Some people who are divorced and want to marry someone else cannot submit to leadership. When you say no to them, they rightly point out that there are remarried couples in the church that you allow to stay, and so some start causing division. Some parents have children involved in a remarriage, and cannot allow the Word of God to be taught and applied because “you are talking about my children.”

My elders and I tried, more than most people realized, to confront and deal with this issue, but we cannot tell of many confidential situations and the lack of support we had. We had a plan to try to implement something all churches are to practice and, if necessary, apply: church discipline. We were trying to be consistent with “practicing sins” that can affect the rest of the body. We have protected the confidential information of many of the people and situations that were “behind the scenes” when it came to church discipline. Many say they have been forgiven, but few will help teach the next generation. They block the information or twist it behind the leadership’s backs. We studied hundreds of hours before anybody knew of this old, not “new,” teaching.

We have researched old libraries about the early church from the first few centuries, old newspapers, old books, Greek lexicons, etc. trying to find support for the idea that adultery was grounds for divorce and then remarriage. But we never did find any information that would support this view. I believe I have been terribly wrong in the past in how I went along with the crowd and did not deeply search the Scriptures myself when it came to the teaching regarding divorce and remarriage. I have repented before God and others.

Why focus on this one topic?

I knew many of the “older” preachers’ opinions about this topic and it never brought peace to me. Many of them will “re-marry” anybody for any reason while a spouse is living. I did attempt to talk to some, and as soon as they realized that I was very passionate about this, they became reluctant to talk to me. I have talked to Christian/Church of Christ, Baptist, Amish, Mennonite, Assemblies of God, missionaries to foreign lands, as well as authors, preachers, and other people of faith across the country and overseas that do agree that marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman until death.

You might not have heard of these people that agree about the covenant of marriage. There is a reason for this: They haven’t been asked to speak at Christian conventions because they are not “seeker friendly” (John the Baptist or Noah would not have been invited either). They haven’t built “modern cathedrals” because of the mass conversions (was Noah a success?). They also haven’t written books about glorifying self and the prosperity gospel. Instead, they promote dying to self, repentance, holiness, and radical giving, which is the true gospel.

We need to constantly strive to enter through the narrow door, as Jesus said in **Luke 13:24**. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to convict us of unclean things which we might be practicing that are not of God. Jesus said the road that leads to eternal life is hard, and few will get there (**Matthew 7:13-14**). In today’s church, “professing Christians” say the way is easy and most will find it.

In today’s church, “professing Christians” say the way is easy and most will find it.

With that said, there is one major issue that absolutely is not being discussed or taught, let alone applied, in the modern church and Christian colleges. We know this topic will not drive the masses to the cathedrals. It would create a public relations mess for the colleges, and donor money would go down. Of all the practicing/willful sins that Paul addresses

Have you not Read?

in the church in **1 Corinthians 5**, **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**, and **Galatians 5:16-21** this is the one sin of which many people are ignorant, or that they choose to ignore because of the great division that it causes. The divorce, remarriage, and adultery Scriptures, which are commandments of Jesus, cannot be read and studied in the modern church without half-truths being taught. You cannot even use Scriptures

You cannot even use Scriptures in a marriage counseling session that could close the gate on divorce because someone you are counseling is probably related to someone involved in a remarriage.

in a marriage counseling session that could close the gate on divorce because someone you are counseling is probably related to someone involved in a remarriage. And the parents become irate if you read passages like **Mark 10**, **Luke 16:18**, **Romans 7:3**, **1 Corinthians 7:10-11**, **1 Corinthians 7:39**, and **Hebrews 13:4** to their children. I have personally learned this on many occasions.



Chapter Two

The Warning

The apostle Paul, who teaches us what grace is all about, also warns us with these very clear words: **I Corinthians 6:9-10** *“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”* **Galatians 5:16-21:** *“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Based on these Scriptures, it appears that the inspired Word of God is more concerned with adultery (remarriage while a covenant spouse is still living) than with the divorce itself. Adulterers are the ones that the Scriptures say will not inherit the kingdom of God, not divorcees. However, later in this book, in Chapter 11, Scriptures will be outlined and explained that show that remaining unmarried or reconciling with their original covenant spouse are the two choices that people who have been through divorce have, according to God’s Word.

These Scriptures should invoke a healthy fear and stress the

Have you not Read?

critical importance of being very careful when a person chooses a partner to either date or marry. Marriage will work for life when both parties are willing to seek God, both by themselves and as a couple. We must teach the next generation that a genuine, lived-out, personal relationship with God in a potential dating partner or spouse is much more important than looks, bank account balances, the job they hold, the family they come from, or any other factor.

The following letter comes from a person who is currently divorced:

“To divorce one’s spouse (put space between) is an act of violence and treachery according to Scripture. Granted, there may be times when danger requires one to “flee” for safety, but safety would in no way require, or justify, involving oneself with another, besides their covenant spouse. The initiators of divorce must repent before God Almighty and their spouse/family that they have injured, which the grace of God will enable them to do. Victims of divorce can remain at peace with their spouse to the degree that they are able, and continue to live holy and chaste, for the sake of righteousness, realizing that their spouse is every moment in danger of eternal damnation—a sobering reality indeed. God knows the heart and will not be mocked. He that finds his life shall lose it, but he that loses his life for Christ’s sake, and the Gospel’s, shall find it.

Jesus’ “Gospel” and doctrine are “according to godliness,” which is holiness in thought and deed, from a pure and fervent love for God, and His righteous commandments. There is no immunity from being treated harshly and cruelly by those who should be our dearest “friends,” in the biblical sense of the word. This has been the case from the beginning of time, with Jesus Himself being our example; “*He came unto His own and His own received Him not.*” and “*He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows...*” The servant is not above his master.”



Chapter Three

God Speaks in the Old Testament

Genesis 2:21-25 *“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”*

- ~ God made Adam out of dirt. Don't you think He could have done the same with Eve? Why did He take a rib out of man? It was a very symbolic event to represent one flesh.
- ~ God created humans, then the universal law of marriage. Only God can make two people one flesh. Jesus confirms it in the New Testament (**Mark 10:6-9**).
- ~ Notice God made marriage between a man and a woman. He does not approve of any other setup. He could have made many other arrangements, but He did not. He will never approve of any other marriage arrangement.

Proverbs 2:17 – *“Who forsakes the companion of her youth, And forgets the covenant of her God.”*

- ~ Marriage, whether people want to believe it or not, is a triangle. God is the witness and He joins them together

Have you not Read?

Mark 10:9– Marriage is a covenant between God and the two people who make the vows to God and to each other. God does the joining once He hears the vows made to Him and each other.

Malachi 2:13-17 *“And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, Nor receive it with good will from your hands. Yet you say, “For what reason?” Because the LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. “For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one’s garment with violence,” Says the LORD of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.” You have wearied the LORD with your words; Yet you say, “In what way have we wearied Him?” In that you say, “Everyone who does evil Is good in the sight of the LORD, And He delights in them,” Or, “Where is the God of justice?”*

He Made Them One.

- ~ The Lord was witness to your marriage
- ~ Malachi is restoring this important principle; No matter if you leave her, she is still your wife by covenant. He affirms God made them one.
- ~ A reason for the union is Godly offspring. This affirms God designed marriage between a man and a woman. Not between two women or two men.
- ~ God loves divorcees but hates divorce.
- ~ We have wearied Him because we have said everyone who is practicing evil is okay and, as we say today, God is so full of grace He doesn’t mind if we continue to practice sin."

Don't Most People Believe Marriage Is a Covenant?

Most preachers always say marriage is a covenant, but what is meant by a "covenant"?

A covenant is a special agreement between two people in which God is an active party. When God is involved in the covenant, He sets the terms and conditions.

Some have said marriage is just a covenant between two parties, but not with God.

Listen to what Paul said about even man-made covenants: *"Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it"*(Galatians 3:15).

"He alone validates a marriage. He created this institution. He set the terms, not us."

This irrevocable agreement is binding even with a man-made covenant. Marriage is a covenant with God, which makes it even more cemented.

The Albert Barnes commentary says this of **Galatians 3:15**: "Though it be but a man's covenant, a compact or agreement between man and man, even in such a case no one can add to it or take from it. The argument here is, that such a covenant or agreement must be much less important than a promise made by God. But even that could not be annulled. How much less, therefore, could a covenant made by God be treated as if it were vain? The word covenant here \~*diayhken*\ is, in the margin, rendered "testament;" i.e., will. So Tindal renders it.

Its proper classical signification is "will" or "testament," though in the Septuagint and in the New Testament it is the word which is used to denote a covenant or compact. (See Barnes "**Acts 3:25**"). Here it is used in the proper sense of the word covenant, or compact; a mutual agreement between man and man. The idea is that where such a covenant exists, where the faith of a man is solemnly pledged in this manner, no change can be made in the agreement. It is ratified, and firm,

Have you not Read?

and final—if it is confirmed by a seal or otherwise.

No one annuls, etc. It must stand. No one can change it. No new conditions can be annexed; nor can there be any drawing back from its terms. It binds the parties to a faithful fulfillment of all the conditions. This is well understood among men; and the apostle says that the same thing must take place in regard to God.

Didn't Jesus say that *God* (not the state or preacher) joined them together in **Matthew 19:6**, and **Mark 10:9**? The problem we are having now is that some people think marriage is just a contract and not a covenant. There are some differences between the two. The sanctity of marriage is destroyed when we begin to think it is just a piece of paper like a mortgage. Actually, in today's culture, it is easier to get a divorce (I saw you can even have a drive-thru divorce in some states) than get out of a mortgage or car loan.

Who Is My Covenant Spouse?

The covenant spouse is the one you first made vows to. God joined you whether you were married inside a “church building” or in a “non-traditional place.” God exists everywhere (**Acts 7:48**, **Acts 17:24-25**, **1 Corinthians 6:19**), and is not limited to a building with a steeple on top. According to the Scriptures, the covenant with a spouse ends only at death (**Luke 16:18**, **Romans 7:3**, **1 Cor. 7:39**). Some people come to realize that their first partner was married before and that the covenant spouse is still living. Thus they were never bound to that person and can marry again to a person who has never been married or has no living spouse. Please find out who truly is the covenant spouse.

Differences Between a Contract and a Covenant.

Contract:

Marriage is a bilateral contract that is voluntarily formed, maintained, and dissolved by two individuals.

Forms the basis of civil law.

God Speaks in the Old Testament

The source of this model is from medieval times.

Not found in Scripture to describe marriage.

It provides weak basis for permanence of marriage.

Opens the door to a variety of marital arrangements prohibited in Scripture, such as same-sex marriage and polygamy.

Covenant:

Marriage is a sacred bond between a man, a woman, and God. It was instituted by and joined by God.

Divine Law and only God can set the rules and requirements of this special relationship. Man does not have the authority to break the vow that God established in heaven. Only God can sever a marriage by death. "Let man not separate."

The source is covenantal language in the Scriptures.

Marriage transcends notion of covenant; part of God's created order.

Did You Know?

Dr. David W. Jones and Dr. John K. Tarwater co-authored a tremendous study in 2005 entitled *Are Biblical Covenants Dissoluble Toward a Theology of Marriage?* They quote this, "We surveyed every example of *berith* in the Old Testament (267 examples), as well as of *diatheke* and *suntheke* in the New Testament (34 examples), and were unable to discover *a single example of a dissolved covenant in which God participated*. Like the language used to describe the nature of biblical covenants, the manner in which covenants are established, and the way in which God deals with covenant violations, the absence of any dissolved covenants in which God participates provides evidence that points to the indissoluble nature of biblical covenants.

Pasquier Quesnel many years ago quotes, "The union which is formed between man and woman by marriage is more intimate and inseparable than that between parents and children. It is honored by being made the figure and representation of the union which is between Christ and His church. It is a part-

Have you not Read?

nership of soul and body, of life and fortune, of comfort and support, and of designs and inclinations. What wickedness then is it to sow division in a society so holy and so dear to God!



Chapter Four

God Speaks in the New Testament

Matthew 5:27-32 (Sermon on the Mount, with a Jewish mindset) – This was the first recorded instance that Jesus talked about divorce. The Pharisees questioned Him later.

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication (porneia), causeth her to commit adultery (moichao) and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (KJV).

Looking at the surrounding verses (**5:21-44**). He was reaffirming the standard of the Mosaic Law and also magnifying and teaching the spirit of the law of the Old Testament as Isaiah prophesied in **Isaiah 42:21**.

- ~ Jesus was instructing the crowd to not only focus on the outward appearance of righteous actions but also the spiritual actions. Your inward actions will dictate the outward action. Your intent to do evil is as sinful as the deed itself.

Have you not Read?

- ~ If we believe divorce and remarriage while a spouse is living is still permitted by God, then we must believe we are still obligated to lay gifts at the altar and be subject to the judgments of the Jewish Sanhedrin court.
- ~ If adultery is grounds for divorce and remarriage, I am sure almost every man and woman has the right to divorce at least one time in their marriage. Jesus called lust adultery.
- ~ “*causeth her to commit adultery*” – In this verse, and in **Matt.19:9**, the woman could have been unjustly divorced and the “innocent” party. However, the remarriage of the “innocent” woman would result in an adulterous union. The man who was to marry her would be committing adultery as well.
- ~ For those who think of Jesus as one who would not judge someone to hell, why does He tell us we better take drastic measures not to lust? I do not believe that the end result He intended was to literally pluck out an eye, because we can lust with our eyes closed. He meant to shock us and motivate us to be serious about taking precautions in this sin and to not ignore the reality of hell.
- ~ Notice “put away” and the bill of divorce is in the same context of Scriptures. More details about this argument later.
- ~ Women were never allowed to divorce and remarry in the Jewish culture. Notice the man was the only one allowed to divorce.
- ~ Some people believe the only reason He talked about divorce is because the Pharisees questioned Him. That is false. Jesus first addressed it on the hillside. He initiated this entire topic himself. The Pharisees were trying to trap Him later in **Matthew 19:9** and **Mark 10**. So there was a possibility of Jesus being killed, like John the Baptist when He confronted

God Speaks in the New Testament

Herod and Herodias with their “sinful lifestyle” (**Mark 6:14-29**). Maybe they had heard what was said on the hillside from “rumors” and did not see His intent.

- ~ Speaking of John the Baptist, is he a “legalist” and “Pharisee” because he confronted a sinful situation? Jesus said there was none greater than His cousin John the Baptist.
- ~ If Jesus was satisfied with the current divorce and marriage policies of that day, why did He bring up the subject?
- ~ Why did all of the surrounding verses change things from the “old way of thinking,” yet many in the church believe divorce and remarriage stays the same or that there are many reasons allowed to get a divorce and possibly remarry (adultery).
- ~ Jesus was clarifying what was the spirit behind the Mosaic Law, because if He were teaching something different, He would be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven (**5:19**). The Mosaic Law was in full force until Jesus died on the cross. Jesus Christ took the old law out of the way (including the provisions for divorce) and nailed it to the cross (**Matthew 23:2-12, Romans 15:18, Galatians 4:4, Ephesians 2:11-18, Colossians 2:14-17, Hebrews 9:16-17**). In **Matthew 8:4** He commanded a leper to do what the law of Moses taught at that moment in time.

Mark 10:1-12 (Roman Audience):

Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again. The Pharisees came and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” testing Him. And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?”

They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her.” And Jesus answered and said to them, “Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the

Have you not Read?

beginning of the creation, 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'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter. So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

- ~ Jesus said "No Longer two but one." "No Longer" (*Ouketi*) means never again. As long as they are breathing, they are no longer anyone else's husband or wife unless the death of one of the spouses. (Other verses Jesus uses *Ouketi* for "no longer" are in **Mark 14:25**, **John 6:66**, and **Acts 8:39**. Read those verses and see if it happened again after He said "no longer.")
- ~ Jesus also validates the principle that God is the one who joins a man and a woman. Why does Jesus say that God is the one who joins the couple and why do we insist the "state" is the one who can end the marriage and make one flesh two again?
- ~ "Joined" in this context means literally to be "cemented or glued" together. It is impossible once cement is mixed together to undo it completely. If hardened cement is broken into pieces, it is impossible to match up any piece with another except for the piece from which it came. This relationship is to be stronger than even a parent/child relationship.
- ~ "If she divorces." This was definitely new teaching for some of the hearers, because Mark was addressing a Roman culture in which women were allowed to divorce. It was rare that a Jewish woman could ever divorce, but women of different cultures could. Also, have you noticed there was never an exception in any of the Scriptures that a woman could ever divorce and remarry unless there was the death of a spouse?

God Speaks in the New Testament

- ~ Jesus was bringing back the permanence of the marriage covenant. Jesus continues to say “her husband” or “his wife” after the divorce.
- ~ Jesus did not give the “expected” answer! Did you notice that the disciples went back and were so shocked by the very strict standard of this sacred institution of marriage that they asked Him again? If the marriage policy Jesus was teaching was the same as the “current culture” of the time, no one would have been shocked. Jesus was demanding something that was totally going against the majority of the religious leaders and the community, and the disciples knew it. In the same way, the teaching in this book may seem shocking to some in today’s current culture.
- ~ What the Bible says in **Matthew 19:10-11** is so true even today—“Not everyone will be able to receive this saying.” What so many people will state is that “you can obey this if you want to, but this commandment is optional and just an ideal.” If that is true, then why did Jesus even bring up the topic of divorce and then call it adultery after the remarriage? And why did He say everyone who divorces and marries another commits adultery?
- ~ Jesus took the very narrow approach and left no loopholes because He knew some people would want to get out of their marriages. He saw all the damage that was going to be done in the future with divorce and remarriage. In this present day we just cannot believe this because we have gone so far away from the Word. But think about the time, not so long ago, when divorce was very minimal. The churches were teaching the truth. Few people in 1920 thought it was rough or “too hard a teaching.” The Amish and Conservative Mennonites have a three percent divorce rate compared to a mainline Christianity rate of over fifty percent. Why? The parents teach that marriage is

Have you not Read?

until death and mean it. The church also teaches it and means it, and if one chooses to divorce and remarry (commit adultery), they practice church discipline as the Bible tells them to do (**1 Corinthians 5:9-13**).

Luke 16:18 (Greek Audience):

“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.”

- ~ A very clear verse.
- ~ Luke is writing to a Greek/Gentile audience (which would be us). There are no exceptions for marriage after a divorce.
- ~ Who is the man divorced from? His wife.
- ~ Who is the woman divorced from? Her husband.
- ~ This verse could be illustrated as follows:

**Courthouse/Divorce + Wedding ceremony/Marries
= Hotel / Adultery.**

The couple signs the divorce papers, one or both participate in another marriage ceremony with a different person, and then Jesus calls that relationship adultery.

The couple signs the divorce papers, one or both participate in another marriage ceremony with a different person, and then Jesus calls that relationship adultery.

The question that affects many people is “Why did Jesus call it adultery after the divorce and marriage?”

It should not be called adultery if the second marriage is honored in God’s sight. Adultery is having sexual relations with someone who is not your spouse.

Even after the divorce, Jesus still refers to the person as “his wife” or “her husband.” And then He says they are committing adultery against him or her if they remarry.

The original Greek word for adultery in this verse is *Moixeu/w* or *Moicheuo* and

God Speaks in the New Testament

is a present indicative that shows a continuation of the sin, or being viewed as occurring in real time.

The word *Moixeu/w* is also used in **John 8:4** where the lady caught in adultery was brought to Jesus. He told her to “Go and sin no more.” It is also used by Jesus in **Revelation 2:22** when Jesus was confronting the church of Thyratira for tolerating the sin of adultery with the evil woman Jezebel. Jesus told them they “must repent of their deeds.”

A Literal and Consistent New Testament Version translated by Dr. Donald Nash translates this verse as follows:

“Everyone divorcing his wife and marrying another practices adultery, and the one marrying (a woman) who has been divorced from her husband practices adultery” (Luke 16:18).

The Mace Bible of 1729 says these words of warning from this verse:

“Whoever repudiates (divorces) His wife, and marries another, is an adulterer. And He that marries her, that is repudiated (divorced) by her husband, is an adulterer” Luke 16:18.

John Wycliffe’s translation of 1395 shows the continuation of the sin in Middle English.

“Euery man that forsakith his wiff, and weddith an other, doith letcherie; and he that weddith the wiff forsakun of the hosebonde, doith auowtrie.”

What are we supposed to do? Ignore this and keep it hidden and never apply it?

What would people think of a fireman who knew a house was burning with a child inside and ignored the situation? Would he be viewed as judgmental and harsh if he told the child she had to stop playing with her toys and get out of the house because there was a fire that could consume her?

No, he would be considered very compassionate by the parents of the child, as well as by the community. But somehow, these days, people who warn others about the direct words of Christ and Paul, and that there is an eternal fire, are viewed as not being compassionate or full of grace.

Have you not Read?

Was Jesus compassionate when he said these words about marriage?

Do you want the narrow road for your marriage which, although it may seem harder in this life, leads to eternal reward? Or do you want the deceivingly easy road in this life that does not lead to eternal reward?

Men, do you want me to marry your wife to another man because she said she deserves better and “God told her to” while you still want reconciliation?

Ladies, would you want me to marry your husband to another woman with a smile on my face while you and your children suffer?

Preachers, do you want me to marry your son or daughter’s spouse, after their divorce, to another person while your daughter or son is praying for reconciliation and your grandchildren want Mom and Dad back together?

Preachers, do you want me to marry your son or daughter’s spouse, after their divorce, to another person while your daughter or son is praying for reconciliation and your grandchildren want Mom and Dad back together?

Preachers, would you marry your wife to another man if she divorced you after she went through the paperwork? If you say no, why? You have to be consistent in how you interpret the Scripture, don’t you?

If you say no, then why do so many of you help people commit adultery by remarrying people while a spouse is living?

Do you want me to say “God is love and full of grace” and tell you to “move on?”

This happens all the time. Most preachers marry couples that have been divorced and don’t even ask many questions. They just hope you come to their church after the honeymoon and tell you, “We can grow together in the Lord.” It is in His

Word that a marriage after a divorce is adultery.

To the preachers who remarry people while a spouse is living, how would you like another preacher marrying your wife to another man after she left you because “she wasn’t happy,” while you are still praying for reconciliation? I talk to many people who are divorced but are waiting for restoration of their original covenant spouse because they believe what the Bible says. However, their covenant spouse will go to the majority of preachers who will “marry them” off to someone else.

We have to be consistent as leaders. Some preachers can’t teach that marriage is permanent because they are committing adultery themselves due to their own “remarried” state. They then teach that homosexuals, perhaps with legal marriage certificates like their own, should turn from their illicit relationships.

A Letter from a Broken Wife...

“I felt in my heart so much of what Scripture has to say about marriage and divorce, but never had all the research to back it up. The Lord has put the conviction in my heart that marriage is until death, but it was not until really studying God’s Word that my convictions became solidified.

My husband separated from me a year ago and has recently filed for divorce. He claims he is a Christian and that God has given him permission to break his marriage vows. I contacted a pastor at our church whom I did not know was divorced and remarried. Of course, he told my husband that as long as he had thought this through, God’s grace would cover him. Of course, this pastor cannot tell him not to break his marriage covenant when he broke his own with his covenant wife. I am beside myself. I do not believe in divorce. There has been no adultery or unfaithfulness on my part. I believe in one man and one woman for life and absolutely know that that is God’s plan for marriage. I am stunned that a Christian man can walk away from his wife of 20 years, leave his two precious children, and act as if he is doing nothing wrong. This is rebellion against God and unforgiveness in the clearest of senses. Divorce is a

Have you not Read?

hate crime against the spouse that you vowed before God to love, honor, and cherish until death parts you. This covenant is binding until death and my husband is clearly blinded to think that God has released him from his marriage vows to me.

This last year has been the most difficult one of my life. I am standing and praying for restoration. Only God can change my husband's hardened heart and convict him of his sin of rebellion, unforgiveness, and desertion. My own church needs to be convicted of not preaching God's Word and of leading members down the slippery slope of sin disguised as "compassion and grace." There has not been another revelation that says you can remarry while your spouse is still living. Many preachers are wrong about this or just will not study at all on this subject because of the cost. Everyone, including myself, better be getting more serious about eternal global warming and not the global warming that they talk about on the news.

Romans 7:2-3:

"For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. 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."

- ~ In the context of explaining the transition of law and grace, Paul illustrates it with marriage (the most powerful illustration he could use).
- ~ This is the universal law of marriage.
- ~ It is a continual sin, not a one-time sin.
- ~ Death, not divorce, ends the one flesh covenant.
- ~ Many people want to cling to the grace part of what Paul teaches, but not what he says about marriage.
- ~ Some people will say this is just an illustration and doesn't mean anything of great importance.
- ~ Read **1 Corinthians 7:39** – Paul knew exactly what Jesus said about marriage.

God Speaks in the New Testament

1 Corinthians 7:10-11:

“Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. 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.”

- ~ Paul submits to the command from the Lord.
- ~ If separation or divorce occurs, Paul said to remain unmarried or reconcile.
- ~ He knows the temptation would be to find someone else and he knows Jesus said that a marriage after a divorce is called adultery.
- ~ There would be fewer divorces if one of the spouses would not remarry due to the vows they had made. This would do two things: first, it could cause conviction in the other spouse. I have heard of many spouses feeling better (at least for awhile) when their original spouse remarried. It made some feel justified in getting remarried themselves or the guilt that they were living with because they made the other partner very lonely. Second, it would be an example for the children to understand the importance of a vow. Think about their future as married people.
- ~ Do you want your child’s future spouse to honor his or her vows to your son or daughter? If you are separated, divorced, or “remarried,” can you in good conscience tell your child’s spouse not to divorce and remarry another person if he or she is “not happy”? Our children are watching us and the model of our lives means everything to them.

1 Corinthians 7:39:

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

- ~ Can this verse be any plainer?

Have you not Read?

- ~ If we disobey this verse and think that saying the words “I am sorry” means we can just keep doing what we want, we are changing God’s Word. You are still bound until death. I did not write this, Paul did.

Ephesians 5:3-8:

“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”

Ephesians 5:21-33:

“Submitting to one another in the fear of God. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

- ~ Marriage is a model of Christ (groom) and the church (bride). When divorce takes place, it seems that

God Speaks in the New Testament

at least one person is either in rebellion or cannot forgive. Both rebellion (doing what I desire versus what God wants) and unforgiveness (unwillingness to move past an offense or being wronged) are prohibited in Scripture (**Matthew 6:14-15**).

- ~ Christ and the betrothed bride (church) are one. Christ is always the innocent party, and we are the unfaithful ones, but do we want Him to divorce us? Jesus and Paul are always thinking about and hoping for reconciliation if divorce does happen.
- ~ Paul said in verse 28 that a man would love his own flesh when he loves his wife. Why? One flesh?
Christ is always the innocent party, and we are the unfaithful ones, but do we want Him to divorce us?
- ~ Husbands, would you want your daughters to be treated by your sons-in-law like some of you treat your wives?
- ~ Wives, would you like your daughters-in-law to treat your sons like some of you treat your husbands?
- ~ All of us can learn from this text in Ephesians so separation will never take place.

Hebrews 13:4:

“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral/fornicators (porneia) and adulterous (mocheia)” (NASB).

- ~ Notice the two separate words, Fornication (*porneia*) and adulterous (*mocheia*).
- ~ God will ultimately judge the application of this verse at each person’s death and at the end of time, not us. But we as Christians have been commissioned by Jesus to teach all He commands.

Have you not Read?



Chapter Five

Ideals?

Do We Believe the Bible is Just Full of Ideals or Is it the Absolute Authority in Our Lives?

There are some verses in the New Testament that you need to rightly divide and dissect, considering culture and context. Marriage is not one of them. Most people know that marriage is to be until death. They are aware of the pain it causes when there is separation for all the parties involved. If you don't believe the Bible is the absolute truth from God, it will affect how you see these marriage Scriptures and how you apply them to your life. Why do we have to ask ourselves this question? Because if we believe the Bible is full of ideals rather than the Word of God, we are opening ourselves up to deception. The foundation of society and the church will be greatly affected and souls will perish if people think of God's Word as just ideals or a good story and believe it is nothing they have to try to live by or be accountable to.

You shall not murder. If we believe this commandment regarding murder is just an ideal and we don't have to live by that command, we are going to have serious issues. If we think the commandment about stealing is just an ideal, then we should not be upset if someone steals from us. If we believe practicing faith, baptism, repentance, and the Lord's Supper is just an ideal thing to shoot for, we have opened ourselves up to be misled. If we believe that marriage between a man and a woman for life is just an ideal, then why not be tolerant of same-sex marriage or polygamy, or other arrange-

Have you not Read?

ments that are not supported in the Word. If someone steals money from you, you expect that they will be held accountable for their actions. But maybe “not stealing” is just an ideal. Marriage is being taught in today’s churches as just an ideal.

For hundreds of years, lifelong marriage was not the optional ideal, but a commandment by Jesus. It was something the early Christian leaders knew and taught. Are we going to pick and choose which Scriptures we will apply to our lives and which ones are just an optional ideal? Are we going to pick out all the grace Scriptures and say they are the absolute truth, but obedience and the repentance Scriptures were just the ideal? Or are we going to humbly pursue and apply all of Jesus’ commandments in the New Testament (Covenant) to our lives because it is the inspired Word of God and we will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment?

No one wants lawless behavior. All people want God’s Word in their lives whether they know it or not. The Word of God is good! Disobedience to the Word at first may seem like the way to go, but sin is very hard and brings great consequences.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones” (Proverbs 3:5-8).

There is a subtle teaching from “professing Christians” that is similar to Satan’s cunning in the Garden of Eden. They question the inspired words of God, then there is no absolute truth. **Genesis 3:1** says: *“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (KJV)*

How Do We Know These Marriage Scriptures Are True?

When examining Bible origin, many of today’s liberal scholars look everywhere but in the Bible. However, the Bible tells us that the origin of the Bible is God Himself. In **2 Timothy 3:16** we

read that all Scripture is inspired by God. The Greek word used for inspiration is *theopneustos*, which means “God-breathed.” In **2 Peter 1:21**, we understand that each writer was “carried along” by God. Therefore, God used each of the Bible’s 40 authors, including their diverse cultural backgrounds, personalities, and positions, to deliver His divine Word to all mankind.

Bible Origin — The Word of God

It seems that the question of Bible origin turns on the truth of its divine inspiration. In **Luke 24:27,44**; **John 5:39**; and **Hebrews 10:7** Jesus says that what was written about him in the Old Testament would come to pass. **Romans 3:2** and **Hebrews 5:12** refer to the Old Testament as the Word of God. We read in **1 Corinthians 2:13**, “*This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit*” (NIV). This is confirmed in **2 Timothy 3:16**. In **1 Thessalonians 2:13**, Paul, when referring to that which he had written says, “*...you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the Word of God...*” (NIV). Peter speaks of the inspiration of Paul’s writings in **2 Peter 3:15-16**, where he maintains that, “*...Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters...*” (NIV) Earlier, in **2 Peter 1:21** Peter writes, “*For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along [moved] by the Holy Spirit*” (NIV). And then finally in **Revelation 22:18,19** the writer John, referring to the book of **Revelation** states, “*...if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life...*” (NIV).

“The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God. However, it was not written by good men, because good men would not tell lies by saying ‘Thus saith the Lord;’ it was not written by bad men because they would not write about doing good duty, while condemning sin and themselves to hell; thus, it must be written by divine inspiration” (Charles Wesley, McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, 1990:178).

Bible Origin — Authenticity of New Testament Scripture

A primary attack against divine Bible origin is that the books of the New Testament were agreed upon (canonized) by men hundreds of years after the books were written. Actually, the leaders of the early Christian church reveal that most of the New Testament books were accepted as Scripture almost immediately. For instance, in **2 Peter 3:16**, the writer takes for granted that Paul's letters were already considered inspired Scripture on the same level as the Old Testament. In **1 Timothy 5:18**, Paul joins an Old Testament reference and a New Testament reference and calls them both Scripture.

The need for official canonization of the New Testament Scriptures only came about because of certain heresies that were being spread throughout the church, starting in the mid to late second century. For instance, Marcion created his own religion by only teaching from ten of Paul's letters and certain portions of Luke. In addition, the Gnostics, especially in Alexandria, were introducing new "secrets" to the standard Christian doctrine, including new gospel accounts altogether. For the church leaders in the mid second century, the four Gospels were baseline authority in their teachings.

In about 170 AD, Irenaeus cited 23 of the 27 New Testament books, omitting only Philemon, James, 2 Peter, and 3 John. The Muratorian fragment, written about the same time, attests to the widespread use of all the New Testament books except Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, and 2 Peter. However, other church fathers had already cited these omitted books in various writings defending against Gnostic doctrines.

The Codex Barococcio from 206 AD includes 64 of the 66 books of today's Bible. Esther and Revelation were omitted, but they had already been declared as inspired Scripture by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, and the Muratorian Canon. In 230 AD, Origen declared that all Christians acknowledged as Scripture the four Gospels, Acts, the epistles of Paul, 1 Peter, 1 John, and Revelation.

Ideals?

By the early 300s, all of the New Testament books were being used in the mainstream church body. In 367 AD, Athanasius formally circulated the Easter Letter that listed all 27 books as canonical. The Synod of Hippo (393 AD) and the third Synod of Carthage (397 AD) also recognized these 27 books as canonical. In addition, during this time, the highly influential church fathers Jerome (340-420 AD) and Augustine (354-430 AD) published their lists of 27 books completing the New Testament.

It's important to remember that the canon of the New Testament was not the result of any pronouncement by any official of the church or any organizational body. Rather, the canon was determined by the authoritative use of these books right from the start by the rapidly expanding church of the first and second centuries. The New Testament canon was merely a process of formal recognition of already recognized Scripture, to defend against the various forms of Gnosticism and heresy that were starting to creep throughout the ever-expanding church. (My thanks to allaboutgod.com for showing us in plain words how we received the Bible)

Have you not Read?



Chapter Six

Early Christian Leaders Speak

What Did the Early Christian Leaders Believe About Divorce and the Indissolubility of Marriage?

The men who recognized and gave formal recognition of what we read in our Bible had differences in opinions on many things doctrinally but were unanimous on the emotionally charged issue of remarriage following a divorce. They were closer to the teaching than we are some 1700 years later. If I want to know what the early leaders of our country meant in the Constitution and their interpretations of this document, I want to know what George Washington says and not what the politicians of today say.

Following are some interpretations of Jesus' and the apostle Paul's inspired words about divorce and remarriage from some of the men who helped canonize our Bible and other well known Christian leaders of the first few centuries, before the truth and the church began to come under corruption in many different areas and began to be "humanistic." Once again, these quotes are not Scripture but commentary to give insight on the consistent doctrine on the marriage covenant just a short time after the inspired writers of the Bible departed to be with Jesus. These statements were made from the years 90-419 A.D.

1)Hermes (90 A.D.)

“I charge you,” said he, “to guard your chastity, and let no thought enter your heart of another man’s wife, or of fornication, or of similar iniquities; for by doing this you commit a great sin. But if you always remember your own wife, you will never sin. For if this thought enter your heart, then you will sin; and if, in like manner, you think other wicked thoughts, you commit sin. For this thought is a great sin in a servant of God. But if anyone commit this wicked deed, he works death for himself.

Attend, therefore, and refrain from this thought; for where purity dwells, there iniquity ought not to enter the heart of a righteous man.” I said to him, “Sir, permit me to ask you a few questions.” “Say on,” said he. And I said to him, “Sir, if anyone has a wife who trusts in the Lord, and if he detects her in adultery, does the man sin if he continues to live with her?”

And he said to me, “As long as he remains ignorant of her sin, the husband commits no transgression in living with her. But if the husband knows that his wife has gone astray, and if the woman does not repent, but persists in her fornication, and yet the husband continues to live with her, he also is guilty of her crime and a sharer in her adultery.” And I said to him, “What then, sir, is the husband to do if his wife continues in her vicious practices?” And he said, “The husband should put her away and remain by himself. But if he put his wife away and marry another, he also commits adultery.”

And I said to him, “What if the woman put away should repent, and wish to return to her husband: shall she not be taken back by her husband?” And he said to me, “Assuredly. If the husband does not take her back, he sins, and brings a great sin upon himself; for he ought to take back the sinner who has repented...In this matter man and woman are to be treated exactly in the same way. –The Shepherd 4:1-10 (a)

2) Justin Martyr (A.D. 151)

“In regard to chastity, [Jesus] has this to say: ‘If anyone look with lust at a woman, he has already before God committed adultery in his heart.’ And, ‘Whoever marries a woman who

has been divorced from another husband, commits adultery.’ According to our Teacher, just as they are sinners who contract a second marriage, even though it be in accord with human law, so also are they sinners who look with lustful desire at a woman. He repudiates not only one who actually commits adultery, but even one who wishes to do so; for not only our actions are manifest to God, but even our thoughts.”

(3) Clement Of Alexandria (A.D. 208)

“That Scripture counsels marriage, however, and never allows any release from the union is expressly contained in the law: ‘You shall not divorce a wife, except for reason of immorality.’ And it regards as adultery the marriage of a spouse while the one from whom a separation was made is still alive. ‘Whoever takes a divorced woman as wife commits adultery,’ it says; for ‘if anyone divorce his wife, he debauches her’; that is, he compels her to commit adultery. And not only does he that divorces her become the cause of this, but also he that takes the woman and gives her the opportunity of sinning; for if he did not take her, she would return to her husband.”

4) Origen (248 A.D.)

“Just as a woman is an adulteress even though she seems to be married to a man while a former husband yet lives, so also the man who seems to marry her who has been divorced does not marry her, but, according to the declaration of our Savior, he commits adultery with her.”

5) Basil the Great (A.D. 375)

The man who has deserted his wife and goes to another is himself an adulterer because he makes her commit adultery; and the woman who lives with him is an adulteress, because she has caused another woman’s husband to come over to her...The woman who lives with an adulterer is an adulteress the whole time. The woman who has been abandoned by her husband, ought, in my judgment, to remain as she is. The Lord said, “If anyone leaves his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, he causes her to commit adultery;” thus, by call-

ing her an adulteress, He excludes her from intercourse with another man. For how can the man, being guilty as having caused adultery, and the woman, go without blame, when she is called an adulteress by the Lord for having intercourse with another man? A man who marries another man's wife who has been taken away from him will be charged with adultery...

6) Ambrose of Milan (A.D. 387)

“No one is permitted to know a woman other than his wife. The marital right is given you for this reason: lest you fall into a snare and sin with a strange woman. “If you are bound to a wife do not seek a divorce,” for you are not permitted while your wife lives to marry another.”

You dismiss your wife, therefore, as if by right and without being charged with wrongdoing, and you suppose it is proper for you to do so because no human law forbids it; but divine law forbids it. Anyone who obeys men should stand in awe of God. Hear the Word of the Lord, which even they who propose our laws must obey: “What God has joined together, let no man put asunder” (Commentary on Luke, Sec. 8:5).

7) Jerome (A.D. 396)

“Do not tell me about the violence of the ravisher, about the persuasiveness of a mother, about the authority of a father, about the influence of relatives, about the intrigues and insolence of servants, or about household [financial] losses. So long as a husband lives, be he adulterer, be he sodomite, be he addicted to every kind of vice, if she left him on account of his crimes he is still her husband and she may not take another.” “Wherever there is fornication and a suspicion of fornication, a wife is freely dismissed. Because it is always possible that someone may calumniate the innocent and, for the sake of a second joining in marriage, act in criminal fashion against the first, it is commanded that when the first wife is dismissed, a second may not be taken while the first lives.”

8) John Chrysostom (A.D. 347-407)

“And observe Him everywhere addressing His discourse to

the man. Thus, he that puts away his wife,” says He, “causes her to commit adultery, and he that marries a woman put away commits adultery.” That is, the former, though he take not another wife, by that act alone hath made himself liable to blame, having made the first an adulteress; the latter again is become an adulterer by taking her who is another’s. For tell me not this, “The other hath cast her out;” nay, for when cast out she continued to be the wife of him that expelled her...

And not thus only, but in another way also He hath lightened the enactment: forasmuch as even for him He leaves one manner of dismissal, when He says, “Except for the cause of fornication;” since the matter had else come round again to the same issue. For if He had commanded to keep her in the house, though defiling herself with many, He would have made the matter end again in adultery.

But mark Him arguing strongly not from the creation only, but also from His command. For He said not, that He made one man and one woman only, but that He also gave this command that the one man should be joined to the one woman. But if it had been His will that he should put this one away, and bring in another, when He had made one man, He would have formed many women. But now both by the manner of the creation, and by the manner of law-giving, He showed that one man must dwell with one woman continually, and never break off from her.

9) Augustine (A.D. 419)

“Neither can it rightly be held that a husband who dismisses his wife because of fornication and marries another does not commit adultery. For there is also adultery on the part of those who, after the repudiation of their former wives because of fornication, marry others. This adultery, nevertheless, is certainly less serious than that of men who dismiss their wives for reasons other than fornication and take other wives.

Therefore, when we say: ‘Whoever marries a woman dismissed by her husband for reason other than fornication commits adultery,’ undoubtedly we speak the truth. But we do not thereby acquit of this crime the man who marries a woman

Have you not Read?

who was dismissed because of fornication. We do not doubt in the least that both are adulterers. We do indeed pronounce him an adulterer who dismissed his wife for cause other than fornication and marries another, nor do we thereby defend from the taint of this sin the man who dismissed his wife because of fornication and marries another. We recognize that both are adulterers, though the sin of one is more grave than that of the other.

No one is so unreasonable to say that a man who marries a woman whose husband has dismissed her because of fornication is not an adulterer, while maintaining that a man who marries a woman dismissed without the ground of fornication is an adulterer. Both of these men are guilty of adultery. A woman begins to be the wife of no later husband unless she has ceased to be the wife of a former one. She will cease to be the wife of a former one, however, if that husband should die, not if he commit fornication. A spouse, therefore, is lawfully dismissed for cause of fornication; but the bond of chastity remains. That is why a man is guilty of adultery if he marries a woman who has been dismissed even for this very reason of fornication.”

“It is certainly not fecundity only, the fruit of which consists of offspring, nor chastity only, whose bond is fidelity, but also a certain sacramental bond in marriage which is recommended to believers in wedlock. Accordingly it is enjoined by the apostle: ‘Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.’ Of this bond the substance undoubtedly is this, that the man and the woman who are joined together in matrimony should remain inseparable as long as they live...”

“In marriage, however, let the blessings of marriage be loved: offspring, fidelity, and the sacramental bond. Offspring, not so much because it may be born, but because it can be reborn; for it is born to punishment unless it be reborn to life. Fidelity, but not such as even the unbelievers have among themselves, ardent as they are for the flesh. . . . The sacramental bond, which they lose neither through separation nor through adultery, this the spouses should guard chastely and harmoniously.” (My thanks to ccel.org—Christian Classics Ethereal Library.)

This Is from One of the Founding Fathers of the “Restoration Movement” About Marriage.

Thomas Campbell says in 1845 :

When our bountiful Creator had formed man in his own image, after his own likeness, he said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a help meet for him.” In order to this, he cast the man into a deep sleep and took out one of his ribs, of which he made a woman, and presented her to the man, who gratefully received her, saying, “This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be one flesh.”

According to this it is evident that the matrimonial relation was designed but for the union of two; that is, of one male and one female, for matrimonial purposes. And it appears from **Genesis 4:19**, that Lamech, a descendant of wicked Cain, was the first who violated this divine law of our nature. But we learn that in the process of time, polygamy not only became fashionable, but also divorcement (See **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**). See also our Lord’s answer to the Pharisees upon this subject, **Matthew 19:3-9**: *“They came to him tempting him, saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered, and said to them, Have ye not read that he that made them at the beginning made them a male and a female? And said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And I say to you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery”* (KJV).

Thus our Lord settles the matter concerning divorce. Moreover, while the practice of polygamy was permitted, that is, under the Mosaic dispensation, a man was not permitted to take his wife’s sister to wife, during her lifetime. See **Leviticus 18** There were also other laws prohibiting marriage within

Have you not Read?

specified limits of consanguinity, which for the natural reasons assigned have never been repealed (See **Leviticus. 18:6-17**).

To all these, therefore, Christians should manifest a pious reverential obedience; and especially to the duties enjoined upon the parties, under the matrimonial relation; for upon the faithful performance of these depends not only their social happiness, both natural and spiritual, but also that of their posterity. For, saith the Psalmist, in **Psalm 37: 25, 28**, *“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.-- But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off”* (KJV). And who are the righteous but they who love and obey God? And, of course, perform their relative duties to each other, and *“train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”* But can this be done in families where the parents do not dwell together in love and do not treat each other with kindness and respect? Surely it cannot. Therefore, Christian husbands are commanded to love their wives, even as Christ loved his body the church, and gave himself for it: so ought men to love their wives even as their own bodies. Also, Christian wives are to submit themselves to their own husbands as to the Lord: for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Therefore, as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. **Ephesians 5:22-28**.

Now, as families are the very molds of human character, the formative seminaries of society; it is therefore perfectly consistent with the divine goodness to be so particular and copious in giving directions to parents how to conduct themselves for this all-important purpose (See **Deuteronomy 6:6-9**, and **11:18-21**; **Psalm 88:1-8**; **Colossians 3:18-21**; **Titus 2:1-5**; **1 Peter 3:1-7**).

Upon the whole, as the marriage relation lies at the very foundation of society, therefore the teachers and rulers in the churches should be very particular in inculcating upon the parties the duties incumbent upon them to each other, and to their families; and where these are neglected or transgressed, if scriptural admonitions and exhortations will not produce the designed effect, the persevering disobedient ought to be formally

rejected; especially where the law of Christ expressly enjoins it, as in the case of adultery, above specified (**Matthew 19:9**. See also **Matthew 5:31,32**, with **1 Corinthians 5:11,13**). “*Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*” In so doing God will be glorified, and Christian character saved from reproach. (My thanks to the *The Millennial Harbinger* (May 1845): 204-205)

R.A. Torrey (1856 – 1928)

A very popular Christian writer and minister, R.A. Torrey was president of Yale University, and also was the superintendent of Moody Bible Institute for 19 years. His book *How to Pray* says, “Infidelity and immorality are Siamese twins. They always exist and always grow and always fatten together.

This prevailing immorality is found everywhere. Look at the legalized adultery that we call divorce. Men marry one wife after another, and are still admitted into good society; and women do likewise. There are thousands of supposedly respectable men in America living with other men’s wives, and thousands of supposedly respectable women living with other women’s husbands.”

Summary of Early Church Positions

It is very clear that the earliest church leaders, who were very close in time proximity to the commandments of Jesus, believed that while divorce was a possibility, especially for sexual immorality (fornication, whoredom) remarriage was not permitted even for fornication while the covenant partner was still alive. This teaching lasted until the 16th century.

Have you not Read?



Chapter Seven

When Did the Teaching Start To Go Wrong?

Erasmus, a Roman Catholic Greek and Latin scholar, suggested a new and previously unheard of doctrinal position concerning marriage and divorce. In the 1500s Erasmus, “the Prince of Humanism,” began watering down **Matthew 19:9** and **I Corinthians 7:15**. This is called the “Erasmian view.” He was also linked with King Henry VIII, who ignored Christian teaching and started the Church of England because he wanted to be remarried. He said these two verses indicate that the covenant of marriage has been broken and allows for remarriage.

He rejected the Divine origin and the indissolubility of marriage, and other fundamental principles of Christian life. He admitted that Jesus and Paul said the words we find in the New Testament about marriage, but He thought the Scriptures were “too harsh.” He thought the interpretation of Scriptures should be left to the individual judgment and not by proper hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the process of looking at all of the clear Scriptures regarding a topic and then all of the not so clear verses and establishing consistency once the Bible culture and all of the Scriptures have been considered. Erasmus’ ultimate goal was that as a humanist and not a theologian.

Martin Luther, who at first was friends with Erasmus, later in his life said of Erasmus “He cares more about the human than the Divine.” Martin Luther also said he would forbid his family to read any of Erasmus’ literature because of the poison he had spread. But the eggs had already been hatched.” (One of many resources I used was NewAdvent.org search Erasmus).

Have you not Read?

In America, it took a long time, a few hundred years, for many of the churches to adopt this “new” marriage policy from Erasmus. Many of the earliest preachers and their fellow Christians still believed the marriage bond was permanent until death. Even in the first half of the twentieth century, churches knew that marriage was one man, one woman, until death, and that remarriage was adultery. I have even asked many older people in the church today what was taught during the first half of the 20th century regarding divorce and remarriage. What they have told me is consistent with what the earliest church leaders taught.

So What Happened in the American Church?

In my opinion here are just some of the reasons that the marriage and divorce teaching changed in America:

- ~ Many, not all, “professing Christians” have allowed men/women leaders to tell us what is right and wrong and did not strive to study God’s Word for ourselves, like the Bereans did in **Acts 17:11**.
- ~ Some remarried (while a spouse was living) because of certain translations that gave a very broad definition of the so-called exception clause. Many did not go and look at the complete New Testament on the subject or the early Christian history and meaning of words.
- ~ We allowed culture to teach right and wrong and not the Bible or the church.
- ~ There has been a lack of teaching on the marriage bond because for many years divorce was rare.
- ~ Lack of church discipline. Young people started thinking remarriage was okay, because it was going on right in front of their eyes with no church discipline. In the last half of the 20th century, “mature” Christians were ignoring the New Testament commands on church discipline in favor of boosting attendance and out of the fear of offending someone.
- ~ Perhaps church attendance and building projects

When Did the Teaching Start To Go Wrong?

were in the forefront of many people's minds and not holiness. Attendance began to slip for churches who would stand for Jesus' position and Paul's position on marriage. They thought they would cease to have a church, so they started to conform to the world's view on marriage and divorce.

- ~ The "God wants me to be happy more than holy" movement. God does want us to be happy, but not at the cost of holiness. I constantly see people reading more mainline "Christian" books about health, wealth, and a better life, without reading the true book, the Bible, that outlines God's boundaries, His holiness, and sincere repentance that leads to eternal happiness. Many have justified their disobedience by some of these "mainline Christian authors."
- ~ Many were afraid to say anything because a person would be branded a "legalist" or "Pharisee" and not full of compassion if they tried to teach and apply what Christ told us to do in the Great Commission, to "teach them to observe my commandments."
- ~ Some parents are not teaching their children biblical principles at home but are counting on the church and school to do it for them.
- ~ Many have taught "cheap grace"—forgiveness without repentance. I can say I am sorry and then continue to live in sin.
- ~ Some teach forgiveness without emphasizing the importance of striving for obedience. For example: Many people will say that Jesus didn't condemn the woman caught in adultery. Most people in our culture will stop there without finishing the verse. Jesus concluded His conversation with this lady by saying, "*Go and sin no more.*" Not, "Go and sin some more."
- ~ There is a lot of pressure put on preachers to be

Have you not Read?

“successful.” As a result, some have watered down the Scriptures or intentionally skipped over many “difficult passages” to be seeker-friendly and bring the masses into the building, because that is how the world sees success. Leaders realize you cannot preach that marriage is for life and mean it without offending the ones who are in a “remarriage.”

- ~ People considering the marriage and divorce Scriptures either had a child, or relative, or friend involved in adultery and it resulted in a changed view of morality.

The Results of These New Trends in Some of the Churches:

23% of born-again Christians have divorced 2 or more times. For every 100 new marriages, 51 end in divorce.

33% of born-again Christians have divorced their spouses, a rate statistically equal to our non-Christian and pagan counterparts. 90% of all divorces among Christians occurred after they came to Christ (Barna Report August 6, 2000) (<http://www.saveus.org/docs/factsheets/stateofmaritalunion2005.pdf>).

In the late 1800s, when the majority of churches believed marriage was permanent while a spouse was living, 1 in 10 marriage relationships ended in divorce and it was considered an epidemic.

In 1920, 1 in 7 couples divorced: in 1960, 1 in 4 couples divorced; in 1974, 1 in 3 couples divorced: and today, on average 1 in 2 couples believe marriage is not a covenant with God and each other.

A Hartford Seminary study confirmed pastors now divorce their covenant partners as often as their parishioners and have the second-highest divorce rate of all professions.



Chapter Eight

Common Questions

Isn't There an Exception for Adultery?

Matthew 5:31-32 – There is no mention of remarriage in this Scripture when Jesus brought up the topic and then made a direct statement on the topic. Jesus was holding the man responsible if he divorced her for any other reason than for fornication (*porneia*), not adultery (*mocheia*). Notice the woman could be innocent, but the husband would be guilty if she remarried someone else because she would be committing adultery. This Scripture, along with **Matthew 19:9**, has no reference to any woman ever having an exception for divorce and then being permitted to remarry. The first time Jesus ever mentions women divorcing was in **Mark 10:12** and there were no “scriptural grounds” for divorce. Matthew was written with a Jewish audience in mind where only the man had the right to divorce and remarry during the betrothal period.

The first time Jesus ever mentions women divorcing was in Mark 10:12 and there were no “scriptural grounds” for divorce.

Adultery has never been grounds for divorce. In the Old Testament the command was to stone the adulterers (**Leviticus 20:10, Deuteronomy 22:23-24**).

Matthew 19:9 is not an exception but a clarification that would allow remarriage because of fornication/sexual immorality during the betrothal period under the law of Moses.

Have you not Read?

Matthew's audience was Jewish; if I went to Mexico, I would want to speak in such a way that they would understand so it makes sense to them based on their culture and practices. Mark records the same scene with the Pharisees in chapter 10 but Mark's audience was Romans who did not practice a betrothal period, so it would be irrelevant to hear him say anything about the betrothal period to that audience of people (**Matthew 1:18-19, Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:9, John 8:41**).

All of these passages discuss the betrothal or espousal period. The Jews, to whom Matthew was writing, understood the betrothal period. So we believe that Jesus gave no exception but a clarification for adultery.

Also, many scholars believe the books of Mark and 1 Corinthians were written before Matthew. If that is the case, the first generation of Christians never knew of a so-called exception clause for fornication that some people claim is found in **Matthew 19:9**.

~ There are authors, whom I deeply respect, who believe in the permanency of marriage, but think the so-called exception refers to whoredom. Another view by, Dr. Leslie McFall, who is affiliated with Cambridge University in England, believes that the Greek compound word translated as "except" in **Matthew 19:9** was never in the earliest manuscripts to begin with for the first 1000 years after Christ. Also, there are others who think the uncleanness exception refers to a very gross defilement. Whatever the case may be, the Scriptures under the new covenant make it clear that whoever marries the woman divorced from her husband, whether fornication happened or not, commits adultery.

The Espousal/Betrothal Period

We have all heard of the espousal/betrothal period because it is part of the Christmas story. Mary was Joseph's espoused/betrothed wife. We understand that Mary and Joseph had not come together during this period. (Jesus was born of a virgin.) And although they were called husband and wife, the marriage was not yet complete.

Common Questions

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name, JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:18-21).

In the Jewish culture, espousal was the period between engagement and marriage. It was the complete commitment of the couple to one another. However, the marriage wasn't consummated until the wedding ceremony had taken place after the betrothal period. A friend of the groom was assigned to watch over the bride during the espousal period to assure her virginity until the wedding day.

During the separation period, they were considered fully married and any infidelity was punishable by death (stoning) **Deuteronomy 22:20-21**. The long period, in the case of a virgin, was two-fold. It gave them time to make sure that she was not already pregnant by another man and it proved their dedication to each other. During this time, the man could write the bride a bill of divorce if he found anything “unseemly” in her. (See **Deuteronomy 24:1, 2**.) She would then be free to marry another man.

We believe this espousal/betrothal period is what Jesus was referring to in **Matthew 5:32** when he told his Jewish audience that they could not “divorce” except for “*porneia*,” which means fornication or in today's vernacular, premarital sex. The word for adultery is a completely different word in the Greek, *moichao*. You can see that by using two different words, Jesus is separating *porneia*/fornication (premarital sex during the espousal period) from *moichao*/adultery (sex outside marriage).

In **John 8:41** Jesus is ridiculed by the Pharisees for being born of fornication/*porneia* during the betrothal period.

Have you not Read?

Another example of someone being a husband and wife during the betrothed state, before the marriage was consummated by having sex, is of Lot's two daughters. His two daughters were virgins, and never had sex with any man (**Genesis 19:8**), yet his daughters were married to their husbands (**Genesis 19:14**), as Lot refers to these men as his sons-in-law. The reason Lot's daughters were virgins, yet had husbands, is because his daughters were betrothed to these men, but they had not consummated their marriage with sex yet. (Birkitt)

ATS Bible Dictionary explains the Betrothal well:

Betrothal is the engagement of a man and woman to marry each other at a future time. Parents anciently often betrothed their daughters without their consent, and even while very young, as is still the case in oriental countries. Sometimes a regular written contract was made, in which the bridegroom bound himself to give a certain sum as a portion to his bride. The marriage was not complete until the bride was at least twelve years old; yet the betrothal could be dissolved only by divorce or death (**Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:27**).

God speaks of betrothing his people to himself, in bonds of tender affection, and pledging his word that all his gracious promises will be fulfilled to them (**Jeremiah 2:2, Jeremiah 3:14**).

In the *Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation*, by Oxford University Press (Editors are: Adele Berlin and March Zvi Brettler. Copyright is 2004, Jewish Publication Society), **Jeremiah 3:14** reads: "*Turn back, rebellious children--declares the Lord. Since I have espoused you, I will take you, one from a town and two from a clan, and bring you to Zion.*" (See also **Hosea 2:19,20** and **2 Corinthians 11:2**).

The movie "The Nativity," which was released in December 2006 by New Line Cinema, does an excellent job of describing this betrothal period with Joseph and Mary.

Doesn't the Marriage Covenant Break with Adultery and a Divorce Certificate?

First of all, if Jesus thought the marriage covenant ended at

divorce, He would never have called it adultery after the second marriage.

Second, we know of several marriages where adultery has happened and forgiveness has taken place.

If adultery, as some people think, breaks the marriage covenant, the couple would no longer be married. So, if they wanted to remain in their relationship in spite of the adultery, wouldn't it be necessary for the couple to redo their vows in order to still be married? If adultery breaks the marriage covenant, did that make Hosea and Gomer "not married" in their life situation? Hosea, the short book in the Old Testament, gives us a case study of how "adultery" does not give a person a right to divorce and remarry. God always wants repentance and reconciliation from spiritual adulterers.

When we become Christians, we are joined (betrothed) to Christ. Christ represents the husband and we, the church, represent the betrothed bride (**Ephesians 5:28-33**). He is always the innocent party, but we want Him to forgive us. Marriage represents this. If we become disconnected from Him, He still wants us to return to Him. He does not want us to continue in a state of adultery with the world (**James 4:4**). When divorce and remarriage takes place, it ruins the beautiful picture of Christ and the church to the rest of the world.

If adultery, as some people think, breaks the marriage covenant, the couple would no longer be married. So, if they wanted to remain in their relationship in spite of the adultery, wouldn't it be necessary for the couple to redo their vows in order to still be married?

Is There an Exception for an Unbelieving Spouse?

There are those who believe that if an unbelieving spouse divorces you because you are a Christian, you are free to remar-

Have you not Read?

ry. In **1 Corinthians 7:15**, the Greek word for bondage/bound is *douloo* and it means to make a slave. The Christian spouse is not held accountable to perform duties as a spouse.

The Greek word for bound found in **Romans 7:1-3** and **1 Corinthians 7:39** is *deo*, which refers to legal/binding marriage. It means to be under a command, duty, or obligation. We believe Paul knew a divorce or separation could happen, in some cases, such as that found in **1 Corinthians 7:15**, or because of abusive situations. While these Scriptures acknowledge that divorce/separation can take place, we do not believe this is an exception allowing for remarriage. Just four verses earlier, Paul had said to remain unmarried or reconcile, so he would be contradicting himself if he now made an exception. Jesus and Paul always have the mind-set of forgiveness and reconciliation.

What About Deuteronomy 24:1-4?

First, let's look at the laws concerning sexual immorality for the nation of Israel in **Deuteronomy 22:13-30**.

"If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and detests her, and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, 'I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she was not a virgin,' then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out the evidence of the young woman's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. And the young woman's father shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he detests her. Now he has charged her with shameful conduct, saying, "I found your daughter was not a virgin," and yet these are the evidences of my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him; and they shall fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days. (Emphasis mine.)

"But if the thing is true, and evidences of virginity are not found for the young woman, then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel,

to play the harlot in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

“If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall die--the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall put away the evil from Israel.

“If a young woman who is a virgin is betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he humbled his neighbor's wife; so you shall put away the evil from among you.

“But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. But you shall do nothing to the young woman; there is in the young woman no sin deserving of death, for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so is this matter. For he found her in the countryside, and the betrothed young woman cried out, but there was no one to save her.

*“If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; **he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.** “A man shall not take his father's wife, nor uncover his father's bed.” (Emphasis mine.)*

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and Jeremiah 3 go together:

“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, 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, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your

Have you not Read?

God is giving you as an inheritance” (**Deuteronomy 24:1-4**).

In older translations look at what God says in Jeremiah. Notice God said, “they say” in the King James Version. It doesn’t seem like He liked this agreement, but when God became flesh on earth; Jesus said Moses suffered to give you this concession.

“They say, “If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man’s, May he return to her again?” Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to Me,” says the LORD. (Jeremiah 3:1-3).

There has been much debate over these verses for thousands of years. Many theologians believe this set of Scriptures is addressing the betrothal period to protect people from being stoned.

Others believe **Deuteronomy 24:1-4** gives permission for divorce and remarriage today and also shows that reconciliation of spouses cannot happen because Moses issued this concession. If this is the case, God was breaking the Law of Moses because He said He wanted Israel back after the bill of divorce in **Jeremiah 3:14**. Also, if that is the case, then any man who took away a lady’s virginity has to marry that person, and they are never allowed to divorce all the days of their lives, based on **Deuteronomy 22:19**. They also need to stone anyone who has committed adultery and their rebellious children. Being under the new covenant does not carry the same penalty. You will not get stoned but you need to repent from the sin. Also, under the new covenant, why are you not allowed to return to a spouse you are still bound too?

Whatever these Scriptures were intending to say, Jesus Christ, God in flesh (**Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 1:23, John 1:1, John 1:14, John 8:58, John 10:30, John 20:28, 29, 1 Timothy 3:16, 1 Timothy 4:10, Titus 2:10, 2 Peter 1:1, 1 John 5:7, Revelation 22:13**) ended the great divorce and remarriage controversy once and for all on the Sermon on the Mount and also when he had the future church leaders (12 disciples) in a room together in **Mark 10**, where there were no loopholes to be found.

There are many laws in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy which we are not bound by such as stoning rebellious children, stoning people who have been sexually immoral or committed adultery, having slaves, multiple wives, never breeding cattle with a different kind, or even our need to sacrifice animals for the atonement of our sins...

Jesus recognized the Mosaic rule on divorce: **Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:4, Mark 10:4**. Recognition does not mean approval. Notice, He said Moses gave it to you as a concession. In some translations it says Moses suffered to give this to you. Then Jesus re-establishes His authority regarding marriage and divorce in **Matthew 5:32** when he says, *“But I tell you....”*

Also, the two religious Jewish schools of the day disagreed sharply over **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**. The school of Hillel was very liberal and said the man could divorce the wife for any reason. The conservative school of Shammai said a man could divorce his wife for adultery or some type of sexual immorality. Jesus, as we all know, didn't make too many friends with the Pharisees of the day. When they wanted to test Jesus, to trap Him about the divorce issue, Jesus did not agree with either of their positions and took the permanence of marriage back to the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 2:24**), where there were no court-houses, no paperwork, and where they were no longer two but one. This is why He called it adultery if a marriage to another person took place while the spouse was still living. If Jesus had taken the side of one of the schools, that school would have become very fast friends with Him. That did not happen and is one of the reasons, I'm sure, that they hated Jesus.

The question we have to ask ourselves is this: Who were the ones looking for loopholes about the marriage and divorce issue? Are we like the Pharisees and are looking for loopholes today? Christian people strive to obey Jesus' commands out of love for Him; they don't try to find loopholes like the Pharisees. I was looking for a loophole myself when I was trying to justify a remarriage in my ministry but I never found one, just peace of God's beautiful Word that marriage is a permanent thing.

What About Matthew 19:9?

Mark 10 is the same story but with no exception clause because of a different audience. He had already made a statement on the Sermon on the Mount.

JESUS said this about the Mosaic Law concerning divorce when talking with the Pharisees: The Pharisees were asking, “What about this? What about Moses?” Just like some people are doing today. You tell me, who are the Pharisees? **Matthew 19:1-12** reads as follows: (KJV)

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

- ~ They wanted to find some loophole.
- ~ In verse 7 they recognized “the bill” and “put away.”
- ~ Notice women were never allowed to divorce because

Common Questions

of fornication in Matthew. The first time Jesus ever addresses women divorcing was in Mark's gospel because His audience was Romans where women were allowed to divorce. But when you read Mark chapter 10 there was no exception for women or men to divorce then remarry without it being called adultery.

- ~ The disciples asked again. They had just heard something that blew them away.
- ~ If divorce stayed the same as Moses' time and Jesus thought the marriage covenant ended at divorce, why did the disciples say, "If this is the case, it is better not to marry?" They were as surprised as people are today.
- ~ The indissolubility of marriage, like in the Garden of Eden, was reestablished.
- ~ Jesus' mind went to eunuchs. Why eunuchs? Celibacy might have to happen for the kingdom of God.

Allon Maxwell of Australia says "Mark and Matthew both say that once God has joined a marriage, men may not separate it. This means that the exception cannot refer to any ground that might arise AFTER God has bound the two into one. Since ADULTERY is a sin which takes place AFTER God has joined a marriage, it cannot be included in the exception. If that is so, then the sexual sin encompassed by the exception, must refer to something which arises BEFORE a "marriage" is joined by God. We are not left without a "case history" which will help us to understand the exception.

It is significant that the only Gospel to record the exception is also the only one to include the story of Joseph and Mary. This is the only New Testament example of what Jesus might have meant by "fornication" or "unchastity" as a ground for divorce. It is this case which defines for us the ground on which a "just man," (**Matthew 1:19**), as opposed to a hard-hearted one, might divorce his wife (or betrothed wife) without guilt before God.

God says bluntly, "*I HATE DIVORCE*" (**Malachi 2:16**).

Have you not Read?

Who amongst us, except the hard-hearted, would choose to do or condone what God hates?

It seems that this is just one more area in which the church has become ashamed of the words of Jesus, no longer confessing him before men.”

“Jesus dismissed in one sentence all Pharisaic teaching on the subject because they bypassed the teaching in Genesis 2:24 and settled for something less than His Father expected from all human beings.”

In review of **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**, **Matthew 5:32**, and **Matthew 19:9**, Dr. Leslie McFall from Cambridge, England, makes a valid point.

“Jesus dismissed in one sentence all Pharisaic teaching on the subject because they bypassed the teaching in **Genesis 2:24** and settled for something less than His Father expected from all human beings. This teaching, He intimated, preceded Moses’ teaching, therefore they should go back to the first thing God taught about marriage and focus on **Genesis 2:24** and forget about **Deuteronomy 24:1-4** completely as a sub-standard, de-based, and degrading level of existence,

which was introduced by men for men.”

What About the Tyndale Bible of 1525 That Says Divorce Breaks Wedlock?

“I say therefore unto you, whosoever putteth away his wife (except it be for fornication) and marrieth another, breaketh wedlock. And whosoever marrieth her which is divorced, doth commit advourty” (**Matthew 19:9**) (TYNDALE).

~ There are some people who will refer to the first half of this verse but not the last part. It says whoever marries the woman who is divorced commits adultery. If Tyndale thought divorce totally broke all bonds, why did He translate Jesus’ words that whosoever marries the divorced woman commits adultery? It should not

be adultery if all bonds were broken.

- ~ Notice that in both these translations, “put away” (the action) and “divorced” (the certificate) is used in the same breath.

I Thought God Was a Divorcee

Both in the Old Testament (Covenant) and in the New Testament (Covenant) God uses the analogy of marriage to describe His relationship with His people in the Old Testament with Israel, and in the New Testament of Christ and the church (**Galatians 3, Ephesians 5**).

Let’s see where the divorce and separation took place:

“They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man’s, May he return to her again?’ Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; Yet return to Me,” says the LORD” (Jeremiah 3:1).

“The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: ‘Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot” (Jeremiah 3:6).

“And I said, after she had done all these things, ‘Return to Me.’ But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it.” (Jeremiah 3:7).

“Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had (put her away) and given her a (certificate of divorce); yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also” (Jeremiah 3:8).

“Go and proclaim these words toward the north (Israel), and say: ‘Return, backsliding Israel,’ says the LORD; ‘I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,’ says the LORD; “I will not remain angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your God, and have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice,’ says the LORD” (Jeremiah 3:12-13).

“Return, O backsliding children,” says the LORD; “for I am mar-

Have you not Read?

ried to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion” (Jeremiah 3:14).

Background of This Very Important Analogy:

God made a Covenant with Abraham because of his faith, that he would be the father of many nations and be blessed. After the test of faith involving his son Isaac, God affirmed again that He would bless Abraham and his descendants in **Genesis 17, and Luke 1:67-80.**

He was “spiritually married/betrothed” to the Israelites in **Exodus 19** with Moses. This continued through much unfaithfulness over hundreds of years.

When the House of Israel split into two kingdoms in the 900s B.C., it became Israel the Northern Kingdom (10 Tribes) and Judah (2 tribes-Judah and Benjamin), the Southern Kingdom. The entire House of Israel, which included Judah, were still the descendents of their forefather Abraham and spiritually married/betrothed to God. The Jewish people were only 2/12th of the people that God made the covenant with. We tend to believe that the nation of Israel was just the Jews from the line of Judah.

Some say that God divorced Israel to remarry her sister Judah. That is absolutely false. There are those who even say that God Himself could not live up to the ideal of marriage throughout this country. It is scary stuff to be saying things like that.

Most people will not read the entire context of this important illustration.

In **Jeremiah 3**, God gave a bill of divorcement to some of the covenant people in a spiritual sense. Israel (10 tribes) was a recipient of the bill of divorcement. Judah, although practicing spiritual fornication as well, could not be divorced by God, only separated for a time, because of God’s promise of sending a Messiah from the lineage of Judah. **Genesis 49:8-12 and Hebrews 7:14** describe this. The line of Judah produced the kings. Wasn’t Jesus called the lion of Judah?

Please don't stop reading there. He also said to them in **Jeremiah 3:14** that He wanted both of them to repent and return to Him because He was their Husband, Master, married, or in some Jewish Study Bibles the word espoused is used because of the covenant He made with their forefather Abraham and affirmed with Moses. Remember the Israelite system that a man was considered a husband even during the betrothal period. God did live up to His covenant He made with His people by sending the Lion of Judah (Jesus) to help redeem the people from the bondage of their "sins."

Once again, after the bill of divorce, God still says He is Husband, Master, married, or espoused to them and He pursued them as He does today with love because He wants reconciliation if we would only open our eyes and ears. It is always our choice if we want to return. God is a jealous God (Deuteronomy 5:9-10) who is looking for a pure repentant wife.

In Jeremiah 31:31-33 Notice This:

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (KJV).

*Once again,
after the bill of
divorcement,
God still
says He is
Husband,
Master,
married, or
espoused to
them and He
pursued them
as He does
today with
love because
He wants
reconciliation
if we would
only open our
eyes and ears.*

God continues to live up to the "Spiritual Marriage Cove-

Have you not Read?

nant.” He has lived up to His part of the promise made with Abraham thousands of years ago. He came down as a lover of His people to sacrifice Himself and for everyone to have the opportunity of forgiveness through His blood. I would say He has lived up to the marriage as a betrothed Husband.

God still wants repentance and is looking for a return of all His people from Abraham’s seed (actually from Adam and Eve’s seed) who obey Him.

God still wants repentance and is looking for a return of all His people from Abraham’s seed (actually from Adam and Eve’s seed) who obey Him. He loves people from the tribe of Judah, Benjamin, the ten northern tribes, people from the United States, Iraq, and the Muslim heritage. For we all come from Adam and Eve who were created and joined by God. He has wanted reconciliation since Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the garden. Read in (**Genesis 3:15-21**) why we

are truly fighting in Iraq.

It all started years ago because of the lack of patience and lack of obedience to God. It can show you the terrible consequences of one bad decision that can last several thousand years. We all have the opportunity to receive the blessing of eternal life and be heirs. Please read **Ephesians 4:4-6**. Many different backgrounds of people made up the first century church, whether they had a Jewish or Gentile heritage. God created Jews and Gentiles and we tend to forget that both can make up the one true Body.

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:27-29).

In the New Testament (Covenant), Jesus/God (in **Matthew 1:23** Immanuel means God with us.) **1 John 5:7** says: *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” (KJV).* God always wants His

betrothed bride to return to Him, if we have been going after other “gods.” And since marriage is a picture of this relationship, we should also always be willing to forgive and reconcile if true repentance has taken place with your spouse.

We need to be ready when the Groom (Jesus) comes for the bride (church).

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. “And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ ”Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ”“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming” (Matthew 25: 1-13).

Hebrews 8:8-13 refers back to the covenant He made with their fathers.

The wonderful book of Hosea teaches us of God’s great love for us. Hosea represents God. Gomer represents his wife and ultimately all of God’s children who love the world’s ways more than Him. Gomer continues to commit adultery but Hosea buys her back and forgives her because of her repentance.

What About the “Putting Away” Argument?

Some people reason that the word “*apoluo*” (put away) explains why God calls it adultery after the marriage. Under this reasoning, a person cannot get married again before receiving the official divorce document. If they do, they would be committing adultery. They believe God is more concerned with the

Have you not Read?

piece of paper than the actual separating. They fail to mention that many scholars know that “put away” and “divorce” are used interchangeably. We believe that doesn’t matter because Jesus recognized the certificate of divorce, which was created to “protect women,” yet He still said whoever marries after being divorced commits adultery (**Matthew 5:32**). Do you believe if someone does have the piece of paper, then Jesus doesn’t look at the new remarriage union as adultery? Jesus wasn’t addressing the “method” if divorcing; He was addressing the reasons why they were divorcing. Never did He mention the necessity of getting a legal document for a divorce to be honored by Him.

To bring it down to our level, is this what God really means in **Malachi 2**? Is God trying to say, “I hate the fact that you are not giving your spouse a piece of paper.” How about a man that just isn’t happy with his wife because she isn’t as pretty as she once was? Should he just make sure he gives her a piece of paper? Most teachers who use this teaching to justify sin would not like this teaching if their wives wanted a better-looking husband or if she claims that “they have grown apart.” They would not like it if a preacher would marry their spouses off to someone else. It is ludicrous to think that God doesn’t hate how the children will be hurt, the financial problems, and the example it will set for generations to come, etc., during an actual divorce. “Putting away” is the action of the separation of the couple. The bill of divorce is the actual piece of paper.

For illustration:

I am marrying my wife (verb), and I have the marriage license (noun).

I am graduating (verb), and I have my diploma (noun).

I am putting away (verb), and I have my bill of divorce (noun).

For the ones who need to go deep into the word meanings here it is:

The following are the definitions found in a number of Greek lexicons. The newest Greek lexicons are listed first.

apoluo ap-ol-oo'-o

(Strong's #630)

The NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words, Editor Verlyn Verbrugge, Zondervan Publishers, ©2000

“In the New Testament *apolyo* has the classical Greek meaning “to release a prisoner, set free from disease, acquit, send people away, dismiss from the duties of life, allow to die. It is especially used of divorcing a wife. *Apostasion* means divorce.”

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature, 3rd. Edition, Revised and Edited by Frederick Danker, University of Chicago Press, ©2000.

“#5 To dissolve a marriage relationship, to divorce”

Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, by Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, Neva Miller, Baker Books, ©2000

“#2 Of divorce — send away, dismiss, let go”

Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. 1, Edited by Horst Baly and Gerhard Schneider, Eerdmans Publishing, ©1990

“In the Synoptics (13 of the occurrences there) *apolyo* is a (common) term for the dismissal of a woman from marriage by means of a letter of divorce (*apostasiou*), so primarily in the phrase ‘send away one’s wife.’ It occurs in Jesus’ prohibition of divorce’ (**Mathew. 5:31-32; Matthew 19:3,8-9; Mark 10:2,11; Luke 16:18**).

The New Englishman’s Greek Concordance and Lexicon by Wigram-Green

(Verb) — “to set free, dismiss, relieve, of divorce; let go; fig, pardon”

Have you not Read?

Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament by F. Wilber Gingrich

“1. Release, set free, pardon 2. Let go, send away, dismiss, Euphemistic for let die, divorce. 3. mid. Go away”

Thayer's

1) to set free

2) to let go, dismiss, (to detain no longer)

2a) a petitioner to whom liberty to depart is given by a decisive answer 2b) to bid depart, send away

3) to let go free, release

3a) a captive, i.e. to loose his bonds and bid him depart; to give him liberty to depart

3b) to acquit one accused of a crime and set him at liberty

3c) indulgently to grant a prisoner leave to depart

3d) to release a debtor; i.e. not to press one's claim against him, to remit his debt

4) used of divorce, to dismiss from the house, to repudiate. The wife of a Greek or Roman may divorce her husband.

[Webster's defines repudiate as “To divorce or separate formally from (a woman).”]

5) to send one's self away, to depart

Strong's Greek Dictionary

“From G575 and G3089; to free fully, that is, (literally) relieve, release, dismiss (reflexively depart), or (figuratively) let die, pardon, or (specifically) divorce: (let) depart, dismiss, divorce, forgive, let go, loose, put (send) away, release, set at liberty.”

Kittle's Theological Dictionary does not address “*apohuo*” or “*apostasion*.”

apostasion ap-os-tas'-ee-on

Strong's #647

Strong's Greek Dictionary

“Neuter of a (presumed) adjective from a derivative of G868; properly something separative, that is, (specifically) divorce: (writing of) divorcement.”

The New Englishman's Greek Concordance and Lexicon by Wigram-Green

Noun — “something that separates (specifically, divorce)”

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words

Noun — “primarily, a defection, lit., a standing off, denotes, in the N.T., a writing or bill of divorcement (Thanks to Biblical Research Reports)

What About Submission to the State?

Jesus Himself commanded us to render to Caesar that which belongs to Caesar (**Matthew 22:21**). Paul had this teaching of Jesus expressly in mind in his passage in **Romans 13**. That has to do with money.

On the other hand, the Scriptures also teach a second principle. That principle is that there are times when the believer must obey a higher power than the State, that of God Himself.

Peter said, “*We ought to obey God rather than men*” (**Acts 5:29**).

Once again, Paul likewise wrote, “*For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ*” (**Galatians 1:10**).

.....
.....
*When God's
moral laws
conflict with the
state, we have
to obey God,
despite the cost
it might bring
to us.*

Have you not Read?

When God's moral laws conflict with the state, we have to obey God, despite the cost it might bring to us. Abortion is legal. Is it moral? "Civil unions" and "same-sex marriages" are legal in some states. Are they moral?

In a "Remarriage," Isn't the Adultery Just a One-time Sin?

George Barna, who reports many trends in this country pertaining to the church, has a startling report from 2004. "66% of professing Christians said divorce was not a sin."

So that means people don't think that a marriage after a divorce (adultery) is a sin even though the Bible says it is. Some may think it is just a one-time sin.

Mark 10:1-12, Luke 16:18, Romans 7:3 The Greek word for adultery, *moixeu/w* and the transliterated word *moicheuo* is a present indicative, suggesting continuous action. Some people believe it is a one-time act of adultery. If that is true, do they have to say their vows all over again after this adultery? If it is a one-time act, should a preacher, leaders, church members, and families of the church validate their one-time sin by marrying these people or allowing them to be married in their church? What other sin would we do that with?

Consider the following comparisons:

I know you are about to commit murder, so here is the gun.

I know you are about to steal from the store; I can provide the getaway car.

I know you are about to commit adultery, so let me encourage you by performing your ceremony or attending your wedding.

*If it is a
one-time sin,
when does
God validate
the sin?*

People do not think of this as adultery after the divorce is finalized, but Jesus said it is, and adultery is sin. If it is a one-time sin, when does God validate the sin?

How can preachers say marriage is for life on Sunday and remarry people on

Saturday whose spouses are still living? The young people are smarter than this, and the disobedience of the entire church is playing out in front of their own eyes. Then we proclaim from most church pulpits and sign petitions about how we care about the sanctity of marriage.

The outside world sees this, and it is no wonder the same-sex marriage community is crying out, “Hypocrites!” Divorce and remarriage while a spouse is living totally undermines existing marriages. People might see that someone’s second marriage is providing more happiness, so some will say, “Why can’t I divorce and remarry, because God wants me happy?”

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (Matthew 7:21-23)!

Preachers, who authorized you to help people validate their adultery by performing their wedding after they got the divorce? Jesus, our authority, said it was adultery.

Remember when Peter tried to put words in Jesus’ mouth about what should happen regarding the death of Jesus in **Matthew 16?**

Many people have tried to conform God into our ways and have not taught people to conform to God’s way.

Peter took him aside and tried to tell Jesus what He should do by saying, “Heaven forbid, Lord,” he said. “This will never happen to you” (Matthew 16:22).

And then Jesus, “...turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men” (Matthew 16:23).

Peter, one of the future leaders of the church, thought He knew best and probably had good intentions of wanting to help Jesus. But Jesus corrected him and made sure that Peter knew who was to be the final authority. Have we, as leaders, been

Have you not Read?

acting like Peter and seeing things merely from a human point of view and not from God's? If Jesus did what Peter said, we would still be without a Savior.

If Jesus thought it was okay to get a bill of divorcement and then get married, He wouldn't have called it adultery; adultery is sin. If Jesus thought it was wrong the first time, you mean to say it is okay the second, third, fourth time, etc. It would be the only sin one gets to continue to practice without the need for repentance.

Have we tried to change Jesus' words to say that it is not adultery after a divorce and a remarriage? Many people have tried to conform God into our ways and have not taught people to conform to God's way. Trying to help lead people to God's way (the narrow road) is not popular and the cost will be great. But God will sustain people who will strive to conform to God's way in the church.

We wonder why the divorce rate in the church is higher than outside the church. Are we trying to have God fit into our ways under the umbrella of "cheap grace?" What is cheap grace? "Grace without repentance," said A.W. Tozer.

As Paul said, in modern terms, "the cancer will spread to the rest of the body" (1 Corinthians 5:6-7). The church that just winks at "practicing sin" in the name of "peace" and "love" will ultimately not be the church that is a vehicle that takes people to heaven.

The majority of churches today would be in total opposition to the original teachings of the church, branding Jesus, John the Baptist, Paul, Peter, Jude, John, James, and all the early Christian leaders as "legalists" or "Pharisees" or "false prophets" because they actually meant the words they spoke to be taught and applied in the church. Many people are called these things if you stand for Jesus' commands, but how can you be a false prophet by repeating the exact words spoken by Jesus and Paul? Jesus was never upset when people spoke the truth,

but He was concerned about their bad intentions and lack of enough compassion to help lead people out of their sin.

Once again, if Jesus thought it was okay to get a bill of divorce and then get remarried, He wouldn't have called it adultery; adultery is sin. If Jesus thought it was wrong the first time, you mean to say it is okay the second, third, fourth time, etc. It would be the only sin one gets to continue to practice without the need for repentance. When does God ever validate sin?

Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him" (John 7:16-18).

How can you be a false prophet by repeating the exact same words from Jesus and Paul?

I would be fearful to disagree with Jesus on these verses. I can only repeat what Jesus says. Are you repeating what Jesus says when it comes to the marriage Scriptures, or speaking on your own authority?

What About the Woman at the Well Who Had Five husbands?

First of all, this is at the beginning part of Jesus' ministry. Jesus had selected just a few of the future church leaders (12 disciples). This entire passage in **John 4** was to show that Jesus was someone special who knew everything she ever did. (She said He must be a prophet.) Normally, if an unknown man would start talking to a woman about divorce, she would think he is crazy.

We don't know if her five husbands had died and then she remarried, but this was probably not the case. Or she could have been divorced under the Mosaic Law where some divorce "was tolerated". The point was she was living with another

man who was not her husband, which was sin. Jesus let her know this.

Most people leave the last part out of this verse in John 8:11. He did not condemn her at that moment but He did say, "Go and sin no more." He did not say, "Go and sin some more."

The issue is that Jesus used this to show the woman her sin and her need for a Savior. He was not approving of her multiple marriages any more than He approved of her current unlawful relationship, whatever it was. He was establishing that He was not your average man on the street. He acknowledged her lifestyle of sin, but at this point in his ministry did not tell her to repent. She seems to have been convicted, because she changed the subject very quickly.

Jesus did not yet have very much credibility and authority in the community's eyes. When word got out that He was someone different, and when His future church leaders were gathered around Him, then He talked about divorce, remarriage, and adultery in the greatest sermon ever to

be preached, the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5:32**. He elevates all standards to a very high level. By the way, did you notice Jesus gave no permission to remarry after this clarification.

How About the Woman Caught in Adultery?

Most people leave the last part out of this verse in **John 8:11**. He did not condemn her at that moment but He did say, "Go and sin no more." He did not say, "Go and sin some more." If this lady did go back to a "practicing" lifestyle of adultery, He would have condemned her. Jesus did not provide "cheap grace" as so many people are doing today. He had compassion on her to tell her she needed to "go and sin no more."

Christ did not think the intentions of the Pharisees were good. If they were going to do it the right way, they would have brought the man with them as they did the woman. Jesus is the truth and He wants us to teach it and practice the truth

with good intentions to help people out of their sin.

What About David and Bathsheba?

There were many things the Lord “tolerated” in the Old Testament that He no longer tolerates today, just as there are things now where grace is extended where there was DEATH in the Old Testament. David paid a very dear price for his sin. There was also an “eye for an eye” and a “tooth for a tooth” mentality.

Polygamy was tolerated by God, but not ordained by Him in Old Testament times. Under the New Covenant times, Jesus brought marriage back to God’s created order, one woman/one man---joined BY GOD, until death. Since God is the one who created the institution of marriage and can be the only one who can join a marriage into “one flesh,” only He has the power to dissolve this union on His terms, not ours. He chooses to do so through death.

Adultery in the Old Testament was punishable by death. We have to remember David was the king, and kings can often use their power to do what they want. The average person at that time could not say, “Bring me that woman.” David still paid a terrible price for his sin after Bathsheba’s husband died because of David’s orders.

In the New Testament, Jesus extended the ability to “repent.” Hosea and Gomer’s marriage was an example of the grace that was coming through Christ—the Lord’s longsuffering and love even in our sin.

“And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the

God’s perfect will came to the New Testament church through Christ and the Holy Spirit. Jesus established His kingdom commandments and left the convicting, comforting, and enabling power of the Holy Spirit to impress it in our hearts and to empower us to live holy lives.

Have you not Read?

sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past (Old Testament) suffered (permitted or let slide) all nations to walk in their own ways” (Acts 14:15-16, KJV).

Acts 17:30 explains this very well:

“Truly, these times of ignorance (OT) God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”

God’s perfect will came to the New Testament church through Christ and the Holy Spirit. Jesus established His kingdom commandments and left the convicting, comforting, and enabling power of the Holy Spirit to impress it in our hearts and to empower us to live holy lives. The full revelation of God has come to the earth and we are accountable to that message.

God’s spirit now lives in Christians and we are houses of God. As Stephen said in Acts, God does not live in houses built by man; this should make us pursue holiness even more. People sometimes say, “God and I had a talk. And He says I am okay and my second marriage is okay.” God will not tell you something that contradicts Scripture. Jesus said it was adultery. Paul and the men who canonized our Bible all agreed.

My wife always asks this question: Should we be more thankful and be willing to pursue holiness and accountability after the Cross or before the Cross?

“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20).

Does Sex Cause a One-Flesh Relationship?

“One Body” relationships mentioned in **I Corinthians 6** and God-joined marriages (“one flesh”) are two different things. Jesus calls remarriage “adultery,” not a God-joined marriage. There is a sin called fornication, which is what **I Corinthians 6** is addressing; it is illicit sex. It is not the relationship God joins in **Genesis 2:24**, nor the relationships spoken of in the Gospel accounts of marriage.

If you are being “joined” with a harlot, it means that you are having illicit relations with someone who has joined herself

with many others. Unless you are a proponent of “sex marries,” then each and every time someone has sex, they are actually marrying that person and leaving their previous spouse. Adultery would be nonexistent, as the new person would be their new spouse, therefore no sin would exist. The one flesh spoken of in **I Corinthians 6** was NOT marriage. Following are some biblical examples of people who had sexual relations with someone other than their wives but it did not cause them to “become married”:

- ~ Abimelech and Sarah in **Genesis 20**. Abimelech was not punished because the Lord came to him in a dream. He did not touch her. God knows whose spouses are whose.
- ~ Judah and Tamar – **Genesis 38**
- ~ Samson and Delilah – **Judges 16**
- ~ David and Bathsheba – **2 Samuel 11** – It wouldn’t be called adultery if “sex marries.” David would never have had to repent.
- ~ If “sex marries,” Jesus wouldn’t have called it adultery after the divorce and after the ceremony because I’m sure they had sexual relations after the ceremony.

Don’t Many Churches Recognize and Celebrate “Remarriages” Following a Divorce While a Covenant Spouse is Still living?

The Bible doesn’t.

Some people will say, “But these people in “remarriages” are producing such good fruit.” (Compare **Matthew 7:17**.) But keep in mind the good fruit the Bible speaks of is not “good results” (**Matthew 7:21-23**) but obedience (**Matthew 7:24-27**). In fact, before this text Jesus warns of false prophets (see **Matthew 7:15**) and these would be considered “believers” and this same theme is carried in the following Scriptures: (**Matthew 24:11-13, 24, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, 2 Peter 2:1-3**).

Have you not Read?



Chapter Nine

Paul's Statements in 1 Corinthians 7 on Marriage

Modern thinking has caused many to be confused about this chapter. But in the past, when it was understood that marriage continued until one spouse died, it was not confusing. Marriage continues until death of one of the spouses. Otherwise, you would think that Paul had split personalities in this chapter. Please, rightly divide this passage as Paul told Timothy to do.

Here is a chart to help you dissect this chapter on some marriage questions Paul was addressing:

Verses	Category	Men	Women
8-9	<i>Spouses died</i>	<i>“Unmarried” (Widowers)</i>	<i>Widows</i>
10-11	<i>Married considering divorce</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Husband</i>
12-16	<i>Married with non-Christian spouse</i>	<i>any brother hath a wife that believeth not</i>	<i>And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not</i>
25-39	<i>Virgins or Betrothed virgins who were legally bound. Widows</i>	<i>if thou (masculine) marry, thou hast not sinned;</i>	<i>if a virgin (feminine) marry, she hath not sinned.</i>

“Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:

It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife

Have you not Read?

the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment. For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that” (1 Corinthians 7:1-7).

Paul Speaks to Widows and Widowers

But I say to the unmarried and to the widows (female): It is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion” (1 Corinthians 7:8-9).

- ~ This statement is for people whose spouses have died. There was not a Greek word for male widower and that is why Paul used the word, “unmarried” (single), like him. Paul had to have been married at one time in order to serve on the Jewish Sanhedrin Council, which many scholars believe he was a part of. We believe he was a male widower. The ancients have the apostle Paul as a married apostle whose spouse had died.

Paul Speaks to Married Couples

“Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. 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.” But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage (doulou) in

Paul's Statements in 1 Corinthians 7 on Marriage

such cases. But God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife? But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches. Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called" (1 Corinthians 7:10-24).

- ~ The part from verses 12-22 goes together in Paul's mind. Many of the newest converts were women and many were thinking about leaving their husbands because they thought they were unequally yoked. Paul told them to remain in the condition they were in. He continues this entire thought about Jewish circumcision. Some Gentiles thought they might have to be circumcised or some Jews thought they had to remove the marks of this Jewish ritual. Paul said no. Remain as you are. Then His thoughts went to the slaves who were converted. This society had a caste system. If your father was a slave, you were too. Some of the slaves asked the question, Should they rebel because they are now free in Christ? Paul said no. Remain and submit. What has happened in the last several years, but not in early Christianity, is that people use these verses to justify sin. Baptism does not sanctify sin. If you are in a sinful state, you need to repent. The unequally yoked couple, when Christianity came to the Corinthians, was not ideal, but Paul said to remain and you might save your husband. If divorce was going to happen, remember he just said four verses earlier to remain unmarried or reconcile because he always hopes for conviction (some

Have you not Read?

spouses who divorced their spouse have shared how relieved they were when the other one remarried) and reconciliation. Whether the new convert had been a Jew under the law of circumcision, or a Gentile who had not been circumcised, neither was a sin. People no longer needed to perform this ritual to receive Christ. Being a slave as a new convert in Christ did not mean you were to escape. So if you're in a state of sin, being a new convert does not mean you keep the sin in your life or that you do not have to pay consequences for past actions. Baptism does not sanctify sin; baptism washes away your sins. However, the Scriptures do not state that baptism alone saves anyone, nor that faith alone saves anyone (**Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, James 2:19, James 2:24**).

- ~ If a practicing homosexual comes to Christ, does the practicing homosexual (possibly in our culture, he or she could be legally married with a marriage certificate) get to continue to be "married" even if it is ongoing sin? Are churches now going to ignore this abomination of same-sex marriage in the same way the preachers of the first half of the 20th century preached against remarriage while a spouse was living but ignored the commands of church discipline? Based on "new teaching," does the church say to remain where you are? How about just confessing your sin? How about the man who murders? He comes to Christ through faith, repentance, and immersion on Sunday in prison and on Monday is he released from prison because he is a new creature, even though he has 20 years left to serve? He certainly can be forgiven but there are still consequences for his actions. How about the man who steals a car? Does that man, after he becomes a Christian, get to keep the car because he is a new creation? Or the man who is a "professing Christian," if he steals a car, does he get to keep the car because he says he is sorry? Based on New Testament teachings, being remarried while a spouse is living is

Paul's Statements in 1 Corinthians 7 on Marriage

not a marriage, but adultery, based on Jesus' and Paul's very plain words. Once you come to Christ, are you allowed to continue to commit adultery over and over again just by saying you're sorry? Or should our fruit be in keeping with repentance as John the Baptist instructed the Pharisees who wanted baptism **(Luke 3:7-8)** but were unwilling to change their ways.

- ~ If a man remarries and then comes to Christ, he cannot keep this "car," because the declaration of its moral value (adultery) declares plainly that it is stolen property belonging to a living spouse!
- ~ Some people will say that divorce and remarriage seems to be the only unforgivable sin. Actually, it is the one sin that most churches, whether they know it or not, teach that you are allowed to continue to practice without repentance after you come to Christ. Some people will say that all you have to say is "I am sorry," without striving to remove the sin. Didn't Judas say he was sorry **(Matthew 27:3)**? Peter repented as well for denying Jesus three times, but Peter changed his actions and God freely forgave him, Judas did not. Being a new creature in Christ means we hate sin and the new you wants to clean up anything that is not of God and turn away from past sins and ongoing sin.
- ~ Some people believe that God never recognized their marriage before they became Christians.

Does this mean the couple has to redo their vows after they become Christians so they won't commit the sin of adultery?

Does this mean that God didn't create the universal law of marriage?

Does this mean that God doesn't recognize all the sins we commit and sinful life situations before we accept Him as Lord and Savior? Why is it called sin? Because we have been disobedient to His Word. We are all accountable to God's Word.

If God only recognizes believers' marriages, do only believ-

Have you not Read?

ers commit adultery?

Do all of their friends and children recognize their marriage, but not God?

Why do we send missionaries out into the field if God doesn't recognize the sin of unbelievers?

God does recognize marriages of unbelievers. Examples: **Genesis 4:16-17, Genesis 20:1-18, 39:7-19, 41:45, 1 Kings 16:31, Daniel 6:24, Matthew 14:1-4, Matthew 24:36-38, Matthew 27:19, Luke 17:26-27.**

Paul Speaks to the Betrothed or Virgins Who Were Not Bound by a Betrothal, Not People Who Had Been Divorced.

“Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy. 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. But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you” (1 Corinthians 7:25-28).

~ These verses have become confusing to many in recent years. Many people who are remarried and/or divorced will use this to justify their position. The entire audience that he is addressing in verses 25-38 is either Jewish virgins (ones who are pledged to be married or betrothed) like Mary and Joseph, who were pledged to be married and were considered husband and wife, or from another background of people who were virgins. Paul was addressing this because some leaders were refusing to marry anybody because they thought marriage would cause so many distractions. They thought it was sin because devotion to Christ would be secondary.

~ Also, some virgins thought they would not be allowed to marry. There were also virgins who were legally

Paul's Statements in 1 Corinthians 7 on Marriage

bound and were betrothed like Mary and Joseph before the birth of Jesus and some thought they had to be free from their betrothed husbands or wives.

- ~ Another reason these verses cannot be used to justify remarriage is that Paul would never contradict Jesus. If Paul said that if you divorce and then remarry it is not sin, he would either be disagreeing with Jesus or not considering adultery as sin. Another reason Paul would be really contradicting himself in these verses is because of verses 10-11.
- ~ He said to remain unmarried or reconcile and then he says in verse 39 that the woman is free when the husband dies, not when a divorce takes place.

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away.

But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord--how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the world--how he may please his wife. There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world--how she may please her husband. And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.

But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry. Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well. So then he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better.

A wife is bound (deo) by law as long as her husband lives; but if her

Have you not Read?

husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment--and I think I also have the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 7:29-40).

- ~ Verse 15 and verse 39 have two different Greek words with two different meanings.
- ~ The Greek word for bondage is *douloo*, found in **1 Corinthians 7:15**—this word means enslaved and speaks of being relieved of any care to maintain marital duties, but it doesn’t mean the couple is not still one flesh in God’s eyes. If a couple divorces, God wants you as a Christian to be peaceful during the process of divorce. The couple should not remarry but should continue to strive towards reconciliation, because previously he said you might be able to win them back. Nowhere in this Scripture does it free a person to get remarried. Paul thinks that the peaceful way they handle the situation could lead to reconciliation.
- ~ The Greek word for bound is *deo*. It is found, in **1 Corinthians 7:27, 28, 39** and in **Romans 7:3**, and means a legal obligation, a “binding,” and refers to the marriage bond.



Chapter Ten

Why is God So Serious About Marriage?

The symbolism of marriage representing Christ and the church is beautiful. It helps us to get a bigger picture of God's design for marriage and what Jesus meant in the "clarification clause" in **Matthew 19:9**. In the Old Testament, there is the marriage covenant of God the Father with the House of Israel (Israel and Judah), which even divorce and separation has not annulled, at least in a spiritual way. There have been many Israelites who have become Christians (weren't there thousands of Jews that came back to their Master by being obedient to Jesus Christ after the resurrection?) and God forgave them. Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, and Joseph (all Jews) understood the significance of their miraculous babies (**Luke 1, 2**). Even Simeon and Anna (Jews) knew that God's promise was being fulfilled.

In the New Testament, there is the betrothal/espousal marriage of Jesus (God in the flesh), and the church. The marriage of Christ and the church will never end. It will never be tainted with divorce or any other separation from Christ.

However, the spiritual consummation after the wedding of Christ and the church has not yet occurred. The church is still only in the engagement period (betrothal/espousal period) with Christ. There are some interesting passages of Scripture that point this out. In **2 Corinthians 11:2** it says that we are Christ's fiancée, so the marriage is yet to come: *"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."*

Have you not Read?

In **Ephesians 5:22-33** human marriage is given as an illustration of Christ and the church. Many people had always viewed this passage as if the church was already married to Christ. However, in **verse 27** it indicates that the marriage is yet to come by using the future tense. It is not the past tense: *“that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”* The fact that the church is not yet fully married has some very interesting implications. It has opened up some new insights that many people have never seen before.

The consummation of marriage in a spiritual sense of Christ and the church occurs after the whole church is gathered together in heaven at the end of the world. God gives us a glimpse of this in **Revelation 19-7-9**: *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God”* (KJV).

There Are Some Interesting Points About the Marriage of Christ and the Church:

There must be death first from Satan, then sin, and also self, so that we can be remarried to Christ—divorce is not sufficient. Death is the only thing that can end a marriage and free a person to marry another. This is true in human marriage as well as in marriage in the spiritual sense to Christ. In **Romans 7** where Paul states that death frees a person from the first marriage so that they are free to marry another person, he also says in **verse 4**: *“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God”* (KJV). This death occurs in the spiritual sense so that we can be betrothed/espoused to Christ.

The marriage of Christ and the church will never, ever end. There cannot, and never will be, a divorce of Christ and the church. This is her eternal destiny.

Why is God So Serious About Marriage?

Human Marriage Is a Type or Shadow of Christ and the Church.

A type (*typos* in Greek), or “archetype,” often called a “shadow,” “parable,” “allegory,” or “figure” in Scripture, is a person, thing, or action that precedes and prefigures a greater person, thing, or action. That which is prefigured is referred to as an “antitype.” The concept is summarized in Scripture itself. (Thank you, Myron Horst.)

We are told marriage is a type or shadow in **Ephesians 5**.

Examples of Other Types or Shadows:

Baptism – Why is it so important to be buried in water like Paul said in **Romans 6**? It is a shadow of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Jesus commanded this.

Communion – It is a shadow of Jesus’ body and blood. Jesus commanded this.

Isaac, after his miracle birth, carried his own wood and was obedient to his father Abraham according to **Genesis 22**. The ram in the thorny thicket (a type of Christ being the sacrifice with thrones on his head) was provided by the angel for Abraham to use instead of Isaac. The event took place on Mount Moriah. The potential sacrifice of Abraham’s son was a type or shadow of Jesus’ miracle birth. Jesus carried His cross and was obedient to His Father’s will on the cross. It is very probable the great sacrifice took place on Mount Moriah (Calvary).

The **Rock** that Moses struck and the water came out in **Exodus 17** was Jesus. It was a shadow of Jesus being pierced with a spear on Calvary, when living water came rushing out of His side. Remember how Moses disobeyed the second time with the rock in **Numbers 20**? He was told to speak to the Rock. Instead, Moses struck the rock twice and the penalty was that he was not going to lead his people to Canaan. Joshua was going to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land. Who was Joshua shadowing? The Greek name “Jesus” is a transliteration of the Hebrew name Yehoshua or Yeshua, the English form of which is “Joshua.” Only through Jesus do we have an opportunity to go to the real Promised Land.

Have you not Read?

Animal Sacrifice in the Old Testament—It was a shadow of Christ being our sacrificial Lamb to take away our sins. This was an Old Testament ordinance.

The **Temple** was a physical building created by Solomon and was the dwelling place of God. The common man could not enter into the Most Holy Place. Only a priest could go into this special place once a year. Jesus' body was that temple (**John 2:19-22**) and Christians are also the temple (**Acts 7:48, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20**). People who are Christians are priests (**Hebrews 4:14-16, 1 Peter 2:5**) and have instant access to the Most Holy Place. Why? The curtain was torn (**Matthew 27:51, Hebrews 10:20**).

The **Curtain** was a type or shadow of Jesus' flesh becoming sin for mankind and opening the way for us to come to the Most Holy Place.

As a type, human marriage cannot break what the type or shadow is. Therefore, if Christ had allowed divorce then re-marriage in the "exception clause" in **Matthew 19:9**, He would have destroyed the type. Human marriage would no longer have been the illustration of the marriage of Christ and the church. If Jesus had stated that divorce would free a person in a human marriage to marry again, it would not illustrate the eternal destiny of the church in which there cannot be, and will not be any separation from Christ. Any other explanation of the "exception clause" other than it referring to fornication with another during the betrothal period does not line up with the marriage of Christ and the church. Any other interpretation removes marriage from being a true type of Christ and the church.

Because the time on earth is the engagement/betrothal/espousal period of Christ and the church, it is possible for a person to forfeit their salvation here in this life before they die.

Jesus did this to present her to Himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault (**Ephesians 5:27**).

Doesn't this sound like the betrothal period?

Why is God So Serious About Marriage?

Marriage, which only death can end, is an illustration of the absolute eternal security given to the church. In heaven there will be no more death. Therefore, there can never be a divorce, annulment, or an ending of the marriage of Christ and the church. If God permitted divorce and then remarriage to another person, marriage would no longer illustrate the church's eternal security with Christ.

The marriage of God the Father with Israel (including Israel and Judah) under the Old Testament (Covenant) took the death of Jesus. The marriage of Christ (God in the flesh: **Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 1:23, John 1:1, John 1:14, John 8:58, John 10:30, John 20:28,29, 1 Timothy 3:16, 1 Timothy 4:10, Titus 2:10, 2 Peter 1:1, 1 John 5:7, Revelation 22:13**) and the church under the New Testament (Covenant) illustrate the permanence of marriage until death. Divorce does not end marriage. Only death can end the marriage covenant and free one to marry another. (Horst, Whitaker)

Have you not Read?



Chapter Eleven

Where is the Compassion?

“And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy” (2 Chronicles 36:15-16).

Compassion is speaking the truth and helping people make the transition from darkness to light, if they let you, no matter what cultural practices surround us, even in our churches. Compassion is not validating anyone’s sin.

If a doctor knew that his patient had a fatal disease and never told the patient the truth regarding the severity of the disease, would he be considered compassionate? If he knew of a treatment to help correct that fatal disease, but withheld that information because he did not want the patient to be upset and have to change all of his or her desires and plans, would He be considered compassionate? No.

.....

If we withhold the truth or ignore the truth that can help people overcome this battle, or twist God’s Word so people won’t be upset or feel hurt, this is not compassion but abuse.

.....

In a spiritual sense there is a disease of sin in all of our lives that we daily have to put to death through the Holy Spirit. If we withhold the truth or ignore the truth that can help people

Have you not Read?

overcome this battle, or twist God's Word so people won't be upset or feel hurt, this is not compassion but abuse. Some of the most compassionate people I know always tell the truth that comes from the Scriptures, no matter if it is popular or not.

The most compassionate man ever to walk the earth was Jesus. He warned people they needed to repent (turn from their practicing sin) or they would go to a place of eternal punishment.

"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish"
(Luke 13:5).

There is a great promotion in the churches that there is no hell. This teaching is in total disagreement with Jesus.

Is Jesus still compassionate for telling us the following story? Yes, He is warning us all that now is the time for salvation.

Jesus said *"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'*

"Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead,

Where is the Compassion?

they will repent.’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead” (Luke 16:19-31).

The Word (Truth) is like a sword and is full of compassion (**Ephesians 6**) to help us fight off the satanic forces. It is warning us to conform our ways to God’s ways and if there is no pattern of us doing this we will pay the eternal price. Jesus told me. It is in His Word.

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:12-13).

Jeremiah being inspired by God says:

“Is not My word like a fire?” says the LORD, “And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces” (Jeremiah 23:29)?

Many people feel that this biblical teaching on divorce and marriage is not compassionate. We need to begin asking divorced people who know the truth and who are remarried, or desire to be remarried, where their compassion is for the children and other young couples they are setting an example for.

Most people will go through their lives without having the truth taught to them. This truth could help their marriages and families because many of the remarried people and the “modern church” will not allow it to be taught the way it was by the earliest Christians and by the men who canonized our Bibles.

Where is the compassion for the spouses who do believe marriage

Many people feel that this biblical teaching on divorce and marriage is not compassionate. We need to begin asking divorced people who know the truth and who are remarried, or desire to be remarried, where their compassion is for the children and other young couples they are setting an example for.

Have you not Read?

Where is the compassion for the spouses who do believe marriage is until death, as was said in their vows, and are waiting on their covenant spouse to return to them?

is until death, as was said in their vows, and are waiting on their covenant spouse to return to them? Where is the compassion for the children who want their parents back together? Where is the compassion for the ministers who have to give an answer to the Lord in their attempts to preach, teach, and apply the whole counsel of God?

Where Is Grace?

God inspired Paul to say:

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you” (Titus 2:11-15).

God inspired Paul again to say:

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death” (Romans 6:1-3)?

God inspired Jude to say:

“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, (lust of flesh) and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 4, KJV).

God’s grace does not make an unrighteous act righteous.

What sin can we say we are sorry for and not try to stop and not continue to practice? Or for what sin can we say the words “I’m sorry” and it changes Scripture?

Where is the Compassion?

For example, You shall not murder. Then I murder. I can be forgiven if I repent, but the Scripture is still there in black and white. If I get remarried and say I am sorry, it still doesn't change the Scriptures that a man who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against his wife. Or a woman is bound until death to her husband (**Luke 16:18, 1 Corinthians 7:39, Romans 7:3**).

“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The LORD will judge His people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (**Hebrews 10:26-31**).

People have been trying to do this for years. Here is what Jeremiah told the “professing believers of God” in his day:

“Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations’” (**Jeremiah 7:8-10**)?

If grace is making people feel comfortable about their sin, that is not compassion but abuse.

What About Forgiveness?

Some people who cry for forgiveness in this situation are ones who could not forgive their spouses. The world sees Christian marriages splitting up at a rapid pace; doesn't this teach the world that there is a lack of forgiveness in our marriages? Doesn't it teach our children that you don't have to forgive? Didn't we say in our wedding “for better or for worse?”

Have you not Read?

I am not saying there are some situations in marriage when

.....
*If people are truly
repentant why
can't these Scrip-
tures be read and
applied to the next
generation before
their potential
divorce happens?*
.....

someone is getting abused or coming home to an alcoholic who does not want help and is hurting the children. In these situations you need to separate, and still seek help and be in prayer, but by all means don't divorce.

What is the purpose of a divorce? Isn't one reason we have a bill of divorce-ment simply to open up the possibility of remarriage by the world's standards? If people are truly repentant, why can't these Scriptures be read and applied to the next generation before their potential

divorce happens?

What About “There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus”?

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).

Many people will use this verse to justify sin by reading just the first part of this verse and not the last part, or by not reading the whole context of **Romans 8**.

We Are Not Jesus.

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

Based on this verse, God will ultimately be the one to judge people guilty or innocent, but we are responsible to teach all that Jesus commands and apply these commandments through “loving” discipline if people ignore and justify their sin and try to influence another generation by their actions.

We Are Not to Judge?

We can get really confused on this as well. I could say, as many people say about marriage, that “not to judge” is just an

Where is the Compassion?

ideal. But it isn't just an ideal. We have to look at all the Scriptures about judging to come up with a doctrine on this topic.

A local judge can pronounce a person innocent or guilty. Many people “in the church” make judgments all the time—and not with the righteous judgment that Jesus tells us to use. As church leaders, do you want us to judge someone if your husband or wife is having an affair with another person? Or do you want us to ignore it? How about if your child is doing sinful things behind your back and we know it? Do you want us to ignore that because we are not supposed to judge?

The very same people who accuse people of “judging” are the same ones who make a judgment of innocence for people who make sin a practice. They are “judging” as well. The same people who say not to judge are the same ones who judge those who boldly teach the Scriptures on marriage and call them false prophets, legalists, and unloving. You have to judge these people to say those things, don't you? All these teachers have done is to repeat the words of Jesus and Paul about marriage. Actually, all of this is God's judgment.

Matthew 7:1-5 – Jesus did not say never to judge. He wanted them to remove the speck. He did say not to judge unless you care about cleaning up your own life.

Matthew 18:15-17 – You have to make some type of judgment to have church discipline, which is commanded for us to do.

John 7:24 – Jesus said to judge with righteous judgment. This should be done with a loving heart and sincere intentions.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 – Paul was telling the errors of the church when they were ignoring a practicing sinner. He tells us to judge those inside the church.

Revelations 2:18-29 – Jesus was against the church of Thyatira because they were tolerating “practicing sin.” They needed to repent or their children would be struck dead. You have to make some type of judgment to do this.

Did you know? Divorce among Christians is disobedience to God's command not to take a believer to court.

Have you not Read?

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



Chapter Twelve

Confused Times in the Church

Love and acceptance is being misused, maybe unintentionally, to reach the masses and validate sin. As a loving parent, there are many times we have to have “restrictions” and “commandments” because we love our children. For example, if my child is about to touch a hot stove, I have to warn her because I love her. It is not legalism if I do that. She might not think I am full of grace, love, or acceptance, but if I let her do everything she wants to, I would not be full of love at all.

God loves us more than I can ever describe to anyone. But Jesus, before He ascended into heaven, instructed the future church leaders to teach the people to teach and obey everything He commanded. One of the commandments Jesus told us to teach is found in **Matthew 5:32**, **Luke 16:18**, and **Mark 10**. Teaching means communication and at times discipline, just like a parent with children.

For example, if my child is about to touch a hot stove, I have to warn her because I love her. It is not legalism if I do that. She might not think I am full of grace, love, or acceptance, but if I let her do everything she wants to, I would not be full of love at all.

If we think grace means a license to sin, then we have a distorted view of Scripture. If obedience to God’s Word is irrelevant, even after we believe, repent, and are baptized, why did Jesus and Paul preach and command the churches in Paul’s

Have you not Read?

letters, the Gospel of Matthew and in Revelation about church discipline and not tolerating the man or woman who is willfully sinning? If we teach that one is “saved” and does not need to pursue holiness, we have totally abandoned the New Testament teachings. If people get together and call themselves a church but are not teaching these Scriptures, are they a church?

In the early church, many people were considered “saved” and “in the church” and had “accepted Christ,” but the church leaders such as Peter, Paul, James, Jude, and others took action because these professing “saved” people were not pursuing holiness.

Remember Ananias and Sapphira (**Acts 5**)? We could ask the question, Where was the love, acceptance, and grace for those people? They were in the church. God is so full of grace and cares so much; He knows that if “justifying sin” is not dealt with, the cancer will affect the rest of the body. These people were not sincere or repentant. The sin of not dealing honestly will affect the rest of the body. The children could see this and the non-believing community could see this and ask the question, “Why even bother, they act just like us.”

Peter could have ignored this because he was concerned about popularity or attendance but he did not. The Word says that great fear came upon the church. Many of today’s churches teach no such thing. Not many people fear and respect God’s commandments. The outside world sees “professing”

Christians practicing the same sins they are practicing. This must cause them to think, As long as I am a “good person,” I do not need to repent, and God will “wink” at my “practicing sin” as well.

The Word says that great fear came upon the church.

Although we have many great assurances in our faith, it is possible to turn away from our faith. Contrary to current teaching, the Scrip-

tures warn us in many places against falling away. Jesus explained this in the parable of the sower in **Matthew 13**. Look at verses **20-21**: “*But he who received the seed on stony places,*

Confused Times in the Church

this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.” (NKJV).

Have you not Read?



Chapter Thirteen

Isn't Discipline Unloving?

Due to the tremendous misunderstanding, neglect, misuse, and abuse of discipline within the church we will look at this subject at length. If discipline is unloving, then God is unloving (**Hebrews 12:6-8**).

Corrective church discipline refers to action taken by an assembly or member of an assembly to maintain the purity and love of that community. In **Matthew 18:15-21**, Jesus lists the steps for corrective discipline. First one member approaches another brother or sister. Then he brings another witness. Finally, the church excludes an unrepentant brother or sister. Every step of the above is church discipline. Excluding the member is merely the final step done when the erring brother refuses to repent. It is done for the restoration of the brother and maintains the purity of the body.

1. Why Do Churches Fail to Exercise Corrective Discipline?

Many churches throughout the world today fail to carry out their responsibilities regarding church discipline. These churches ignore the clear instructions given in God's Word on this topic. There are many reasons why this is so:

A. Some Are Apathetic - They do not shepherd their sheep and therefore are unaware of habitual sin that may enter into the life of one or more of its members. In fact, some churches are so lax in the area of shepherding that they do not know who is a member and who is not a member. Sheep wander in

Have you not Read?

and out like a revolving door. The shepherds of these flocks need to be sobered up to the fact that they will give an account before God for their respective flocks (**Acts 20:28-31; 1 Peter 5:1-4**).

B. Some Believe It Is “Unloving” - They believe the church is to be “all loving” and therefore never “judge” a brother or a sister. They feel their responsibility is to keep a “loving arm” around the members at all times and eventually God will bring them around. This type of thinking distorts the biblical definition of love. Godly...love does not allow a wayward brother or sister to continue on in his or her sin. God does not allow for this and neither should the church. (**1 Corinthians 5:12-13; Galatians 6:1; 1 John 3:6-9**).

C. Some Believe It Is “Harsh” - It is a cruel thing to confront someone about their sin. After all, doesn't the Bible say “He who is without sin cast the first stone...?” Doesn't this tell us not to confront others about their sin? Even in the above-mentioned passage, this is not the case. For Jesus himself went on to tell the woman caught in adultery, “Go now and leave your life of sin.” Though confronting people about their sin may be a difficult thing to do, the Bible certainly instructs us to approach our brother when he is caught in a sin—for the purpose of helping him, not hurting him (**Matthew 7:3-5; Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1**).

D. Some Fail to Discipline Out of Fear - What will the other members of the church think of such action? If some don't like this they may leave or cause a division in the church. Why rock the boat? This thinking is erroneous and a compromise to the Scriptures. In fact, failure to discipline will do more harm to the church than good. Christ himself rebukes the church of Thyatira for not disciplining as it should have (**Revelation 2:20-21**). The apostle Paul also refutes this type of thinking; reminding the Corinthians that a little sin will eventually infect the whole church (**1 Corinthians 5:6-8**).

E. Some Fail To Discipline Because Of Unbelief - They think they know better than God how to handle the matter. They think putting a person out of the assembly and shunning the ones who have sinned is not the answer. They know a better

Isn't Discipline Unloving?

way, a more “loving,” “gentle” way, to deal with the problem. Yet, **Proverbs 3:5-6** clearly teaches us to trust God in everything. His ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. He is the one who knows the best way to deal with His children. It is therefore our responsibility to believe Him and trust Him even in the matters that seem difficult for us.

F. Some Discipline Behind Closed Doors - Some churches attempt to discipline wayward members, but not bring it before the church. They feel that the “leaders” need to handle these matters and that the church is not “mature” enough to handle such things. Matters like this will only upset them and confuse them. Unfortunately, a church misses out on many blessings by adhering to this type of thinking. The church at Jerusalem was struck with fear and learned a tremendous lesson through the discipline of Ananias and Sapphira (**Acts 5:1-11**). God will use church discipline to not only sanctify the wayward believer, but also to purify the church.

2. Discipline Defined and Supported

A. Disciplined Defined

a. Church discipline has been defined as: “The due exercise of that authority and power which the Lord Christ, in and by His Word, hath granted unto the church, for its continuance, increase, and preservation in purity, order, and holiness according to His appointment” (John Owen).

b. By church discipline we are referring to any action taken by an assembly or member of an assembly to maintain the purity and love of that community. Church discipline, therefore, takes place constantly in the life of a church. Excluding the member is merely the final step.

B. Scriptural Background and Support

a. Old Testament Examples:

- i. **Exodus 32:19-35** - The Israelites were disciplined because of idolatry.
- ii. **Leviticus 10:1-3** - Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, were slain for offering “unauthorized fire.”

iii. **Numbers 16:1-35** - Korah was disciplined for rebellion.

iv. **1 Corinthians 10:1-13** - These things occurred as examples and warnings for us.

b. Christ himself sanctioned church discipline (**Matthew 18:15-20**). In fact, He became angry with a church for its failure to exercise discipline (**Revelation 2:20-21**).

c. The apostle Paul commanded the practice and gave instruction on the topic on numerous occasions (**Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5,11; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; Titus 3:10**).

3. Purpose Of Church Discipline

Biblical discipline is an expression of love. Therefore it can never be contrasted with love, e.g. by asking, "Should we show love or should we exercise discipline?" The biblical opposite of discipline is neglect, which is an expression of hatred. Therefore, the most unloving thing a church can do is "nothing." Neglect of a wayward believer will undoubtedly bring about his demise and perhaps the destruction of the church.

*"For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (**Hebrews 12:6-11**).*

Biblical discipline does not include harshness, provoking the offending party to anger or acting out of personal irritation. Nor is it to be used by church leadership to suppress opposition or differing viewpoints (**Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:19,21**).

4. Results of Church Discipline

When a church carries out discipline as it ought, it will bring about the following results:

A. Safeguards Purity in The Church - Our God is a Holy God who has called a people to Himself to be holy, blameless, and without stain or wrinkle (**1 Corinthians 5:6-7; Ephesians 5:27; 1 Peter 1:16**). Removing the little bit of leaven ensures that the church will remain pure as God wants her to be. If the church will not take steps to ensure purity, God will take matters into His own hands (**1 Corinthians 11:27-32**).

B. Sets an Example for the Other Members - When Ananias and Sapphira were struck down by God for their lying, "fear seized all who heard what had happened" (**Acts 5:5**). Salvation by grace is not a license to sin (**Romans 6:1-2**). In fact, the forgiven sinner has a greater responsibility to live a holy life by the power of the Holy Spirit (**Romans 6:9-13**). When one of the members is disciplined by God, it is a sobering reminder to the others of their responsibility as children of God (**1 Peter 1:15-16**). An elder who is disciplined also serves as a warning to the rest of the assembly (**1 Timothy 5:19-20**).

C. Safeguards the Testimony/Reputation of the Church - The church is to be a light in a dark world. It is to be an example and witness of the Lord Jesus Christ to the lost. If we allow sin to enter in and remain, we become ineffective and useless in our efforts. In fact, certain radio and television "ministries" have made a mockery out of the Gospel due to their conduct. Great shame has come upon the church because of such action. Therefore the church must protect its testimony by dealing with such matters swiftly and completely (**Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Corinthians 5:1,13; Timothy 4:16**).

D. Brings the Offending Party to Repentance and Restoration - The goal of church discipline is to bring the wayward member back to a place of fruitfulness for God. When the offending party is removed from the church, he loses the protection and care of the body as well as the privilege of fellowship and the Lord's Supper. The hope here is to bring a sense of loss

and pain to the person so that he will repent of his ways and be restored. Such a person must repent of the sin(s) that led to his dismissal before restoration can occur. Fruit of a changed heart must be visible. This will call for proper restitution to be made. The congregation must then forgive and receive back the one who confesses and renounces his sin (**Proverbs 28:13; Matthew 7:16-20; Luke 3:8; Luke 17:3-4; Acts 26:20**).

5. Reasons for Church Discipline

Over the ages there has been much debate over what sins merit church discipline. Certainly, some areas are open to question while others seem quite clear according to the Scriptures. Therefore, the discussion in this paper will be restricted to those passages in the Bible which give clear and specific teaching. These passages list those sins which, when practiced, characterize the unregenerate or unbelievers. There is a stiff warning associated to those who continue in these sins.

A. 1 Corinthians 5:11-13:

“But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”

B. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10:

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

C. Galatians 5:19-21:

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such

Isn't Discipline Unloving?

things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (KJV).

D. Ephesians 5:3-11:

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (KJV).

E. Revelations 21:8:

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (KJV).

F. Revelations 22:15:

“But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.”

6. Implementing Church Discipline

A. Steps of Church Discipline

a. Scripture

Matthew 18: 15-17:

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (KJV).

Have you not Read?

- b. The steps involve:*
 - i. One on one shepherding
 - ii. Take two or three for additional witnesses and to give confirmation and warning
 - iii. Tell it to the church
 - iv. Expulsion and handing the person over to Satan
- *Each step is to be handled carefully and prayerfully. Each case is unique and should be handled on its own merits. The goal is to bring repentance and restoration. The church's responsibility is to call the person back to his Savior, then to forgive and receive back the repentant one.

B. Response of the Church

The response of the church depends on the response of the disciplined individual.

a. A person who is disciplined and leaves the assembly - Such a person must be treated as an outsider or an unbeliever (**Matthew 18:17**). This person should lose all the benefits of being in the body. Such a person does not have true fellowship with God, and therefore should not have the privilege of enjoying fellowship with God's people (**1 John 1:6-7**). The only contact with these individuals should be for the purpose of bringing them to repentance. However, if the person becomes factious and divisive, there should be no contact with them to protect the flock (**Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10-11**). The offending party must repent and show evidence of repentance prior to being restored to the body (**Luke 3:8**).

b. A person who is disciplined but who does not want to leave the assembly - This is a "so-called brother"—a person who does not want to repent of his sin, yet retain the privileges of God's people. Such a person is dangerous, since they represent "yeast." This person can infect the entire assembly if left unchecked. The Bible tells us to remove the "old yeast," that we may be a new batch without yeast (**1 Corinthians 5:6-7**). The Lord instructs an assembly to treat very severely someone who

Isn't Discipline Unloving?

remains in sin and at the same time professes to be a “brother.” He is to be expelled from the church. With such a man we are not even to eat (**1 Corinthians 5:11-13**). He should be put out for the protection of the purity of the church and to protect the testimony of the church. In fact, Paul instructs the church to hand such a man over to Satan, so that his flesh may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord (**1 Corinthians 5:5, 1 Timothy 1:20**). The hope is for God to deal with the offender in such a way so as to bring him back to repentance.

c. A person who is under discipline for being unruly - In some cases, an assembly may need to censure the behavior of a brother or sister. If such a person is unruly or living a disorderly life, he is not to be associated with. The purpose of this is so the offending party might feel shame and come to his senses. He is not to be expelled from the church like the sinning brother referred to in **1 Corinthians 5**. The offense here is not as flagrant and therefore does not call for expulsion from the church. If this discipline proves ineffective, ultimate church discipline could then follow (**2 Thessalonians 3:6-15**).

d. Discipline of non-members - In some cases it is appropriate to discipline non-members. A “so-called brother” who disrupts an assembly by his conduct or teaching may be “marked out” for the protection of the church. Such a person does not have to be an “official” member of the church to be marked out. The discipline here is geared more for the protection of the flock. False teachers and divisive people are to be avoided (**Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11**).

7. Problems That Short Circuit the Effects of Discipline

A. A Church Fails to Persevere in Discipline - The church “caves in” and allows the offender back prior to fully repenting and making proper restitution (**Acts 26:20**). They begin to question whether or not they have done the right thing and fail to allow the discipline to have its full effect on the person’s life.

B. Churches Fail to Cooperate with Other Sister Churches - Sometimes a member who is disciplined from one church is

gladly received in another church prior to the person repenting. They fail to look into the background of the new member and find out why he left his prior assembly. It is recommended that the elders require letters of commendation or at least make a telephone call to the prior church before receiving transferring members.

C. Relationships in the Body Are Not Strong Enough to Affect the Offending Member - Perhaps that person was never fully integrated or shepherded into the life of the assembly. In such cases the discipline will not be as powerful. The person will not sense a great loss of fellowship since they never had such fellowship to begin with.

D. Certain Members Don't Stand Firm in the Discipline

Although the church as a whole stands firm, certain members refuse to stand by the discipline. They continue to fellowship with the offending person and therefore do not allow the discipline to take its full effect. In cases like this, the members who rebel against the discipline must also be warned. If they do not cooperate, discipline may also need to be administered against them. The members of the church need to be taught that discipline should always be motivated by love--for their Savior and for the erring member.

Love and discipline should never appear in opposition. The church will need to learn the "tough love" of our heavenly Father in this area. Churches that do not discipline are more like Christian clubs than living communities. (Barrett)

In many of today's churches, we do the opposite of what the father of the prodigal son did (**Luke 15**). The prideful son was lost because he did not obey his father. He thought he knew more than the father and went out of the father's boundaries. He recklessly spent money on the pleasures of the world until he was broke and ended up in the mud with the pigs. He then realized how much he needed to repent and do the things that the father desired for him to do. In Jesus' story, the prodigal son came back home after brokenness of his soul. The father ran to meet him after his son's repentance and threw a party to celebrate!

Isn't Discipline Unloving?

Some people in today's churches, in the "name of compassion," would try to make the prodigal son feel comfortable in his sin by taking more money to him or joining him in the pig pen. They would be upset with the father, who represented God, and would say that he was "cruel" and "religious" by not helping the boy. The father never validated the sin of the son and did not enable his son's sinful lifestyle, which could result in him being lost forever. This parable of the prodigal son is to illustrate that our heavenly Father reacts to sin and repentance in the same way.

Have you not Read?



Chapter Fourteen

"Salvation by Works"?

Is Salvation by Works?

Not by any means.

Ephesians 2:8-10:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Anytime you hear Paul talk about works, please don't confuse this with Christian obedience (the law of Christ). Paul was constantly dealing with Jewish people who thought they still had to do the works that the law of Moses commanded. Paul boldly states that only through the blood of Jesus and accepting Christ through repentance, confession of Jesus as our Lord and Savior, Christian baptism, and a continuing faith and striving in Christian obedience will any of us see Jesus one day.

It is through Jesus Christ, not by the works of the Jewish law or the works of “good men” in the world's eyes, that we have the opportunity to receive God's grace. It is through faith (**Mark 16:16, John 3:16, Hebrews 11**), confession (**Matthew 10:32, Acts 8:37, Romans 10:9**), repentance and baptism (**Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16, John 3, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:1-3, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 2:12, 1 Peter 3:21**), and works (pursuing holiness, striving in obedience. Read **James**). Paul and James are united on this doctrine, contrary to what a lot of people teach.

Have you not Read?

Erasmus, who helped contribute to the mess we are in, thought

It is through Christ that any of us has the opportunity to be saved. But this does not mean we can now live in disobedience.

the book written by the half-brother of Jesus (James) did not have an apostolic spirit, so he didn't like its powerful words. So do a lot of "professing Christians." If obedience does not matter, why are there commandments about church discipline from Jesus and Paul? Peter practiced this in the first church.

We cannot earn salvation. You cannot just be a good person and end up in heaven. It is through Christ that any of us has the opportunity to be saved.

But this does not mean we can now live in disobedience. It is by God's grace that mankind has a plan of salvation available. (Salvation is unmerited but not unconditional.) Can you imagine what it would be like if we didn't have salvation available to us? We would be hopelessly doomed to hell, with no possibility of redemption.

Just because we are not saved by works does not mean we must not still be faithful and strive to be obedient to God in our daily lives. Paul, who tells us God's commandments on marriage, also tells us about the urgency of church discipline. If people who claim to be Christians are practicing sins of the flesh and not being obedient, he knew the jeopardy of their souls if no repentance took place. He knew how the cancer would spread in the church and many would think it was okay. James also tells us how faith and works (Christian obedience) go together. We must accept Christ through faith but works (obedience) prove that it is real.

Judaizers?

A Study of the Book of Galatians

Many people think that the verses in the Bible about being justified by faith give them a license to sin and then automatically be forgiven time after time without even trying to abstain from the sin in the future. This is not what it says.

"Salvation by Works"?

Many people in our churches wrongly interpret **Galatians 5:16-21** like this:

“Seeing it is one God which shall justify, through faith, the unrighteous, and fornicators, and idolaters, and adulterers, and effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind, and thieves, and covetous, and drunkards, and revilers, and extortioners, those who do the works of the flesh, including fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars.”

The following, however, is what God inspired Paul to say, which is the true Gospel:

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”
Galatians 5:16-21.

It is clear that the fleshly ways described in this passage need to die for one to be with Jesus in heaven. He tells us to walk in the spirit and we will be able to overcome these sins. This book of Galatians, written by Paul, was to confront the Judaizers, who were a party of Jewish Christians in the early church who held that circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic Law were necessary for salvation and in consequence wished to impose them on the Gentile converts, or who at least considered them as still obligatory on the Jewish Christians.

Some people will use Galatians to try justifying their position and say this stance is going back to the “law,” without

Have you not Read?

looking at the whole book and the mindset of Paul. Some of these people will emphasize that we are not under the law, but want to go back to the law on the marriage issue, like the Pharisees did with Jesus, “But why did Moses command...?”

Paul also tells us to hold people accountable with church discipline to protect the person’s soul and because of the

Galatians was written to tell the people they did not have to go back into the Jewish “law” system to earn justification (forgiveness for their sins).

example the person might set for the church. Galatians was written to tell the people they did not have to go back into the Jewish “law” system to earn justification (forgiveness for their sins). For example, some were trying to convince Titus to become circumcised to earn justification. Others tried to revert back to animal sacrifices, clean and unclean food, special days, etc. That is what Paul was upset about in Galatians. It is no longer required to perform Mosaic ceremonial law, civil law, and Jewish customs to earn salvation. Jesus Christ

replaces all of those requirements. Once you accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and give Him glory for what He alone can accomplish, obedience to the commandments (not the Jewish laws for redemption) of Christ mean everything to him.

Here are two very important Scriptures that contrast the two thoughts:

1 Corinthians 7:18-19:

“Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.”

Galatians 3:19:

“What purpose then does the law (Jewish customs, washings, etc.) serve? It was added because of transgressions, until the Seed (Jesus Christ) should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.”

"Salvation by Works"?

Looking at the whole book of Galatians, many tend to overlook the last part (**Galatians 5:16-21**), when he is contrasting the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.

Is Paul contradicting himself by pointing out these disobedient lifestyles? No. The context of this entire book has to do with Christian Jews trying to accept Christ plus circumcision and teaching it to others.

He confirms the need for us to help restore people in the next chapter.

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (**Galatians 6:1-2**).

If you try to help restore anyone today in the church like Paul told us to do, you are quick to be told, "You are not to judge."

If you try to help restore anyone today in the church like Paul told us to do, you are quick to be told you are not to judge. You are considered legalists and Pharisees. Some cry that we are "not under the law but under grace."

Was Paul a "legalist" or "Pharisee" because he told people to change their ways? Does Paul need to repent from "judging" people? I have heard that if God would just repent we would all be fine. I think we are to be the ones to repent and walk in the ways of God, not the prevailing cultural practices.

Was Paul a "legalist" or "Pharisee" because he told people to change their ways?

"These words in Galatians are an objection which the adversaries of the doctrine of justification by faith have been always ready to make against it, namely, "That if persons be not justified by their obedience to the law, then they may live as they want in the breach and violation of the law, and freely indulge themselves in sin, and consequently make Christ the minister of sin, as if He had relaxed His duty." The apostle Paul rejects

Have you not Read?

this inference and deduction with the greatest abhorrence and detestation, saying, "God forbid."

If sinners are justified through Christ by faith without giving heed to God's moral law, it means Christ would approve sinners, and actually exhort them to sin by His ministry. It releases a person from the obligation of obeying God's law and teaches that a man may be saved though he does not conform to the commandments of Christ.

The idea is that you seek to be justified by faith without obeying the law. You professedly reject that, and do not hold that it is necessary to yield obedience to it. If now it shall turn out that you are sinners; that your lives are not holy; that you are free from the wholesome restraint of the law, and are given up to lives of sin, will it not follow that Christ is the cause of it, that he taught it, and that the system which he introduced is responsible for it? And is not the gospel therefore responsible for introducing a system that frees from the restraint of the law, and introduces universal licentiousness?"

Paul answers that this conclusion is false, because Christ destroys sin in the believer; that being acquitted from the curse of the law and justified, they may be saved by Him. Christ gives them that strength and power, through the Holy Spirit, which destroys sinful tendencies. As a result, after having the old man abolished by the power of Christ crucified, Christ may live in them, and they may consecrate themselves to God. Therefore if any man gives himself to sin after he has received the Gospel, let him not accuse Christ nor the Gospel, but himself, for he destroys the work of God in himself. Christ is not the minister of sin; but in turning away from Him, one makes himself a sinner.

If it turns out that we are sinners, or if others discover by undoubted demonstration that we lead lives of sin; if they see us given up to a lawless life, and find us practicing all kinds of evil; if it shall be seen not only that we are not pardoned and made better by the gospel, but are actually made worse, and are freed from all restraint, is it to be traced to Christ? Is it a fair and legitimate conclusion that this is the tendency of the

"Salvation by Works"?

gospel? Is it to be charged on Him, and on the plan of justification through Him, that unrighteousness prevails, and that men are freed from the wholesome restraints of God's Law? God forbid. It is not so. This is not the proper effect of the gospel of Christ and of the doctrine of justification by faith. The system is not fitted to produce such a freedom from restraint; and if such a freedom exists, it is to be traced to something else than the Gospel.

Learn hence that the doctrine of justification by faith alone cannot be rightly preached except the duty of mortification of sin be urged and enforced with it; for the same faith that depends upon Christ for pardon of sin looks up unto him for power and strength to vanquish and subdue sin. If we do not the latter, Christ will never do the former." (Anthony)

Once again, if obedience does not matter, then why did Jesus tell us to "teach them all that I have commanded you." If we think obedience to Christ's commands should not matter to us, once again, why church discipline? Why the challenging words to the churches in Revelation? Why these words that John's Gospel captures:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

If we think obedience to Christ's commands should not matter to us, once again, why church discipline?

John 14:23 – *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."*

1 John 1:5,6 – *"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth"* (KJV).

Have you not Read?



Chapter Fifteen

Law and Grace

Romans 6:14 says, *“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”*

By this, Paul means that they are not under the death penalty for sin imposed by the law. Instead, they have been given opportunity to repent of their sinful life by God’s grace. But Paul goes on to state that this grace does NOT allow them to continue in sin (v. 15). To continue sinning, Paul states, would lead them back to death (v. 16). However, Paul says that obedience leads to righteousness (v. 16). Although he states that the Roman believers used to be slaves to sin (v. 17), their obedience to the teaching brought to them has freed them from sin. Now they are to be slaves to righteousness (v. 18).

By definition, a slave has to work for his master. When sin was their master, the Romans had to serve it by indulging the lusts of the flesh. Now that they had been saved from the punishment required for their law-breaking, Paul expected them to serve their new master, righteousness. This master also requires obedience—to the law of righteousness.

Would a governor pardon a man convicted of murder so he could continue murdering more and more people? God’s merciful pardon—His grace—is lavished on us because we have repented, with a sincere desire to turn from our wicked ways of lawlessness. If we are willing to live, from here on, righteously, happily as we should have from the beginning, the merciful and loving God has been willing to give His Son Jesus Christ, who, in turn, was willing to give His life to square up our past

Have you not Read?

law-breaking—to wipe the slate clean, and give us, by His merciful grace, a fresh, clean start.

“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:4-8).

The “Transition” from the Old to the New Covenant

Matthew 5:17-20 says:

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

Luke 16:16 says:

“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached” (KJV).

John 1:17 says:

“For the law was given through Moses; but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

Are We Under “Law” or “Grace”?

Wayne Jackson, a theologian from Stockton, California, has two excellent articles on this critical issue of the transition of the two covenants.

Why do some insist that Christians are “under law” today? *“...for you are not under law, but grace” (Romans 6:14).* *“The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus” (John 1:17).*

We must respectfully point out that the question recorded above reflects a serious misunderstanding of the nature of both law and grace. And it misrepresents the nature of the religious

system to which men are amenable today. It is a tragedy of enormous magnitude that some, waving the banner of “grace,” argue that they are free from the constraints of sacred law, and thus are at liberty to forge their own route along the religious terrain. One cannot but be reminded of Jude’s indictment of certain persons who pervert God’s “grace” to accommodate their own sensual goals (**v. 4**).

The terms “law” and “grace” are employed in **John 1:17** to designate the predominant systems of divine, written revelation—namely the two covenants. The first covenant was that given through Moses at Sinai, commonly known as the “law of Moses.” The second was a universal covenant for mankind that issued from Jesus Christ and was ratified by the Lord’s death (**Matthew 26:28**).

Jeremiah referred to these respective systems as “the covenant” that Jehovah made with the “fathers” when he brought them out of Egyptian bondage, and the “new covenant” which later would be world-wide in scope (**Jeremiah 31:31-34**). The writer of the book of Hebrews referred to these laws as the “first” and the “second” (**Hebrews 8:7**), or the “old” and the “new” (**Hebrews 8:13**).

In the text under review (**John 1:17**), the two covenants are designated respectively as “law” and “grace.” And there is a very logical explanation for these appellations. It has to do with the prevailing themes characteristic of these systems. The function of the Mosaic “law” was as follows: (a) to demonstrate that the violation of divine law separates the perpetrator from God (**Isaiah 59:1-2**). (b) To declare that written law is needed to define sin (**Romans 7:7**); and, (c) To show, by recorded precedent, that sacred justice requires that a penalty be paid for law-breaking (**Romans 3:26**; **1 Corinthians 10:5ff**).

On the other hand, the dominant design of the new covenant is to stress the redemptive mission of Christ as the only remedy for the human sin problem (**Matthew 26:28**; **1 Corinthians 15:3**). The wonderful plan of salvation is the result of heaven’s grace (**Ephesians 2:8-9**), not human merit. No richer term than that of “grace” could be employed as a synecdoche (the part put

Have you not Read?

for the whole) for the summation of God's thrilling scheme of redemption. It is entirely reasonable, therefore, that these two systems should be set forth in a contrasted fashion, such as "law" and "grace."

It is a baffling mystery as to how anyone with even a cursory knowledge of Scripture should not understand that there was an abundant measure of grace under the former regime. Noah found "grace" in the eyes of the Lord long before the Mosaic system was birthed (**Genesis 6:8**), but it was not the modern sort of cheap grace that disavows obedience (**Genesis 6:22**; cf. **Hebrews 11:7**). Scores of Old Testament passages stress the pouring out of Jehovah's grace in ancient times upon those who responded to his will (cf. **Exodus 33:13**; **Deuteronomy 7:12**).

It is no surprise that many today are ready to repudiate the idea that man is responsible to sacred law. Outlaws eschew law. The reality is, this irresponsible suggestion—that folks today are "under grace," as opposed to law—is so trifling that it would scarcely be worthy of a rebuttal were it not for the fact that it is so common. The notion has absolutely no sanction in Scripture.

1. Were it the case that man is not under law in this era of time, then it would follow necessarily that no such thing as sin would exist today, for sin is a transgression of the law (**1 John 3:4**). As Paul once noted, where there is no law, there is no sin (**Romans 4:15**). By way of contrast, since it obviously is the case that men (even Christians) do sin in this era (**1 John 1:8—2:2**), the compelling implication is that there is a divine law to which men now are amenable.

2. The Old Testament prophets, in previewing the coming of the Christian age, spoke of the current dispensation as one where the law of God would be obligatory. Isaiah, for instance, spoke of the days of the new covenant, when Jehovah's "law" would go forth from Zion (**2:2-4**). The term "law" renders an original term suggesting "instruction," considered as a "rule of duty" (E.J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965, I.106). Similarly, when Jeremiah spoke of the "new covenant" (**31:31ff**), he made it the equivalent of God's

“law,” which would take up residence in man’s heart (v. 33).

3. When Jesus Christ is repeatedly depicted as a “king” in the biblical record, clearly the concept is set forth that he exercises an authority to which men are expected to comply. If this is not “law,” there is no meaning to such terms as king, rule, reign, submit, obey, etc. (see **Matthew 2:2; 28:18; Luke 19:14,27; Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-10; Hebrews. 5:9; Revelation 1:5; 19:16**).

4. The inspired writers of the New Testament viewed the authority of the regime of Christ as one of law. Our freedom from the condemning effect of sin is the result of our submission to the “law of the Spirit” (**Romans 8:2**). The expression “law of the Spirit” is the same as the gospel, the new covenant system. It is “of the Spirit” because it was conveyed by the Spirit’s direction. It is designated as law because it is an “expression of the divine will” and a “rule of conduct” (Moses Lard, *Commentary on Romans*, Cincinnati: Standard, n.d., 247).

Elsewhere, Paul acknowledged that he was “under law to Christ” (**1 Corinthians 9:21**). Additionally, to the Galatians, he gives this admonition: “*Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ*” (**Galatians 6:2**).

Finally, if the inspired James is not referring to the present order of things when he alluded to the “perfect law” (**James 1:25**), of what was he speaking?

A consideration of the foregoing facts ought to enable the conscientious Bible student to see **John 1:17** in a balanced light. Furthermore, it should forever banish the absurd notion that our modern world is exempt from the restraints of sacred law.

Is the Law of Moses (Torah) Still Binding?

Never has there been a period in my lifetime when there is as much doctrinal confusion in the body of Christ as there is at this time. Some of the most fundamental issues of biblical truth are being challenged.

One of the curious oddities that has made its appearance is

Have you not Read?

the notion that the Torah (the law of Moses) was not abolished by Jesus' death upon the cross.

A Transitional Period

One must understand that the commencement of the New Testament record begins with what might be designated as a "transitional" period. In this era, instruction was given first by John the Baptist; then by Jesus himself, which would accommodate a seamless passage from the old Mosaic regime to the glorious kingdom of Christ.

This is the very point the Lord had in mind when he declared: "*The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached*" (**Luke 16:16**) (KJV). In a manner of speaking, John's ministry was a "bridge" between the old covenant era and the beginning of the reign of Christ.

Though the law of Moses was still operative until the death of Christ (and its civil aspects until the fall of the nation in A.D. 70), Jesus nonetheless taught many "kingdom" principles during his personal ministry. He did this, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 5-7**; cf. also **Matthew 18:15-17**), frequently highlighting some of the differences between the two covenants, especially in terms of the contrasting motivations that were internal to the respective systems.

What About Matthew 5:17-20?

One of the problems the Lord would encounter was a reaction from the Pharisees, who would charge that this Jesus of Nazareth was a revolutionary who had designs on "destroying" the Mosaic economy that had held sway over the Hebrew nation for fifteen centuries. It was imperative that this distortion be addressed and corrected. Hence, the Lord announced:

"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I

say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:17-20) (KJV).

The term “destroy” is a word that can connote the idea of some violence. It derives from the compound Greek term *kataluo* (17 times in the New Testament), literally to “loose down.” Christ employed the word prophetically concerning the destruction of the Jewish temple by the Romans in A.D. 70 (**Matthew 24:2; Luke 21:6; cf. also Matthew 26:61; 27:40, etc.**). It also is applied to the commencing corruption of the human body at the point of death (**2 Corinthians 5:1**).

In the context cited above, therefore, the Lord was contending that he did not come to violently “tear down” the law, as though He were its enemy. Never. Rather, he came to “fulfill” it. These terms stand in perfect contrasting balance.

The Savior fulfilled the messianic prophecies (more than 300) of the law that heralded his coming (**Luke 24:44**). He fulfilled the demand of the law for perfect obedience—by his sinless life (**John 8:29, 46; Galatians 3:10; 1 Peter 2:22**). He fulfilled the purpose of the law, being the very object of its glorious, preparatory design (**Galatians 3:24-25**).

The Mosaic regime was never intended to be a permanent institution. The notion that the Torah would continue in effect until the Second Coming of Christ—as some have alleged—is utterly without biblical support. The beneficial effects of the law, as designed by the Creator, will abide through the age, but not the law itself.

But one might wonder: Does not the passage affirm that the law would continue “until heaven and earth pass away?” It absolutely does not. The text simply announces that the law would remain intact until such a time as it is fulfilled.

This fulfillment is the very thing Jesus declared He came to accomplish. If He did not fulfill the law, then the Savior did not do what He came to do; hence, failed in His mission. If He *did* do what He came to do, the law was fulfilled; hence, does not remain an obligatory system today. Compare Luke’s parallel:

Have you not Read?

“But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fail” (Luke 16:17). When the Son of God “fulfilled” the law, it had not failed, fallen, or been destroyed; it had been completed. Thus it no longer was a law to which the Jews, or anyone else, were obligated to obey as a legal system. To fail to recognize this truth is to overlook one of the most fundamental propositions of biblical literature.

But what should be said about the connection of **verses 19** and **20** to **verses 27** and **18**? Does this suggest that the commandments of the law would be binding upon those in the kingdom of Christ? This was the position argued by the young gentleman cited earlier. It absolutely does not. Such an interpretation would stand in radical contradiction to scores of passages in the New Testament letters. J.W. McGarvey explained the connection nicely:

“The man who would break what he considered the small commandments of God, under one dispensation, would be proportionately disobedient under a better dispensation; for habits of disobedience once formed are not easily laid aside. For this reason obedience or disobedience while under the law was an index to what a man would be under Christ. The text shows that the relative greatness of persons in the kingdom of heaven is measured by their conscientiousness in reference to the least commandments. To the great commandments, as men classify them, even very small Christians may be obedient; but it requires the most tender conscience to be always scrupulous about the least commandments (53).”

The text most definitely is not teaching that the Torah will be a binding law throughout the Christian administration. In fact, in his “marriage” metaphor, designed to emphasize the changing of laws, Paul wrote:

“For the woman who has a husband, is bound by law to the husband while he is living; but if the husband dies, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So if then, while the husband lives, if she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she is joined to another man. Wherefore, my brothers, you also are made

dead to the law [Torah] through the body of Christ; that you should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God” (Romans 7:2-4) (NASB).

If Christians are equally obligated to the Torah and the law of Christ, they are in a state of spiritual adultery. This is a most unenviable consequence of the doctrine under review. In an excellent discussion of this untenable theory, so common with various theologians, the scholarly R.C. Foster wrote: “The view that He [Christ] merely deepened and emphasized the law in the Sermon on the Mount will not bear investigation” (469). I would encourage those who have access to Foster’s tremendous work, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, to carefully study the material on the “Sermon on the Mount” (462-487).

In concluding this section of our article, we are compelled to make this observation: Jesus emphatically affirmed that neither a “jot” nor a “tittle” (terms used to represent the minutest portions of the documents) would “pass away from the law” until “all things be accomplished” (v. 18b). If Christ did not fulfill the law, and it will remain until “heaven and earth pass away,” then all of the Torah—every jot and tittle—remains. Or, to say it in another way—all the commandments, from the greatest to the least, still are in force.

Garbled Language

It will not do to filter “the law,” so to speak, separating the “ceremonial” from the “moral,” rejecting the former while claiming to retain the latter—as attempted by the Seventh-day Adventists (though they cling to the Sabbath and the abstinence from pork idea, both of which were in the “ceremonial” category). This is a false distinction.

Nor will it work to claim that by practicing the teaching of Jesus we are “keeping the Torah.” For example, when the Christian honors Christ as his “Passover” (1 Corinthians 5:7), or when one submits to the covenant of “circumcision” (in baptism – Colossians 2:11-12), he is not “obeying the commandments of the Torah.” The Old and New are two different systems. The “types” of the Old Testament foreshadowed the

Have you not Read?

“anti-types” of the New, but one cannot claim he is “keeping the law of Moses” when he yields to New Testament ordinances. This is an irresponsible confusion of the two covenants and a garbled use of language.

Neither is it valid to contend that while the law’s “curse” expired, the law itself remains. Paul stated that “*as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse*” (**Galatians 3:10**). The law and the curse were joined. A law with no penalty is no law at all. The fact is, the entire law, together with its demands and curse, passed away. Only fifteen verses later the apostle declared that: “*we are no longer under a tutor [the law]*” (**24-25**). How can that point possibly be ignored? The former covenant was replaced with a “better covenant” (cf. **Hebrews 8:6ff**)—unless, of course, one wishes to rip the entire book of Hebrews from the Bible.

Does this mean that the Old Testament is of no value today? Of course this is not the case. The legacy of that body of literature is vast, wonderful, and abiding (cf. **Romans 15:4**; **1 Corinthians 10:6, 11**). There is a divine link between the Old and the New Testaments. But does that mean that the Christian is under the former regime in this age, obligated to its body of law? It does not. Should one be teaching that Christians ought to be observing the commandments of the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) today—from the greatest to the least? To so argue is to leave a distinctly erroneous impression. Though we do not have the inclination at this time to review the full range of arguments being advanced in support of the notion that the law of Moses was not abrogated by the death of Christ, we do wish to address one further aspect of it.

Nailed to the Cross

In his letter to the Colossian saints, Paul reminded these Christians that prior to their conversion to the Lord, they were “dead through [their] trespasses.” But they were made “alive” together with Christ, who forgave all their sins. The apostle then contends that Christ “blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross” (**Colossians**

2:13-14) (NASB).

This would involve “the legal bond of ordinances to which the Jew had agreed and to which even the Gentiles’ conscience had in some degree given assent (**Romans 2:14,15**)” (Ashby, 1533; see also: Abbott, 255; Eadie, 163-164; Vincent, 908, and many additional scholars).

It has become fashionable in some quarters, however, to allege that this text has no reference to the abolition of the law of Moses. Rather, it is supposed to refer to the “note” of sin-debt that stood against the Christian prior to his conversion. In response to this theory we offer the following considerations.

The Context

The immediate context argues otherwise. In the sentence that follows, Paul draws his conclusion: “*Let no man, therefore, judge [condemn] you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or a new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ*” (**Colossians 2:16**) (KJV).

Especially note the “therefore,” which connects certain elements of the law (the parts standing for the whole) with that “nailed to the cross.” This is too obvious to miss. Thayer identified the “handwriting” as a metaphorical reference to “the Mosaic Law” (668). See also Vaughan (11.201) and Lenski (114). Peake states: “It is generally agreed that the reference here is to the law [of Moses] (cf. **Ephesians 2:15**)” (4.527).

Observe the double use of “was” (past tense verb) in verse 14, indicating that the system is operative no longer. A.T. Robertson commented that the verbal “has taken” is a perfect tense form which “emphasizes the permanence of the removal of the bond” (which he identifies as “the Mosaic Law”), “that has been paid and cancelled and cannot be presented again” (4.494).

The Parallelism

This text unquestionably is parallel in a number of aspects to Paul’s instruction to the Ephesians in chapter two of that letter

Have you not Read?

(these two books have a number of striking parallels).

For he [Christ] is our peace, who made both [Jew and Gentile] one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (Ephesians 2:14-16) (NASB).

Noted Bible scholar David J. Williams says that Paul's reference to "the Jewish law in **Ephesians 2:15**" is "decisive for the interpretation of **Colossians 2:14**" (189). Both refer to the same situation.

R.C. Foster states:

"A great need of the Christian world today is the clear recognition that we are not under the law, but the Gospel; that the law was nailed to the cross and passed out of force when the new will was probated at Pentecost (469)."

He also pointed out that neither Catholicism nor Protestantism has entertained a clear perception regarding this matter. To dismiss the theme of the "law of Moses" from **Colossians 2:14**, because of a predisposition one entertains with reference to the perpetuity of the Torah, is both irresponsible and reprehensible. (Thank you, Wayne Jackson and www.christiancourier.com.)

What About the Ten Commandments? Do They Still Matter Under the New Covenant? Yes, the Apostles in the New Covenant Reaffirmed Them.

	Old Covenant (Testament)	New Covenant (Testament)
1	<i>You shall not have other gods</i>	Acts 14:15, Acts 17:29, 1 Cor. 8:6
2	<i>No graven image</i>	1 Cor. 10:7, 14, 1 John 5:21
3	<i>Do not take God's name in vain</i>	1Tim. 6:1, James 5:12
4	<i>Remember the Sabbath</i>	Romans 14:5, Col. 2:16, Heb 4
5	<i>Honor your mother and father</i>	Eph 6:2

Law and Grace

	Old Covenant (Testament)	New Covenant (Testament)
6	<i>You shall not kill</i>	1 Cor. 6:9-10, 1 Peter 4:15
7	<i>You shall not commit adultery</i>	1 Cor. 6:9-10, Gal 5:19
8	<i>You shall not steal</i>	Eph. 4:28, Rom. 13:9
9	<i>You shall not bear false witness</i>	Romans 13:9, Col. 3:9
10	<i>You shall not covet</i>	Romans 7:7, Eph 5:3, Col. 3:5

The law of Moses embraced the Ten Commandments. While this law was in force, the Jewish people were so bound to it that obedience to any other would have been considered adultery. The body of Christ discharged them from the law of Moses. This made them free from many Hebrew laws but they were not without law. Now they were to follow the commandments of Christ.

“Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 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, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the law (of Moses), having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit” (Romans 7:1-6) (NASB).

Have you not Read?



Chapter Sixteen

Is Following and Teaching the Marriage Scriptures Legalism?

Did you know that the word legalism was never used in the Bible?

What do you do when the world calls Christians hypocrites because they see many people involved in the church being disobedient to God? What if “professing Christians” call you legalists or Pharisees if you try to apply the Scriptures in the church?

In **Ephesians 6** Paul tells us to use the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God to fight the devil’s schemes. Today, many of today’s “professing” believers boldly pronounce that if you use the Word of God (sword) to go against sin and Satan, you are becoming a legalist. Some teachers will say that “it is a spirit of religion” to show Scriptures about repentance to help people change from sinful ways. To put it in perspective, it would be like a general telling an American soldier to go down the streets of Baghdad and defeat the sniper without any type of weapon! The Word, which works with the Holy Spirit, is all we have to guide us in ultimate truth. If we do not use this spiritual sword, we will be led into everlasting torture!

Legalism:

- ~ Adding to Jesus’ commandments.
- ~ Trying to earn salvation through works and not recognizing it is only through Jesus that anyone has an opportunity for salvation.
- ~ Trying to live out our Christian life in our own energy

Have you not Read?

and not through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus replied,

“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”
(Matthew 15:8-9).

Legalism is not repeating word for word the commandments of Jesus and the apostles. Was Christ a legalist and “unloving” for giving us commandments and telling us the steps of church discipline? Does Christ also need to repent?

The marriage Scriptures were clear for 1500 years after Christ until a “humanist” named Erasmus thought it was too harsh a commandment, and now the majority of churches have replaced Jesus’ commands with “man-made” teachings. And now it is called legalism if you hold people accountable to Jesus’ commands, which we are commissioned to do. Who are we going to follow, Erasmus and humanism, or Jesus and Paul?



Chapter Seventeen

But I Am Already Saved

Warnings in the Word of God by the Apostle Paul:

Paul, who teaches us about grace, also teaches us about marriage. He then reinforces the need of church discipline and warned Timothy of those who had turned from the truth and were still in the church. Recently I listened and studied about the Christian leaders in the first few centuries after Christ. They believed that even though someone claimed Christianity and was “saved,” they could still fall away from the truth.”

1 Timothy 1:18-20:

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

1 Timothy 3:4-7:

“One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

Have you not Read?

1 Timothy 4:1:

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,”

1 Timothy 6:9-10:

“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

1 Timothy 6:20-21:

“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge-- by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.”

2 Timothy 2:16-18:

“But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.”

The Apostle Peter Also Warned Us:

1 Peter 4:16-18:

“Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now “If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”

2 Peter 2:1-3:

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their

But I Am Already Saved

judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. “

2 Peter 2:20-2:2

“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (KJV).

2 Peter 3:17:

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (KJV).

Other Warnings:

Hebrews 6:4-6:

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.”

Hebrews 10:26-27:

“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (KJV).

James 5:19:

“Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”

2 John 8-11:

Have you not Read?

“Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”

Jesus Warned Us:

Revelation 2:4-7:

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;”

Revelation 3:5:

“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Revelation 3:16-22:

So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, “I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing”—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

In these passages Jesus was speaking to the churches and to all “professing Christians.”

But I Am Already Saved

More Exhortations:

Ephesians 4:1

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.”

If we were saved with no possibility of falling away, then there would be little reason for the majority of the New Testament. Most of it is to challenge Christians to holy living so they do not lose their crown. Once again, if every thing else become irrelevant once a person accepts Christ, why do Jesus, Paul, and Peter command church discipline? Is there a possibility that a “professing Christian” could be lost if he or she does not turn from “practicing sin?”

~ Be steadfast and immovable – **1 Corinthians 15:58**

~ We will reap if we do not give up – **Galatians 6:9**

~ Practice these things and God will be with you –

Philippians 4:9

~ Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life – **Revelation 2:10**

2 Peter 1: 5-11:

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (KJV).

Have you not Read?



Chapter Eighteen

Is It a New Testament Church If You Can't Read Every New Testament Verse?

In reference to the current church culture in America in 2008, a wise church leader once said, “You can preach difficult verses in the church as long as you don’t mean it.” Is he right?

If a church cannot read all the marriage, divorce, and adultery Scriptures and teach one of Jesus’ commandments, without mass protest and threats from the majority, is this a New Testament church? When is the last time, either from the pulpit, counseling session, weddings, or in leadership meetings, you heard these Scriptures read: all of **Mark 10**, **Matthew 5:32**, **Luke 16:18**, **Romans 7:3**, **1 Corinthians 7:10-11**, **1 Corinthians 7:39**, **Hebrews 13:4**?

If a divorced and remarried man or one who married a divorced woman cannot be a leader in a church, some people think it is harsh. One huge reason these people should never be in leadership is because they will never allow these Scriptures to be taught and applied to the rest of the body.

If you don’t believe me, ask them before they become leaders if they would have a problem reading those Scriptures to the church one Sunday morning or to the Senior High Youth Group.

Ask them; Is it adultery to get remarried after a divorce? If they say no, they will be disagreeing with Jesus.

How about if someone wants to get divorced then remarried, what do you think these leaders would say to him or her? How could a divorced man who marries again and commits adultery against his original spouse, who is living (Jesus said it

Have you not Read?

was adultery, not me), tell a couple not to marry again because Jesus calls it adultery. We have personally learned that this is the case in several churches. Most people in this situation will not allow the Scriptures to be read and applied without trying to find loopholes to justify their disobedience.

“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop

Most people in this situation will not allow the Scriptures to be read and applied without trying to find loopholes to justify their disobedience.

(elder), he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into

reproach and the snare of the devil.

Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus”
(1 Timothy 3:1-13).



Chapter Nineteen

Some Personal Situations

Here Are Just a Few of the Personal Situations in my Ministry That Have Made the Scriptures Speak Loudly.

~ I've had people admit they had convictions and reservations about divorce and remarriage. But because of other remarried couples "perceived happiness" in the church, they thought divorce and remarriage was okay. Many remarried couples and parents of remarried couples are usually "happy for them." But as Paul said, "yeast spreads" (**1 Corinthians 5**), or in modern terms, cancer can spread.

~ Many people whom I have confronted have told me, "I was warned years ago not to remarry but did it anyway." Many will say, "I do not want to be lonely."

~ I have had many parents or friends upset that their children, friends, or relatives were going to marry a divorced person or going to get a divorce. My question is, Why were they upset? Is it possibly going to be a sin if they marry again? And if it is sin, when does God ever validate practicing sin? After a year? Two years? 20 years?

~ Sometimes when I tell people I can't marry them because Scripture forbids it, they'll shrug their shoulders and say, "If we find out later that we are wrong, we'll just ask God to forgive us," as if it were no big deal.

~ I have heard of many situations of people saying that their spouse never wanted to have sexual relations. They say

Have you not Read?

they now found someone who would. Does this give the so-called “innocent party” freedom to divorce and remarry (1 **Corinthians 7:2-5**)?

~ What do you do when a couple is about to get a divorce and these powerful marriage Scriptures could help, but we cannot read them because the couple has parents who are remarried, plus over half the church is in a remarriage. This happened several times with me. My wife and I started bringing the marriage Scriptures to several couples in the last year and many marriages are coming back together and are strengthening. God’s Word is powerful. We have heard from another preacher who opened up his Bible and showed the marriage Scriptures to a young couple. The couple said, “Since we know this we will never get a divorce now.”

Most people in the modern church say it isn’t compassionate if you use these verses. I am glad the young minister who opened up God’s Word was compassionate enough to help this young couple see how these verses fit together. Where was the so-called compassion of all the people who supposedly cared about them? Why didn’t they show these verses to them? Most of them can’t because they might feel conviction themselves.

There have been more marriage conferences than ever before in the last 30 years, but the divorce and remarriage rate has increased dramatically to over 50% in the church. Why? Although some conferences can be good, I only know of one that used any of these marriage and divorce Scriptures. It is amazing how powerful these Scriptures can be to the couples that are heading to divorce. But many “professing Christians” just won’t read them because of the consequences it will bring from others.

It has been said by many, “This is dangerous teaching.” The only reason it sounds dangerous is because this is the 21st century, not 1920. It sounded dangerous to the Pharisees as well, because they kept looking for justification. Which is more dangerous, having these verses read and explained to the youth and young couples or having people trying to justify adultery? Was it dangerous that Jesus told the Jews they needed to make

Some Personal Situations

a change in their lifestyle if they wanted to see salvation?

It is a dangerous situation when young couples who are headed for the divorce court cannot be taught in an established church that Jesus calls it adultery if they marry again after their divorce. Sadly, in today's church, this is often the case, because the "remarried people" in the church or parents of children who are in a remarriage situation will not allow the Scriptures to be applied. Some of these people will try to validate and rationalize these verses on marriage, either because they were not taught themselves or they ignored those verses before they went to divorce court. Or perhaps they never taught their children. Why can't the church just admit that we have blown it in this area for the last 50 years instead of burying our heads in the sand, putting on a smile, and trying to come up with an excuse like the Pharisees did by saying, "But Moses allowed it." **Hebrews 3:3** says, "*For Jesus has been counted of much more glory than Moses.*" Jesus is our authority.

~ I have known adult children who constantly struggle with their parents' divorces. I have had some tell me they were broken when a preacher married their parents off to other people. If you are a preacher, do you care that you are breaking the children's hearts when you help the couple commit adultery? Most children want their real Mom and real Dad together. Most preachers do not think it is adultery after a divorce. Jesus did.

Here are a few quotes I have heard about this subject while in the ministry:

- ~ "Marriage until death is the way it was taught years ago, but society's needs have changed."
- ~ "I know the kids need to know this, but I don't know how you can do it without killing the church."
- ~ One person who has been in the church faithfully many years rightly pointed out that marriage until death is the truth. This person also went on to say that certain women had had more than two husbands and certain men had had two wives. But he added, "Don't tell

Have you not Read?

anybody I said so.”

- ~ Several people seventy-five years old and older, grew up being taught the same thing we are saying today about marriage. They believe and agree, but they will not say anything in support.
- ~ There have been many people that said, “This teaching is Casey’s opinion.” And all I did was have them read aloud the Scriptures out of the Bible on divorce and remarriage.
- ~ I have heard many say, “Do you expect someone to stay celibate for the rest of his or her life?”

Jesus does not expect people to commit adultery. If that means celibacy, then yes.

What about single people who have never been married? Would it be okay for them to go have sex with anyone they find because they cannot control themselves? Is it okay for them to practice their sin because they cannot control themselves? What if a spouse is paraplegic or a prisoner or impotent? Does that mean that we no longer need to be faithful to them? There are a lot of things that can be difficult and this is one of them. But there is something called self-control. God expects all of us to practice this in many areas.

- ~ I have had a few notes from people who privately support our stand but are not willing to take the same stand in public.
- ~ I have seen many quotes from preachers that said, “If I taught **Romans 7:3** and **1 Corinthians 7:39**, I would be fired in a heartbeat.”
- ~ Recently a popular Christian call-in show was discussing the permanence of marriage. A lady who is divorced called in and said, “I know what the Bible says about divorce and remarriage, but I think God wants me happy.” The radio host said, “See, there is the problem. She knows what the Bible says about divorce and remarriage, but she ignores it.” She is trying to

Some Personal Situations

conform God to what *she* wants instead of conforming herself to what *God* wants.”

- ~ I have heard people who are either waiting for their covenant spouse to reconcile or who have reconciled say that they are being encouraged to “move on.” In the recovery groups some of their churches offer they are told that they deserve happiness. I’ve had people who have restored their “covenant” marriage tell me that those who are already remarried are upset that they got back together. Why is this?
- ~ I have heard from children who had to make a choice when the judge asked them, “Do you want to stay with Dad or Mom?” How hard that must be! Then we say we care about children.
- ~ A leader in a church who is remarried said once, “How can I tell someone not to get a divorce and remarry?”
- ~ I have heard several people say they don’t want to read those marriage Scriptures because they are so lonely, and they will try to ignore them to please the flesh.
- ~ I have heard from adult children throughout the nation that it was bad enough when their parents divorced, but when they “got married” again to another person it felt like death. It reminds them of the traumatic day when their parents first said they were going to divorce, and every time they get together with parties, etc. the past comes back.
- ~ I heard a story about a man whose marriage was saved because his church practiced discipline years ago on another gentleman who was divorcing his wife. This man said he wanted to leave his wife as well but did not want to be disciplined by his church. So he started getting it together with his wife and the marriage survived.
- ~ One lady told me that she has the right to divorce and remarry while her spouse is still living, not because of

Have you not Read?

what the New Testament says about divorce, but because popular preachers, authors, and many professing Christians are remarrying. Meanwhile, her children and husband want her to come back home.

- ~ I recently heard of a couple who tried repeatedly to have a meeting with their pastor on the issue of divorce/remarriage to find out what the church's stance was. The pastor would not return their phone calls/emails. They finally understood that he was unwilling to discuss it with them, so they felt no option other than to leave that church. They then received a letter from the pastor "blessing" them on their way.

These are just a sampling of the quotes that have helped me see the Scriptures on marriage come to life. These situations are real and helpful in illustrating these Scriptures.



Chapter Twenty

Teaching the Next Generation?

The Opportunity and Obligation of Teaching a Generation to Restore the Permanence of Marriage

We cannot just ignore this. We cannot be like in Isaiah's day when leaders turned the other way because they did not want to be involved. *"His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber"* (**Isaiah 56:10**) We need to bark for the next generation! Some people say ignorance is bliss, but in **Hosea 4:6** it says, *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*"

We believe we have a tremendous responsibility to teach the children about the sanctity of marriage. We do not want to be a church that says no to same-sex marriage, and at the same ignores the clear commandments about divorce, remarriage, and adultery, because both of these are illicit relationships. The churches are doing what Paul said not to do in **Romans 2:1**, "The ones who judge practice the very same things." The strongest people against same-sex marriage are sometimes the people who have divorced and have remarried while a spouse is living.

It is absolutely wrong to withhold these Scriptures and not

We cannot just ignore this.
We cannot be like in Isaiah's day when leaders turned the other way because they did not want to be involved.

Have you not Read?

apply them in the church. The youth continue to watch our actions. There is an old saying that more things are caught than taught. We have to ask ourselves: Are there some commands of Christ that are taboo in the New Testament church? Quite frankly, we are not allowed to teach all that Christ commands in the established church, especially **Matthew 5:32, Matthew 18, Mark 10, Luke 16:18 and 1 Corinthians 7:10-11.**

How God will view all of this is up to Him, but Jesus has told us to teach and apply His commands. You cannot do this in an established church unless you have the leadership and their wives in total agreement, and remarried couples humbly acknowledging that a marriage is adultery following a divorce, and this will help future generations to come.

It also seems that most will defend staying in a remarriage situation rather than the reconciliation of the original covenant marriage.

When the Ten Commandments were being read to the Israelites, they were warned that if they rebelled it would affect many generations to come. God said He would punish the children when they grew up because they would more than likely follow in their parents' sins and the

example they set.

“For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.” Exodus 20:5-6

Divorce magazine states that children who come from divorced families have a 50% higher divorce rate than children whose families stay intact. This is one big reason the parents cannot teach these Scriptures in good conscience to the children without recognizing they are in sin.

Will you help change the family cycle?

The wonderful story of Josiah in **2 Kings 22** gives all the youth hope to change a nation. Josiah did something that was very hard to do. He loved God more than his family, which is

Teaching the Next Generation?

the only way to lead a revival. Some of my best encouragers have been people who have been children of divorce who want the truth to come out no matter how hard it is. I thank God because their testimony and faithfulness to God and His Word is greater than their deep love for their parents.

Jesus said. *“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me (Matthew 10:37) (KJV).*

Some popular preachers who agree that marriage is until death will brush off the remarriage issue by saying, “It is hard to undo scrambled eggs.” If that is true, which it is, why won’t those same preachers and leaders help teach the authority of God’s Word on divorce and remarriage before a couple is about to remarry and get their lives “scrambled,” or as Christ calls it, “commit adultery?” Is it because they fear they might offend someone who is already in the “scrambled situation?” Is it because they fear men more than they fear God?

It also seems that some will defend staying in a remarriage situation rather than the reconciliation of the original covenant marriage. Is this sound logic? I have heard it said by wise people, “If you can’t unscramble what God did not join together (the remarriage while a covenant spouse is still living), how is it that you can unscramble that which God did put together (the original covenant marriage while both spouses are living)?”

Same-Sex marriages Need to Turn from Sin (Repent) as Well.

I am all for equal rights when it comes to the color of skin but not when it comes to justifying sin. The Family Research Council is extremely concerned about proposed “thought crime” or “hate crime” laws that could mean a preacher or Christian could not tell someone, without legal consequences, that according to Scripture their sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. is not biblical. There is a good chance that “thought crimes” will triumph over religious freedom of speech in the future. There is a good chance that Christians will not be allowed to teach people the need for repentance without

Have you not Read?

legal consequences if this is defined as a thought crime. Jesus and John the Baptist surely would have been put in jail if they were held to these legal standards. Look at Canada. There are some instances of preachers being legally persecuted for their stand for the truth. Certain businesses have had their licenses removed because they would not support gay marriage.

Churches need to practice consistency. Many “churches” in America are promoting the gay agenda right in front of our eyes by using the word “grace” or “compassion” to justify their sin. Some know homosexuality is an abomination, but don’t think about the fact that Jesus talked more about divorce, remarriage, and adultery than He talked about homosexuality. One reason that He did not teach more about homosexuality is that it was a given fact. It is against the law of nature.

Also, in every instance in Scripture that the marriage issues came up, Jesus talked about husbands and wives. You have to be a man to be a husband and a woman to be a wife. It was understood that this is the only marriage He would even recognize. If God approved of gay marriage, it also would ruin the illustration of Christ (husband, masculine) and the bride (church, feminine). It would have Christ being ultimately married to a man instead of a woman. God forbid.

The man (Paul) who teaches us about grace gives a sober warning. I say this again because many of the “same-sex individuals” who are “professing Christians” are using the same language as heterosexual couples that try to justify their sexual sin. The wonderful word of “grace” was being misused in the apostles’ time, as well, as a license to sin.

“Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even

Have you not Read?

to repent. All of us may have been born with some type of weakness that Satan can use to try to disconnect us from God for eternity. Modern doctors say that genes may play a role in this sin. My answer to that is, all of us have a lot of Godly “genes” that can help us overcome any sinful lifestyle.

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16-17). There is a web site called setting-captivesfree.com that can give you help through people who have experienced the same sinful patterns and who have overcome and repented.

Did Paul and Jude hate you because they wrote these verses? Do these two apostles need to repent? If you are divorced, re-

.....

One day, unless a major revival takes place in our congregations, “one man and one woman” will be considered hate speech just like “one woman, one man, until death” is considered hate speech by some now.

.....

married, or homosexual, please don’t say we hate you. We don’t hate you, but love you enough to say things that you may not want to hear.

My four-year-old child recently was riding in the van with my wife and me and was being disobedient. Because of her disobedience there was a consequence of her actions in that she was unable to listen to one of her favorite songs. When we did this she said to us, “I thought you liked me.” We do like her and deeply love her enough to teach her that there are boundaries to follow for her own good, and we have to apply discipline if she does not want to follow them. These teachings are made to show her that she cannot do everything she may desire. Some of those desires will have her end

up in a bad situation one day if not corrected. Many people try to use the same tactics when it comes to the truth about many things in God’s Word. If you confront to try to help, many take offense and say, “I thought you liked me.”

One day, unless a major revival takes place in our congregations, “one man and one woman” will be considered hate

Teaching the Next Generation?

speech just like “one woman, one man, *until death*” is considered hate speech by some now.

Churches, are you prepared for the day when the same-sex couple who has legal marriage papers will come to your church with their adopted children and want to serve and teach children that it is okay to have two mommies or two daddies living in the same home?

I know of churches where that is happening right now. Many people are just ignoring it because Satan’s tool is to have people accuse you of being full of hate and not loving if you confront the situation. No one wants to not be liked or thought of as not being compassionate, so they ignore the issue and move on. Has anyone ever thought about why so many Christians were killed in the first two centuries? Was it because Jesus and the apostles commanded people to pursue holiness, and many of the first Christians lived out what the word of Jesus and the apostles had commanded them to do? I believe that by telling and showing sinners to repent from a “fleshly” way of life and turning to a Godly way of life, they convicted many people. That is the true Gospel.

Be ready for the “Would Jesus discriminate?” campaign. Be on guard for commercials or advertisements trying to water down the Scriptures on homosexuality. The same-sex marriage supporters are invoking civil rights, handicap discrimination, and ethnicity discrimination to make their case against this so-called discrimination against homosexuals. And some of these are professing Christians. I have seen how some Canadian “churches” and even some American “churches” are compromising the Word of God to justify sin and are allowing people in this sin to become members and to mentor youth.

Some church leaders will say that two wrongs don’t make a right when it comes to the thought of advising those in unholy remarriages (adultery) to possibly separate. What will these leaders say then to the same-sex couples who have legal marriage certificates? Is separation wrong for the homosexual couple who is seeking to do what the Bible says? Genuine repentance is never wrong!

Have you not Read?



Chapter Twenty-One

What Do I Do?

What Should I Do If I Am in a “Remarriage” Situation?

- ~ Go and read these Scriptures on your own. Don't allow someone else to tell you what is right and wrong. Allow the Holy Spirit to be your guide and make sure that is the voice you are listening to. Remember God's voice is on the pages of the Bible. His voice will not contradict His Scripture.
- ~ Understand God loves you very much and His grace (power) can help you overcome any situation you might be in. We have to love Him more than anyone else.
- ~ Keep an eternal picture in mind (James said we are a mist that appears just a little while) and not let worldly emotions overrule God's truth.

- ~ Be careful not to do what God's Word warns against:

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4) (KJV).

- ~ Study about repentance

Genuine repentance involves three things:

Conviction - Recognize that Jesus said remarriage after divorce is adultery. Adultery is sin.

Have you not Read?

Contrition – I am sorry for my sin. Not just for the divorce, but also for the marriage after the divorce. Only God can ultimately forgive. Come broken before Him. **1 John 1:9** says – *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Change – Forsake from the sin with the power of the Holy Spirit.

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7:10) (KJV).

“But declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance” (Acts 26:20).

“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.” (1 John 3:4-9).

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Is adultery wicked? What should I do when adultery happens? Turn from it.

“He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).

~ The only way to get through this is to allow the Holy Spirit to help you overcome this. Actually, praise God you are able to change the pattern. God is eager to forgive. His grace

What Do I Do?

can give you strength to overcome.

~ Adultery is having sexual relations with someone who is not your spouse. Once again, Jesus called it adultery (SIN) after the bill of divorcement and the marriage. A divorced person needs to live as a single person would. God has never validated any “willful sin.” Your children need to be taught what those Scriptures say so they will be much more serious about whom they will marry before they get involved in a difficult situation.

~ Think about the example you can give to your children and their spouses. Ask yourself if you want another preacher to marry your child’s spouse to another person when your child still wants his or her spouse back. It happens all the time in the churches.

~ Ask yourself if you want these marriage Scriptures to be taught to your children, Will you support the teacher and leaders? If not, ask why? Are you convicted when you hear them? There is something to this when you can’t even open your Bible and try to show people what Jesus and Paul clearly say about marriage. Jesus said, *“Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word”* (**John 8:43**).

~ Please live as brothers and sisters in Christ, not as enemies, as is the case with so many divorces.

~ Do I have to go back to my original partner? No. Some do after much therapy and repentance, but others don’t because there has been no change in the behavior of the other person. Remember Paul said to remain separate or reconcile: **1 Corinthians 7: 10-11**. Some say **Deuteronomy 24:1-4** means you cannot reconcile. But if that is true then God was wrong in **Jeremiah 3**. He wanted His people to return to Him after the bill of divorcement.

~ Do I get a divorce? Some choose to separate without getting a divorce through the court system. It has been done by many people in this situation. No one can tell you what to do. Others, especially with children involved that they conceived together in the remarriage (adultery), have talked with their

Have you not Read?

church leaders and the leaders shared with them these Scriptures. I have heard of couples that decided to sleep in different quarters in the same house and did not get a divorce. However, please read **John 3:20-21** and **1 Thessalonians 5:22**, which challenge us to avoid the appearance of evil altogether. You see, the problem with divorce is that it creates many difficult situations. Many times the greatest casualties are the children. It rips out their hearts as it did in the book of **Ezra** in **chapters 9 and 10**. The children need to know how important it is to keep God's Word.

~ Once again, if you decide to separate, let people know with letters and Scriptures why you are taking this stand. Recognize this before hand; you will have fewer friends. Especially if your friends are in the same situation. They will come under conviction, and you will now become the messenger. We all have to allow Jesus to be our best friend. Everyone else will change. Here is a web site of a lady who did this: <http://www.cadz.net/remarriage.html>

~ If people think this is too hard, what is going to happen ten years from now when homosexual couples with legal marriage certificates from Massachusetts or other states, or Canada, with three children, want to be members of your church? Will you accept their marriage because they have state papers, or will you believe God's Word above man's law? What happens when they want to be teachers? Or leaders? What are you going to say? If you think it won't ever happen, don't be deceived. It is already happening right now in many churches. The church who doesn't take a stand against adultery remarriage cannot take a stand against homosexuality without showing partiality.

Repentance is turning away from the wrongful action with the resolve to conduct one's life in a different way. We cannot return to the old way of life and say we have repented. We seem to understand the following situations:

- The **DRUNK** must give up the alcohol and stop drinking.

What Do I Do?

- The **GAMBLER** must stop placing bets and pulling handles.
- The **LIAR** must stop lying and start telling the truth.
- The **DRUG ADDICT** must stop taking drugs.
- The **HOMOSEXUAL** must leave the homosexual lifestyle.
- The **SEXUALLY IMMORAL** person must stop practicing sexual immorality.
- The person who **CURSES** must clean up his language and begin talking without using curse words.
- The person who has a **BAD TEMPER** must gain control of his emotions.

Why is it that we can see perfectly that God requires these actions of those who are practicing and committing the associated sins, but we are unable to see that those who are in adulterous marriages have to CEASE the adultery. They can't just ask for forgiveness and continue living in adultery. Repentance demands the same thing from adulterers that it requires of other sinners—CEASE sinning and change the lifestyle. If not, why not? (KMG) (McClure)

- ~ Check out the Spirit of Hosea support group website. The address is in the resource page at the end of this book. (There are people who are experiencing the same emotions you are going through.)
- ~ Read **Matthew 6** – God will take care of you if you seek Him first.
- ~ Do nothing. Everyone has the freedom to make their own interpretations and the right to do what they want to do, as I have the freedom to make my interpretations. But I would be wrong as a minister to withhold what Jesus, Paul, and the men who canonized our Bible said about this issue and what Erasmus watered down.

Are You a Counselor or Leader in the Church?

I know many of you are very concerned and care deeply when people come to you with divorce issues and you want to help them. I realize that many of you, like me, have read what the early leaders thought and what Erasmus watered down, and were shocked. So what do we tell people when they come to us? I recognize that it is always tempting to tell people

I recognize that it is always tempting to tell people what will make them feel good whether it is scripture or not. But I have quickly realized that other people, especially the younger generation, are watching and will justify their sin by looking at the older professing believers' examples.

something that will make them feel good whether it is Scripture or not. But I have quickly realized that other people, especially the younger generation, are watching and will justify their sin by looking at the older professing believers' examples.

Jesus, John the Baptist, and others never condoned sin but told people to repent. Jesus made a lot of people angry because He told them they had to make radical lifestyle changes. More people hated Jesus than loved Him. People will not have total peace until they truly fall in love with Him, no matter what the cost.

When I was counseling remarried people while their original spouse was still living, I began to realize that I was totally undermining people's covenant marriage. I have also learned that there are many people who are praying for their covenant spouse to return, and I cannot counsel in a way that could prevent that from happening.

Some people have told me that they do want their covenant spouse to return and that they tried to seek counsel from preachers but the preachers do not want to get involved. I pray that counselors and church leaders will teach what Jesus has said about marriage through His Word and not make up their own marriage beliefs that are not based on the clear words of Jesus and the apostle Paul.

What Do I Do?

In Jeremiah's day there was a warning that we also need to wake up and pay attention to:

"I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; they also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah" (Jeremiah 23:14).

Does Time Change Things?

As Joe Fogle said in a very good book called *One Flesh, A Biblical Perspective on Divorce and Remarriage*, "Some wrongly assume that time changes one's marital status. It is true that God's grace combined with time can heal damaged emotions, but the Bible gives no hint that a "period of healing" changes one's marital status to allow a divorced person the freedom to remarry. It is also not true that the state of adultery that is entered into by remarrying after a divorce slowly goes away. If remarriage is considered adulterous one day after a divorce, it is still considered adulterous one year or ten years after the divorce. The one flesh bond continues on until the death of either partner.

Have you not Read?



Chapter Twenty-Two

The Cost of Discipleship

In the Words of Jesus:

Matthew 7:14:

“Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

Matthew 7:21-23:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ‘And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

Matthew 10:34-39:

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”

Luke 6:22-23:

“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out

Have you not Read?

your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets" (KJV).

Luke 6:46:

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? (NKJV)?

Luke 9:25-26:

"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."

Luke 14:28-33:

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it-- lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

John 8:31:

"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

John 15:12-14:

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."

John 15:18-19:

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."



Chapter Twenty-Three

The Rewards of Discipleship

Present Rewards

Matthew 6:26:

“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

Matthew 6:33:

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

Matthew 11:28-30:

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Matthew 13:23:

“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (KJV).

Matthew 23:12:

“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (KJV).

Matthew 28:20:

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded

Have you not Read?

you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (KJV).

Mark 10:29-31:

“And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first” (KJV).

Luke 11:28:

“But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

John 8:31-32:

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

John 10:10:

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

John 14:27:

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

John 16:33:

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Here is just a glimpse of future glory!

Matthew 6:20:

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor

The Rewards of Discipleship

steal” (KJV).

Matthew 8:11:

“And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven” (KJV).

Mark 13:13:

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (KJV).

John 14:1-6:

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.” Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

John 16:21-22:

“A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.”

Acts 7:56:

“And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (KJV).

2 Corinthians 5:1:

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (KJV).

2 Corinthians 12:1-6:

“It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions

Have you not Read?

and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me."

Philippians 3:14:

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (KJV).

Hebrews 11:16:

"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (KJV).

1 Peter 1:4:

"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (KJV).

Revelation 21:2-7:

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things."



Conclusion

Conclusion

Revelation 2:10 says, *“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (KJV).*

Adam Clarke says about this verse, “Be firm, hold fast the faith, confess Christ to the last and at all hazards, and thou shall have a crown of life. Thou shall be crowned with life and have an eternal happy existence, though thou suffer a temporal death.”

It is said of Polycarp, a disciple of John and a leader in the early Christian church, that when he was brought before the judge and commanded to deny Christ’s words and teachings, he firmly answered, “Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me wrong, how then can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me?” He was then judged to the flames, and suffered cheerfully for Christ his Lord and Master.

All of us are to have faith like Polycarp! Polycarp knew the one relationship that was above all others was the relationship he was to have with Jesus Christ! We are to use that example as we face loneliness, persecution from the world, and the lure of compromise. We are to live for Christ even if possibly no one else will.

The last several years of study have made me open my spiritual eyes to many things. I would not trade the lessons I have learned for anything. So many Scriptures have come to life to me. I realize now more than ever before how much we need Jesus’ transforming power in our lives. There are two situations

Have you not Read?

that have made me pay close attention to the fact that something is desperately wrong in many homes and churches.

The first situation happened a few years ago at a Christian camp. I was speaking to a group of teenagers for a worship service. I asked the question, "Why was the rainbow put in the sky?" Over half of the teenagers did not know.

Like marriage, the rainbow was a covenant made by God on His terms after the worldwide flood. The rainbow covenant should remind us of God's great faithfulness.

"And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth" (Genesis 9:9-17).

The second thing that I came across made me become critically aware that there is a major problem happening in our culture, and churches are not excluded:

There was a poll taken in the last few years by George Barna which reported that 42% of people believe that Jesus sinned. It seems to me that many people would like to think this way because they don't want to feel convicted anymore. Many people make Jesus out to be just "one of the boys," giving into sin and validating their sin. I realize conviction is not something most of us like, but it is a healthy thing. If you never come under

Conclusion

conviction in your life, I would be very concerned about your soul. Here are a few Scriptures to help us realize that 42% of the people were wrong.

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

“You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5) (NASB).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21) (KJV).

“Have You Not Read...”

Jesus said those words to “the believers of God”. At that time many of them were Jews. He is saying to us now in the church, “Have you not read?” I have written many things which I wish I wouldn’t have had to. I have written with tears of concern for the people involved in these situations. I want you to know I love and care for you who are in a divorced and remarried state just as much as the people who disagree with this marriage study. I will help you to the best of my human ability. However, only God can ultimately help you and He will give you the power. There has to be brokenness before Him. We cannot compromise His Word for future generations or compromise a core belief to make us feel better. God is looking for faithful people. The way God measures success is radically different from how the world measures “success.” God instituted marriage as part of the created order of things. And Jesus, God in the flesh, said these words that are still meant for us today:

Matthew 19:4-6...

And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Have you not Read?



Resources

Resources

Here Are Some Resources for People Contemplating Marriage, in a Remarriage, or for People Who Have Gone Through Divorce:

www.loveandrespect.com – Great marriage resources so divorce never happens and your marriage can thrive, based on **Ephesians 5:33**.

www.lifepartners.org/contact_us.html - Dr. Ken and Nancy Nair are Christian counselors and founded Life Partners' Ministries.

www.Marriagedivorce.com - The most popular website about marriage and divorce in the world.

www.cadz.net/mdr.html - Tremendous testimonies of people who believe marriage is for life. Also, many questions about the marriage covenant are answered here in a biblical way.

www.marriagedivorce.com/mdreform2.htm - Great resources from various theologians about this critical issue.

www.marriagedivorce.com/mdotherlinks.htm - More study guides from theologians and ministers from different faiths who agree and have researched endless hours on the early Christian church's interpretations on marriage and divorce.

www.marriagedivorce.com/hoseamain.htm - Encouragement for people who are looking to reconcile their marriage even though they are divorced.

Resources

www.marriedivorce.com/group.htm - Fellowship chat room for people who are divorced but who are seeking reconciliation with their spouse.

www.settingcaptivesfree.com - Web site to help people overcome many addictions.

www.cpr-ministries.org- "Till Death Do Us Part?" This book by Dr. Joseph Webb, which uses many Scriptures about this subject and has been through five printings, can be found here.

www.ccel.org/fathers.html - Collection of writings of the early Christian leaders in the first few centuries.

www.scrollpublishing.com/store/ChristianHistory.html - Resources that you can purchase that give a glimpse of how Christians practiced living out their faith in the first few centuries. Some of these quotes are from people such as Polycarp and Clement, who were personal disciples of the apostles John and Paul. This website can help people see how the earliest Christians thought about divorce, remarriage, baptism, church discipline, Israel, salvation, etc.

www.Trueconnection.org - Josiah Scott has a detailed book on divorce and remarriage available for free download which can be requested in print. You can even request a speaking engagement in your area for Josiah to present this teaching to your group. Josiah also helped edit and review this book.

Marriage, Divorce & Remarriage, John Coblenz, Christian Light Publications, Harrisburg Virginia.

Christian Family Living, John Coblenz, Vision Publishers, Christian Light Publications.

www.wisereaction.org – Australian Michael Whennen's outstanding marriage website.

<http://www.btinternet.com/~lmf12/DivorceMcFALL-view.pdf> - Dr Leslie McFall's research on **Matthew 19:9**. He is a former lecturer on Hebrew and the Old Testament and now is a full-time researcher in Biblical Studies. Former Research Fellow at Tyndale House Library (Cambridge, England).

Have you not Read?



Testimonies About Restored Marriages

Testimony from Argentina

By Orville E. Swindoll brother of Charles “Chuck” Swindoll. He was a missionary in Argentina from 1959 to 1991.

In early 1967 a group of Christians from varied denominational backgrounds began meeting on Monday nights in the home of a businessman in the stately old residential area of Coughlan in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Our purpose was to seek the Lord for a spiritual breakthrough in our lives and in our churches throughout the city. This weekly gathering initially involved Christians from many backgrounds, such as Plymouth Brethren, Baptist, Mennonite, Evangelical, Union, independent holiness groups, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and an occasional Presbyterian and Methodist. Within a few months we experienced quite a turnaround and many in the group were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Then the pastors in attendance felt that we needed to start meeting once a week to try to get a handle on what the Lord was doing among us, for things were mushrooming around us. Thus we began meeting on Saturday mornings. These pastors' meetings continued throughout the years to follow.

In the early or mid 1970's the topic of divorce and remarriage arose. The Roman Catholic church has traditionally had a firm stand on this issue, but canon law was sometimes interpreted in devious ways to allow for separation and remarriage with

Have you not Read?

canonical permission.

As for the evangelicals, the traditional firmness for years had begun to break down. As we took stock of where we were on the issue, we discovered that we were “all over the map.” We decided the time had come to do a serious study of the Bible on the issue.

Many discussions revolved around what is known as the “exception clause” (**Matthew 5:32**). The Greek word *porneia* is translated variously as infidelity, fornication, unfaithfulness, or some other sexual irregularity. ‘

The basic Old Testament passage at the bottom of our dilemma was **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**. Even the Jewish scholars over the centuries could not seem to reach agreement on this passage.

The discussion arises anew in Jesus’ ministry when the Pharisees press him on the subject of divorce in **Matthew 19:3-12**. The exception clause is brought up again.

The text of **Luke 16:18** was quite convincing to us. We concluded that this text is the clearest one and provides the clearest interpretation.

The most amazing thing about our research and reasoning together is that we all reached the same conclusion. Over the next several years we were asked to participate in forums on the issue of divorce and remarriage, and in seminars and workshops with pastors and church leaders. We prepared papers on the subject (all in Spanish) and one of our colleagues wrote a book which bears the same title in Spanish as Joseph Webb’s book, “Until Death Do Us Part.”

We have developed a common pastoral practice in the hundreds of congregations under our collegial oversight. We insist upon the permanence of the marriage bond in God’s sight. If someone is divorced for whatever reason, we make it clear that he (or she) has two options: 1) either be reconciled to the legitimate spouse, or 2) continue as a single person, at least until the death of the spouse.

We understand that the way to move forward is to be Scrip-

turally clear, compassionate in our counsel and ministry to those who have serious marital problems, and gracious toward those who disagree with us.

We try to remember that truth is not just something we fight for, it is the foundation of our lives and our families and is best expressed in loving concern for those who have messed up their lives. May the Lord help us to honor him always.

I Almost Threw It All Away!

Testimony of Lorne Matthews

My destructive choices were worse than burning money. I was in a “tender trap” and it all FELT so good. My mind said it had to be of God! On the altar of selfish emotions, I was sacrificing my true wealth: my family.

On my 40th birthday, I recall feelings of anger, rejection, frustration, and not having the success I longed for. I bitterly concluded the hindering factor had to be my wife, Jimmie Ruth (**Genesis 3:12**). We had been married 18 years, but I now found our relationship dull and boring. We didn’t fight, there just wasn’t any emotional connection.

Our family started using the hair styling services of a woman in our church. One day I visited the shop in her home for a haircut. As she completed the job, she gently caressed me and this action sparked the fire of lust within me to become fully kindled. The iniquity I had hid in my heart now erupted into a blazing fire. We met the next day, determined to divorce our mates and continue this abundant life our sinful hearts craved.

I reached out to a high-profile Christian counselor who was convinced God was setting me free from the bondage of my marriage and giving me someone more suited to my needs. This counselor encouraged me to move in with my new “flame” and learn from her. He used Bible verses like **Mark 10:29-30** to convince me (**Romans 7:8 and 11**).

My new heartthrob easily obtained her divorce. I ran into a brick wall, however. Jimmie Ruth was a wife who believed, by the inspiration of God, that a covenant marriage meant “un-

Have you not Read?

til death do us part.” She refused to cooperate or sign anything. I tried to convince her that I was committing adultery and she had biblical grounds to divorce me. But Jimmie Ruth had already examined the so-called “exception clause” (**Matthew 5:32** and **19:9**). She had concluded that this was written to a Jewish culture with betrothal customs. (During the year of betrothal, if there was unfaithfulness, the betrothed could obtain a divorce).

Joseph and Mary were such an example (**Matthew 1:18-25**). The Scriptures state: “*except it be for fornication*” (not adultery). Even though many Christian friends, out of sympathy for Jimmie Ruth, thought my adultery was grounds for divorce, she stood firm on her conviction: the covenant vows of marriage united us as “one flesh” until one of us died.

I blamed my wife for my adultery at this point; after all, if I could get a legal document of divorce in my hand, then my new relationship would cease to be adultery. Or would it (**Mark 10:11-12**, **Luke 16:18**)?

The other woman and I moved in together. She helped soothe my conscience by telling me she heard “the voice of God.” I now know it was a form of control and manipulation, not God at all. “The voice” told us to move to Florida and we did! The “voice” in her often prophesied to me things which did come to pass. (Demons have power to deceive, so fulfillment of a prophesy is significant only if it agrees fully with the Word of God **Deuteronomy 13:1-5**, **II Thessalonians 2:9**). The lack of righteousness in my heart gave power to the deception of sin working also in her.

She prophesied that a millionaire would come into our lives and provide everything we needed for a new life, a new marriage, and a new ministry. And it happened! The millionaire placed into my hands keys to a new car, keys to a condo on an exquisite golf course, and keys to a church which I would pastor (in spite of my adultery). He also financed Christian television programs for us at a well-known TV facility. I could involve any woman I chose to “marry.”

Testimonies

Still my wife continued faithful, praying a hedge of protection around me and trusting in her God.

The youngest daughter of this woman lived with us. Each night I would tuck her into bed, pray with her, and play the role of a “Christian” father while committing adultery with her mother (INSANITY!) (**Romans 7:22,23**). At the same time, I had forsaken my own two children, Mark and Melody. I was worse than an infidel (**1 Timothy 5:8**). I had misplaced my passion and was controlled by my emotions. My focus was inward and selfish, not on the Word of God or my family (**2 Timothy 3:1-7**).

One evening this child prayed, “Dear Jesus, make Jimmie Ruth so sick that she will sign the divorce papers so we can be a family.” Within hours of that prayer, my wife, who had been in perfect health, was rushed into emergency surgery. A large portion of her intestines had to be removed and she was not expected to live through the night. Still she clung faithfully to her covenant promise, “until death do us part”.

The day following my wife’s surgery, this woman’s first-born teenage son, who had also been in perfect health, was rushed to another hospital across town. He was diagnosed with a brain tumor. The woman was convinced it was the work of a demon sent by my wife. However, she stubbornly refused to repent of her own sin (**Revelation 2:18-23**). Several months later her son, a godly young man, died. She had prophesied that I would one day adopt him; his name would have been Jimmy Matthews (like my wife’s name)! The blinders covering the eyes of my spirit were being removed. I started seeing glimpses of the deception. The curse was being broken.

Gradually I realized I had to start obeying the Word of God, not just what felt good to me. The softening of my heart (**Matthew 19:8**) caused me to turn toward Melody, my daughter, and her graduation (**Malachi 4:5-6**). On my arrival, I found she had lined our driveway with yellow ribbons to welcome her daddy home. I went to my son Mark and asked him to forgive me. He gave me a casual “sure” that probably matched the initial sureness of my repentance, but both have become more solid over

Have you not Read?

these many years. My wife, by God's mercy, was still standing where she had stood when she uttered those vows on December 28, 1962—faithful to her God and to her covenant. The process started; I confessed, turned and forsook my sin and received God's mercy (**Proverbs 28:13**).

On a cold winter's day, I sought for the grave of that godly young son. Kneeling in the snow, I asked God why He did not take my life instead of his. The boy was innocent—I was the guilty one! Finally I found some comfort in the thought that he was now in God's presence. Then the Scripture came to me, "*The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife.*" (**1 Corinthians 7:14**). My wife's faithfulness kept me separated unto God, as well as to our children.

At the first, as we sought to restore our lives together, Jimmie Ruth and I did not have warm, "fuzzy" emotions, but in the fear of the Lord we began rebuilding our marriage. Each began taking personal responsibility for our individual walk with God. We made an investment of putting effort behind right actions to each other, which will always lead to healed emotions over time.

The process has been long and painful, but I can honestly say the results are well worth the effort. My daily life now swims in peace, and the joyful sounds of happy, healthy grandchildren are the fruit of God's mercy added to my obedience. Our son and daughter have chosen to forgive and love their repentant Dad. I have a place called "home" (the same one I tried to throw away!), and that home is filled with all precious and pleasant riches (**Proverbs 24:3-4**). I have a wife who loves me in a way few men will ever be loved: a wife who is willing even to die if necessary in order to be faithful and to keep her covenant. AND I ALMOST THREW IT ALL AWAY!

Precious ones, if the fires of bitterness and lust consume your life too, turn to Jesus! See the pure fire in His eyes. Turn from your selfishness (**2 Timothy 3:1-5**). Receive the mercy and forgiveness Jesus Christ has provided when we confess and forsake our sin. Don't be deceived: adulterers cannot inherit the kingdom of God (**1 Corinthians 6:9-10**). The fires of greed, bit-

terness, and lust will destroy life. The fires of faith, hope, and love will purify life and produce true wealth. If you turn your heart fully toward the Lord Jesus Christ, you will know what perfect love is (1 John 4:17-18).

Tony Sexton Repented of an Adulterous Remarriage and Reconciled with His First Wife, Dawn. Below Is His Testimony:

For two and one-half years the heavens became as brass in my life, the sweet fellowship I had known since earliest childhood ceased to exist, and my fellowship with Christ was greatly compromised. See, I put away my wife for another. And this after having been a leader in the ministry for many years, having served as an assistant chaplain at a county correctional facility after leading a Nursing Home Ministry since 1995. With scores of people depending on me daily, I failed. I failed my heavenly Father, I failed my family, friends, ministry, and church.

For these two and one-half years there was nothing but overwhelming conviction, grief, sorrow, and shame. First for an unbiblical divorce, and secondly for an unbiblical remarriage. And the important word here is decidedly “unbiblical.” In the same fashion God does not recognize a homosexual union, neither does He recognize an unbiblical union.

What contributed greatly to my coming to myself was one chapter of a book, no more than about twenty pages in length—“The Horrible Thing in God’s House: Adultery, Fornication and Divorce” from David Wilkerson’s book Set the Trumpet to Thy Mouth. There are two statements from this book that contributed more to my repentance and the forsaking of sin than any other.

Wilkerson writes “Oh man of God-- tremble at this curse God prepared for priests and ministers who refused to forsake their immorality. ‘*The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob,*’ (Malachi 2:12). Not only will God cut off the anointing, unction, and blessings, He will humiliate the offender, destroy his credibil-

Have you not Read?

ity, and cast his ministry aside. God has reserved the most fearful prophecies for ministers who live and preach in sin.”

Think of it. This was written in 1985 and if for no one else, it was for Tony Sexton in Kansas City 2001.

He also writes, “Saints of God, don’t look at the way things appear. Servants of God cheat on their wives, then go on with new wives, apparently still enjoying God’s blessings! Not so! You do not see or hear of God’s judgment on them. You know nothing of the sleepless nights or the despair and sorrow that floods in on them. To live under God’s displeasure is a burden few can bear.”

For the good part, on January 12, 2005, my wife and I were reunited in marriage. God has performed miracles that time will not permit to tell, but yes, it is true that to repent means to forsake, and then restoration and forgiveness takes root.

The Scripture that was read at the ceremony was adapted from **Zephaniah 3**, and has been very near and dear to us:

“I will gather them that are sorrowful. Your sorrow has ended. They to whom the reproach of it was a burden, now celebrate. I will undo all that afflicts thee. I will save you that halteth and make you a remnant. I will bring together the lame and the outcasts and I will lead you home, and with your own eyes you will see Me bless you with all you once owned. I the Lord hath spoken.”

In Christ,

Tony & Dawn

Tony & Dawn Sexton

P.O. Box 7842

Sugar Creek, MO 64054

In This Next Testimony, the Leaders Told Her to “Move On to Someone Else”

We received an exciting phone call several weeks ago. A caller told about a couple in their church. The young wife is very beautiful and the young man was a drug dealer. Eventually the husband was arrested and sentenced to prison for dealing drugs. The pastor and the leaders of the church told the young wife she needed to “get rid of her husband and get on with her life.” These same leaders then proceeded to introduce her to businessmen and doctors, encouraging her to separate from her husband.

One couple in the same church (they had ten children) invited the young wife to their house to explain to her the permanence of the marriage covenant. Before she left they gave her a copy of [Till Death Do Us Part?](#) by Dr. Joseph Webb. Several days later she called the couple and told them how angry the book had made her. She said that she threw it down many times because of its message. Then she went to bed praying about what she had read and the Holy Spirit told her what she had read was TRUTH. She told the couple; “I am going to visit my husband tomorrow.”

When she returned she told them she had told her husband, “I have committed my life totally to Jesus Christ and I now realize you and I are married for life. Until one of us dies, we will be married in God’s sight. What you do with this truth is up to you, but regardless, I will serve the Lord. She soon learned that her husband had gone back to his cell, prayed, and contacted Teen Challenge. In a very short time he was saved, delivered of his drug habit, and spent the last 18 months of his sentence teaching Bible classes to other prisoners. When he was released, he and his wife moved to Texas, where he attended and graduated from a Christian Bible College. Today he is in demand as a speaker all over the Midwest.

Thank God for one FAITHFUL family who was willing to speak the truth into this lady’s young life. Thank God for the miraculous ending to this story. This is the message that God

has given us, and this is the kind of fruit that it is producing.
(From *C.P.R. ministries*)

Another Beautiful Testimony from a Couple in Their Late Twenties:

As children, we were both baptized and raised in good homes where we went to church on Sunday. Yet the reason we divorced was that God was not the head of our marriage. While we struggled with issues such as communication, love and respect, and understanding our gender differences, we wanted to give the perception that our marriage was not in trouble, neither asking God nor anyone else for help. Worse yet, we fell for the worldly traps that we deserved happiness and that marriage should be easy. Our marriage was like the “crazy cycle.” Instead of honoring the covenant that God established on our wedding day, we selfishly gave up in September of 2005 after five years of marriage.

Needless to say, divorce did not bring the happiness that we sought. When God reached for our hearts and initially brought us the Scriptures on marriage, we rejected the Word because we were still trapped by worldly wisdom and pride, trying to prove that we could make it out on our own and find happiness for ourselves. Once again, the world’s view of life and marriage gripped us.

Despite our best attempts at self-gratification, God did not give up and helped us question the decision to divorce. Ironically, we wondered what would happen if we went back and asked for counseling—someone to listen and help resolve our mistakes in the hope that we could avoid making the same mistakes in future relationships. Perhaps this would also help us find the peace with our past that we sought. These questions were God’s way of bringing us back to Him. During one counseling session, our counselor recommended a church in the area, and we began attending in March of 2007. We started to realize that what had been missing in our lives was God. Only through Him would we be truly happy and through Jesus’ death would we receive forgiveness for our past mistakes.

Thankfully, God's patience has never run out as we have learned from our mistakes. Thanks to God, we are still learning. We opened up about our struggles with prayer couples at church and the pastor of care ministries, where we received additional premarital counseling. Most importantly, we received God's Word on marriage again from a special couple. We should have done all of this long before we spoke of divorce or even stepped foot on the stage to get married.

Turning from the sin of divorce was the first step toward our new life in Christ. We have humbly asked God for forgiveness and guidance. We have repented to each other. We give Him the glory for our reconciliation.

We pray daily for God's help to honor and obey His marriage covenant. We ask for His help through marriage issues. We also pray for conviction. We now hunger for His Word in our lives in all things, not just marriage. In short, our two-way relationship is now a triangle with God at its head. We have fallen in love with Him, and as a result, we love each other as never before. We want our lives to be completely in obedience to God's Word. We pray that our struggle will be used to help turn other Christians away from the world's views of marriage and that God will give us opportunities to share our conviction to help non-believers come to Christ.

Eric and Melinda Barber

This Next Testimony Comes from Pennsylvania...

My name is Colleen and I am 58 years old and the mother of four grown children and the grandmother of 12 grandchildren..... I was born and raised in Canada... My father worked with the Canadian government and we moved all over Canada during my childhood years. He worked for the Canadian Defense Liaison Staff, so when I was 17 years old, we moved to Washington, D.C. I went to a Secretarial School in downtown Washington. After I finished school, I worked for the school as a secretary and my husband Ward worked on the same street for a shoe store. He sold me a pair of shoes and got more than he bargained for. ☺

Have you not Read?

Although my family moved around a lot, I was raised in a pretty stable household. My parents were married 50 years and when I said my vows, I knew that the only thing that was going to get me out of them was death. I took my vows that seriously. My husband, on the other hand, grew up in a very dysfunctional family. He had four fathers in the first 17 years of his life and his mother, father, and three stepfathers were all alcoholics. It was “do unto others before they do unto you.”

Ward was drafted into the Army and joined the Navy before the Army could enlist him during the Vietnam War era. He was in the Navy for nine years and during that time he was not home very much. After nine years of marriage, he decided to get out of the Navy and that, coupled with his mother dying and his new-found freedom, proved to be the catalyst for a major crisis in our marriage. Although I had been raised in the church, I didn't have a personal relationship with the Lord. I had been baptized and confirmed, taught Sunday school, but didn't know the Lord. He was a far-off God... I felt that the Lord was up there and I was down here and never the twain shall meet. God had a plan though and Ward and I became born-again Christians three days apart.

My husband at that point was convicted that he needed to come clean with me and confessed to many affairs beginning shortly after we were married. I was crushed and with my new-found faith asked the Lord to get me out of this marriage any way he could. I was praying and crying out to the Lord one morning and the sky was dark and then one glimmer of sunlight broke through the clouds and I heard the Lord say in my spirit, “Out of all darkness comes light.” There was a song playing on the radio at the same time that had the words, “Can't we give our love another try?” I knew that God wanted me to stay and work on my marriage. Ward had become a new creature in Christ and just glowed. I know that if God asked him to walk on water, he would have tried...

We were moving with his job while the children were young and lived in Germany for four years and Hawaii for eight years and all over the States. We attended many different churches of

different denominations and sought the Lord where he would want us to minister or be ministered to. Life was good.

Five years ago, however, my world came crashing down around me. We had gone through some difficult times with our children and the church. My husband decided he wanted out of the marriage. I was devastated, and struggled to understand what God would have me do. We were between churches, which I am sure didn't help. He got involved with a friend of mine and moved out of the home.

The stronghold the Lord had broken 25 years earlier was back. I prayed and sought the Lord again about what His will was for me, and through many sources He told me to stand for my marriage. He began to speak to me about marriage being a covenant and how He views a covenant and the vows we make. So standing for my marriage then became standing for what is right. It meant loving others when they have hurt you and believing in a powerful God that can soften the hardest of hearts and bring victory out of loss.

When my husband first left, I begged, pleaded, and did everything I knew to do to change the situation. I gave him Scriptures, prayed for him for hours at a time, and fasted. I was consumed with fears of what my future would be like if he chose not to come back. Then slowly I began to realize that God wanted to be that husband to me, the friend that sticks closer than a brother. He wanted to be everything I needed until my own husband came back home. He wanted me to trust Him to be working on my husband at the same time.

I had been a housewife and mother for 34 years at that point. We had two children before we became Christians and the Lord literally intervened and we had two more. So there are 11 years between my oldest and my youngest. It took me 30 years to raise them and get them out on their own. My life up until that point had been supporting everyone else so they could fulfill God's ministry and calling for their life. I didn't consider "putting myself on the shelf," as neglecting what God was calling me to do. It took my husband's removal from my life to realize that God wants first place in each of our lives to

Have you not Read?

be our first love. We can never put anyone or anything in that place, or it becomes an idol and God will remove it.

I was very sick at the time Ward left and ended up having major surgery. So, in one year's time, my husband left me for my friend, my son was in Iraq and Afghanistan with the 82nd airborne, and I had major surgery on my neck. Yet I can say it was one of the most precious years of my life. The Lord carried me when I couldn't walk and prodded me when I didn't want to keep going. He was my stronghold and my rock. When everything else was shifting around me, I could count on Him to never change and to complete the work He began in me.

I will never say it was easy, but it was definitely worth it. Ward came home in September 2003 and went to the other woman's husband and asked forgiveness. Our marriage has been restored. He was gone for a year and has been home 4 years this month. We both have changed. We renewed our vows last year in May 2006 and God is working to heal all the family relationships that were broken during that time. We have four lovely grown children and 12 beautiful grandchildren that are a definite blessing from the Lord. Now they won't inherit the legacy of divorce, at least not from us.

I just want to encourage you that God is able to do more than we can think or ask and has a wonderful plan for each of our lives. It doesn't mean that we won't go through trials and heartaches, it just means that he will bring us through the fire and we won't even have the smell of smoke on us. We will be refined to become all he has called us to be, and if we remain faithful, one day we will receive our reward—if not here on earth, in heaven.

Ward and Colleen Fleharty



Letters

Letters

“In today’s age of moral decay we are searching for answers to this ever-growing problem of divorce and remarriage. As we can see from the statistics, Satan is intensely battling with families to steal, kill, and destroy them one by one, from one generation to the next. You see, what we fail to realize is the tremendous effect that divorce and remarriage continues to have on people even some 20 or 30 years later.

As a child of divorce, I have seen the pain of broken homes and step-families and realize that some ministers are not helping people in their walk with the Lord. I only wish as a young boy, sitting in the judge’s chambers having to make the decision of whether I was going to live with my mother or my father, that someone had shown these Scriptures to my family. So before you remarry those couples who say they are truly in love, despite the fact that they are wrecking a home and not keeping open the doors of reconciliation, please consider reading the Bible—and consider the children who want Mom and Dad to be together.

As a young minister, I searched, studied, and looked for the answers, but this stirring in my soul would not stop. All the Scriptures never really came together until I picked up this book entitled, Have you not Read? You can read all the commentaries, or what the latest great preacher has to say on the topic, but do not set your theological beliefs in stone until you have read this book.

This book not only helped me to tie the Scriptures together

Have you not Read?

but also to become a better student of God's Word. So if you choose to take this journey, I want to caution you right now; your life will forever be changed."

Heath Penewit

"In his Have You Not Read?, Casey Whitaker tackles one of the thorniest issues confronting the church today—marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Upholding the authority of Scripture, Whitaker superbly presents the unambiguous teachings of Christ and His apostles on this subject and—like the prophet of old—pleads with this generation of pastors and teachers to "see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it." Have You Not Read? answers a great need in the 21st century church."

Scott Coltrain

Casey Whitaker has done a superb job in presenting what the Bible speaks on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. It is refreshing to see a man of God deal with the Scriptures one by one, methodically comparing Scripture with Scripture. Sadly, broken families are increasing at an alarming rate and the church is, for the most part, unwilling to tackle this destructive plague on the family. Many who sit in the congregations have heard very little about what the Bible truly teaches on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Casey has shown himself to be a man who seeks to know what God says. His motivation? Love—love for Christ's church and love for those who are perishing in their unrepentant sin. I hope this book will be a force used by God to open the eyes of the blind. I hope this book will challenge the reader to seek the truth in God's Word for themselves.

Who am I? Well, I am just a regular ol' Christian woman who loves Jesus and desires to walk in His truth—not perfect by a long shot, but striving to grow in Him more and more. About 5 years ago, I was challenged to seek God on the issue of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Why? I don't know. I am in my first marriage, so this was not an issue that directly

affected me. For some reason, the Lord used a friend's remarriage to cause me to seek what He said on the issue. This is odd to me because of my family background. My mother has been married/divorced 4 times. My father is in his second marriage. My brother, a confessing Christian, is in his third marriage. Two sisters married divorced men.

To be quite honest, I was happy in my ignorance. I held the same position that most church folks hold today—divorce is terrible, but God is a forgiving God and He wants people to be happy. Divorce and remarriage is not the unforgivable sin. Surely, my family and friends were okay being divorced and/or remarried (the ones who may be saved already, that is). That was a very comfortable stance for me. It didn't offend anyone and I would remain pretty well-liked. However, once the Lord started putting questions in my mind, I was pushed right out of that comfort zone. There was something driving me to know what God said and what God meant. I pressed in. I too came to the same conclusions that Casey has— that marriages GOD joined together ARE permanent until death.

Many today teach that as an ideal, but the Scriptures do not teach lifelong marriage as an ideal. God speaks of lifelong marriage as a reality. When those of us speak the REALITY of lifelong marriage, there is great opposition, and sometimes anger and indignation are directed towards those of us who speak that truth. For all of us who come to this understanding, know there is a cost (fellowship, friends, family, etc). But we must always remember: when we stand for truth, desiring to see error exposed, and good come, the cost will be well worth it, in the here and now, and in eternity (**James 5:19-20**).

*Blessings in Jesus Christ,
Cindy W. from Michigan*

Have you not Read?

Casey Whitaker's book on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage was a very refreshing read. This is a book that I wish I had read years ago before I became entangled in a divorce/remarriage situation.

The Lord has shown me through His Word that we cannot take another's spouse. Taking another's spouse is adultery and Jesus labeled marriages after divorce as adultery while a first spouse lives.

Whitaker helps break down this complex subject and make it easy to understand for people of all age levels seeking to know what the Lord has truly spoken on this subject.

Having repented of an adulterous remarriage a few years ago, I highly recommend this book. Many of our churches are not truthfully dealing with this subject. I believe the Lord can use this book to open the hardest hearts to see what His intentions are for marriage.

Cheryl Chrisman

"I want to thank Brother Casey Whitaker for his book, Have you not Read? More and more preachers are seeing that most current teachings on divorce and remarriage are not biblically accurate. This book accurately puts Jesus and the apostle Paul's teachings in proper context on this subject. For too long now the Christian community has been bombarded with humanistic ideas and philosophies. WE NEED THE WORD OF GOD!

Brother Casey Whitaker's book gives us God's Word on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. I have been separated from my wife for over four years now and hope one day for reconciliation, but even if this does not happen, I thank God for Brother Casey's book which reaffirms the truthfulness of God's marital covenant. Thank you, Brother Casey, for your biblical compassion and desire to help others. God Bless this work!"

Richard A. Evangelist

“Casey Whitaker has put together a very clear picture of what marriage is in God’s eyes. He covers the early Christian leaders’ views and makes it very clear about their interpretation and application of Scriptures in regards to the sanctity of marriage. He presents a very clear picture of where the church leadership should be taking their believers.

Marriage for life, early church teachings, and needed church discipline are all discussed thoroughly and accurately and based directly on Scripture. His book will keep you glued to the pages and you will find yourself constantly going back and reviewing it to find out the things you have missed, and the answers will be right in front of you. Very highly recommended!”

William Reinmuth

Frankfort, Illinois

“Thank you, Casey, for an easy-to-read book that teaches great truths. Have You Not Read? is thoroughly biblical and cannot be disputed. It is based on the Word of God as sole authority. This book is practical, relates to our present day situations, and has many relevant Bible verses. As a covenant stander “down under,” I pray this book will touch and speak to the hearts of those who read it as it has touched my heart.”

Judith Bond

Sydney, Australia

Have you not Read?

This book spells out clearly that the marriage union once entered into legitimately is a permanent union of husband and wife, which can only be ended by the death of one of them. To marry another partner while the first union is still in force—in the eyes of God—is an adulterous relationship. Such adulterous relationships must be ended if union with Christ is to be restored.

~ This book also spells out clearly that there is a hierarchy within marriage. God is the head of Christ; Christ is the head of the husband; and the husband is the head of the wife.

~ These twin truths—of permanency and headship—will make this book a blessing to all who covet a firm, clean, relationship with their Lord, to whom all men everywhere will give an account of their lives some day in the near future.

~ Scripture points to the tongue as a constant source of pollution in a Christian's relationships with God and man, but whoever enters a second marriage—unlawfully in God's eyes—lives in a permanent state of pollution, and is, thereby, unfit to enter the Kingdom of God. I strongly commend this Christ-centered book and trust that it never goes out of print.

Dr Leslie McFall (Cambridge, England)

Letters

Works Cited

- ~ ATS Bible Dictionary. <www.studylight.org>.
- ~ Barna, George. "Americans Draw Theological Beliefs From Diverse Points of Views." 2002 <www.barna.org>.
- ~ Barna, George. "Born Again Christians Just as Likely to Divorce as are Non-Christians." 2004 <www.barna.org>.
- ~ Barnes' Notes on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949.
- ~ Birkitt, Dr. James. What the Bible Teaches About Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage and the Family. Glen, Allen, Virginia: Biblical Resarch Center, 2006.
- ~ Bork. Slouching to Gomorrah. New York: Harper Collins, 1996.
- ~ Campbell, Thomas. "Divorce." Millennial Harbinger (1845): 204-205.
- ~ Daniel Mace New Testament 1729. <www.wordsearchbible.com>.
- ~ "Divorce Stats." 2006 <www.divorcemag.com>.
- ~ Dr. Donald Nash, A Literal and Consistent New Testament Version. Grayson, Kentucky:
~ Kentucky Christian College.
- ~ "Early Christian Writings." <www.ccel.org>.
- ~ "Erasmus." <www.newadvent.org>.
- ~ Fogle, Joe. One Flesh, A Biblical Perspective on Divorce and Remarriage. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007 Eugene, OR
- ~ Horst, Myron. "Divorce and Remarriage." <www.biblicalresearchreports.com>.
- ~ "How Do We Know the Bible is True?" <www.allaboutGod.com>.

- ~ Jackson, Wayne. "Are We Under Law or Grace?" 2007 <www.christiancourier.com>.
- ~ Jones, Dr. David W., and Dr. John K. Tarwater. "Are Biblical Covenants Dissoluble." Reformed Perspectives Magazine Sept. 2005.
- ~ McClure, Glendol, Keith Greer. "Repentance", Knollwood Church of Christ. October 2007
- ~ McFall, Dr. Leslie. "The Biblical Teaching on Divorce and Remarriage." <<http://www.btinternet.com/~lmf12/DivorceMcFALLview.pdf>>.
- ~ Scroggins, Dick. "Church Planting Manual." 2008 <www.dickscroggins.com>.
- ~ "State of the Marital Union." 2005 <www.saveus.org>.
- ~ Torrey, R.A. How to Pray. 1900. Public Domain
- ~ Scripture comes from the New King James Bible translation unless marked other wise.
- ~ (KJV) – Public domain
- ~ "Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright ©1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission."
- ~ Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

Have you not Read?



About the Author

About the Author

Casey Whitaker has served in two mid-size congregations in Associate and Senior Minister positions for over twelve years. He now serves as a minister of a new congregation in Ohio the last three years. He can be reached at caseywhitaker@hotmail.com. This book is sold by Faith View Books, 330.674.0684. This book is also free on www.wisereaction.org and www.marriagedivorce.com as an e-book.

“In his Have You Not Read?, Casey Whitaker tackles one of the most difficult issues confronting the church today—marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Upholding the authority of Scripture, Whitaker superbly presents the unambiguous teachings of Christ and His apostles on this subject and—like the prophet of old—pleads with this generation of pastors and teachers to “see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it.” Have You Not Read? answers a great need in the 21st century church.”

~*Scott Coltrain*

