# DIVORCING DIVORCE



*An Examination of Marriage, Divorce, and Re-marriage According to the Scriptures*

Timothy Klaver

Author of *The End Times: Letting the Bible Speak for Itself*

# DIVORCING DIVORCE

An Examination of Marriage, Divorce, and Re-marriage According to the Scriptures

**OTHER BOOKS BY TIMOTHY KLAVER**

*The End Times: Letting the Bible Speak for Itself*
*The Homosexual Dispute*
*Studying God's Word*
*The Chronological Life of Christ Jesus*
*Red Pilling Muslims*
*Baptism: What Do the Scriptures Teach?*
*Romans 7: Who Is This Man?*
*Red Pilling Atheists*
*The Red Pill Solution*
*The Rapture Answer*
*The Christian Evolutionist: Is There Harmony Between Science and God?*

# DIVORCING DIVORCE

An Examination of Marriage, Divorce, and Re-marriage According to the Scriptures

TIMOTHY KLAVER

***DIVORCING DIVORCE: An Examination of Marriage, Divorce, and Re-marriage According to the Scriptures***
© 2018 by Timothy Klaver

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—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the author. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

*Cover design and interior by Timothy Klaver.*
*Cover image © Timothy Klaver.*

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are 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. All rights reserved.

All emphasis in Scripture quotations has been added by the author.

ISBN-10: 1981754075
ISBN-13: 978-1981754076

To

JOHN and LILLIE WILLIAMS
OEGE and SILVIA KLAVER
AMPELIO and JUANA MORENO

*whose marriages were broken only by death.*

Dedicated also to my wonderful wife, MARIA, in whom I have found a good thing (Prov. 18:22), for her worth is far more than that of rubies and jewels (Prov. 31:10). Thank you for your amazing love! May our marriage be broken only by death.

# Contents


Preface 11

Acknowledgements 15

Introduction 17

**PART 1: MARRIAGE**

1. Love 23

2. What Is Marriage? 27

3. The True Recipients of Marriage 31

4. Whom Should I Marry? 37

5. Count the Cost 43

6. Servitude: Have This Attitude In You 47

7. Stop Comparing Yourself To Me! 51

8. Who Pays For Your Spouse's Sin? 55

9. Forgiveness and Reconciliation 57

10. Why Reconciliation In Marriage Is the *Only* Option 59

11. Lessons Husbands and Wives Can Learn From Ephesians 4:25-5:33 63

12. Questions Regarding Marriage 65

13. 230 Questions To Ask Before Marriage 73

**PART 2: DIVORCE AND RE-MARRIAGE**

14. The Introduction 85

15. The Conversation 89

16. The Words of Paul 91

17. The Law 95

18. The Guilty 101

19. The Issue of Fornication 107

20. The Death Sentence and Release 113

21. The Issue of Re-marriage 115

22. An Alternate Understanding 119

23. A Fearful Reality 125

24. The Conclusion 129

25. Gentle Words For the Divorced and Re-married 133

**APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Did God Divorce Israel? 139

Appendix B: Jay Adams On Re-marriage 143

Appendix C: Common-Law Marriages (John 4) 147

Appendix D: Fornication (Physical and Spiritual) 151

Appendix E: Timothy and Maria's Vows 155

# Preface

"One word of truth outweighs the whole world."
–Alexander Solzhenitsyn

"Our only rule of faith and practice is the Word of God. We have . . .

no *creed* to defend,
no *denomination* to maintain, and
no *confession* to bind our minds.

'*What do the Scriptures teach?*' This is and must be our only concern. If the plain teachings of Holy Scripture appear to destroy or contradict *our understanding* of any doctrine, then let us relinquish the doctrine, or acknowledge the fact that our minds are both depraved and miniscule, and bow down to the revelation of God."

–Don Fortner

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, *"What is written in the Law? What do you read there?"* Luke 10:25-26

Notice in this passage, *the high honor which our Lord Jesus Christ places on the Bible.* He refers the lawyer at once to the Scriptures, as the only rule of faith and practice. He does

> not say in reply to his question, "What does the Jewish Church say about eternal life? What do the Scribes, and Pharisees, and priests think? What is taught on the subject in the traditions of the elders?"
> He takes a far simpler and more direct course. He sends his questioner at once to the writings of the Old Testament, *"What is written in the Law? What do you read there?"*
> Let the principle contained in these words, be one of the foundation principles of our Christianity. Let *the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible*, be the rule of our faith and practice. Holding this principle, we travel upon the king's highway. The road may sometimes seem narrow, and our faith may be severely tried--but we shall not be allowed greatly to err. Departing from this principle, we enter on a pathless wilderness. There is no telling what we may be led to believe or do. Forever let us bear this in mind. Here let us cast anchor. Here let us abide.
> It matters nothing *who* says a thing in religion--whether an ancient father, or a modern bishop, or a learned theologian.
> Is it in the Bible? Can it be proved by the Bible? If not, then it is not to be believed.
> It matters nothing how beautiful and clever sermons or religious books may appear. Are they in the smallest degree contrary to Scripture? If they are, they are rubbish and poison, and guides of no value!
> *What does the Scripture say?* This is the only rule, and measure, and gauge of religious truth. "To the law and to the testimony," says Isaiah, "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20
>
> –J. C. Ryle

> "It is a small and narrow mind that is afraid to change; it is a sign of greatness that one is prepared to admit at times that one has been mistaken, and that therefore you have had to change your position."
>
> –D. Martyn Lloyd Jones

"*What do the Scriptures say?*" "*What do the Scriptures teach?*" Sadly, this is not a question many Christians want to ask, let alone have answered, when it comes to the subject of marriage, divorce, and re-marriage. I am sorry (not really), but our lives, if we are indeed Christians (or the least bit worthy of the name), need to be conducted in accordance with God's Word—not our

own personal selfish desires.

Look through history and find me any Christians who ever acted in a manner that says, "To hell with what Jesus says, I'm going to do what my heart desires." This is the attitude with which many churches today treat the Bible. There is no reverence for God *or* His Word. And yet they attempt to call themselves "Christians."

Even from some secular historical figures, such as Napolean Bonaparte, we find testimonies such as this: "I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him." Jesus' followers, His *true* followers, would go to their deaths preaching and singing. Why? Because they *knew* Who their God was and they reverenced Him. Their God was not an idol made in *their* image to suit *their* desires, the way Jesus is treated by many professing "Christians" these days.

Read any book written by Christians earlier than 200 years ago and note the vast chasm of difference between most the books written by "Christians" today. Note the lofty position afforded to God; the reverence, praise, adoration, etc. They *knew* Who their God was and they humbled themselves before Him. Now note the self-seeking selfish self-interest that adorns many of the "Christian" books written during the last 50 years (at the very least). Likewise, compare the lyrics found in most of the old hymns with the lyrics found in most so-called "Praise & Worship" music today. You find the same vast chasm. Emptiness. The old hymns glorified God and were God-centered, while most "Praise & Worship" music today is very me-centered: "I, I, I, me, me, me, my, my, my."

"*What do the Scriptures say?*" "*What do the Scriptures teach?*" For Jesus' true followers, this question will *always* be paramount. We *always* want to know what God's Word has to say, what it teaches, so that we may, by the grace of God and the aid of the Holy Spirit, conform ourselves and our lives to that Word. Jesus said, "he who *does* the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter [into heaven]" (Matt. 7:21). Our beliefs *must* conform to God's Word, and we *must* live out what we claim to believe. Not merely giving lip service. Jesus is *not* some dashboard bobble-head giving you a thumbs-up and saying "Yes" to everything you think, say, do, feel, or believe. He has already spoken, and His response is found written down in the Scriptures, the Bible, God's Holy Word. If you do not like His responses, then quit pretending to be His follower and be honest with yourself and everybody else: reject Him already. Quit making Jesus an idol in your own image to suit your own desires.

*Gracious and merciful Heavenly Father, hide the author of this book so*

*that You may be revealed and glorified. Bring Your words to life in the hearts of Your children, conforming them to Your truths. I ask that You would bless this book, Father, and use it for Your glory and the furtherance of Your kingdom. May this book honour and glorify You, protect the integrity of Your Word, forward Your Gospel, and edify Your church. I am Your humble servant, Father, and I praise You for the wonderful, beautiful, loving wife You provided me with. Our marriage may be the only 'Bible' that the lost ever read, and so I ask that You would use our marriage to display Your Gospel, to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the church. We rely on Your grace each day, Lord, for without it we can do nothing. Help us to live lives worth of our calling. I pray these things in the name of Your blessed Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus. Amen!*

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my God, my Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus, for having provided me the opportunity to write this book and get it into the hands of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. This book is written with the purposes in mind to:

1. glorify God and honour His Son (Romans 15:6; Colossians 1:18),
2. educate the body of Christ regarding truth (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 2:13), and
3. to reform the theology, beliefs, and practices pertaining to marriage (Heb. 13:4).

Secondly, I would like to thank my wonderful wife, Maria, for her love, patience, understanding, and sacrifice during the writing, reviewing, and editing process of this book.

Lastly, I would like to thank you, the reader, for picking up this book. It is by no accident that you have. Whether out of curiosity, out of a desire to learn more, or for personal Bible study, I pray that you have picked this book up because you are interested in learning the truth as contained in God's Word. I have strived to design this book in a way that leads you by the hand in order to allow you to see with your own eyes what Scripture has to say concerning marriage, divorce, and re-marriage. I pray that you will read this book with an open heart and an open mind, having a ready willingness to humble yourself, to submit to God, and to conform yourself to both the words of Scripture and

the image of Christ. I have put this book together in order to educate the body of Christ as to the truth concerning the very sacred union of marriage. May God bless this book so that the church may rise above society and the world, demonstrating to them what marriage is supposed to be. May we, God's children, hold marriage in the highest regard (Heb. 13:4) and demonstrate the relationship it represents between Christ and His church (Eph. 5:25-32), displaying the Gospel for all to see.

Thank you, one and all.

# Introduction

In the movie *The Mexican*, with Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts, Julia's character, Samantha Barzel, asked the question, "When two people truly love each other, when do they reach that point where enough is enough?"

Excellent question!

The answer, of course, is, "*Never*!"

Love *never* ends, as you will read in 1 Corinthians 13:8a. If you reach the point where you can call it quits and file for divorce, then it is quite likely that you never truly loved each other to begin with. You never allowed love to take root and you never nurtured love so that it could grow. Loving another person is hard work—work from which you are *never* allowed a vacation. The other option is that you have let bitterness and anger take root inside you, growing over and shrouding your love like ivy on a building.

Remember, in biblical times there were many arranged marriages. They did not have the luxury that you have in being able to seek out and choose your own spouse. So when you read the commands in Scripture to "love" your spouse, understand the context in which it is given. In marriages not of their choosing, these people are commanded to *love* their spouses. So if they were able to do this in marriages not of their own choosing, then you are left without excuse in a marriage that was completely your choosing.

For most people in this world, however, their "love" is nothing more than lust, infatuation, emotion, or passion of the moment wrapped up in self-seeking self-interest while masquerading as "love." They have *no clue* what *real love* is or what it is all about. Love is not a feeling or an emotion. Love is

a decision. It involves the will. When you *choose* to love somebody, your decision has a much stronger and firmer foundation than a simple feeling of love. Feelings come and go. Fireworks fizzle out. Decisions last for a lifetime.

Prior to having gotten married, you should have asked yourself, *Why do I love this person? What do I love about this person? Why do I want to marry this person? Can I commit to them for a lifetime?* Perhaps you were in love with an endearing quality that your spouse possessed, such as kindness, but as time wore on that quality vanished. It may be that that quality vanished because you never appreciated it. Perhaps you were in love with a physical feature that your spouse possessed, such as his/her hair, but circumstances in life, such as cancer, removed that feature.

If you marry a person because of some quality that he/she possesses, you might want to consider the fact that that quality needs nurturing from you if it will grow stronger. A little appreciation goes a long way. If you marry someone because of his/her looks, you might want to consider the fact that as she has children or as he/she grows older those looks change. That person will put on some extra weight, lose some hair, develop wrinkles, etc.

What if that person is involved in a serious automobile accident and has his/her face horribly cut up, or loses all use of his/her lower extremities and must be pushed around in a wheelchair for the rest of his/her life? Do you *honestly* love the other person to remain with them in these life-altering states "until death do us part"? If you cannot, then you *do not* truly love the other person. You only "love" them as long as they continue to meet *your* ideals, as long as they fit *your* "perfect" mold.

I write this book with great concern and compassion for the church, which has lost the purpose and meaning of marriage, and has forgotten the responsibilities with which it is accompanied. I write these things with a heart that is breaking because the church is not experiencing love and marriage the way that God intended. It is indeed a sad state of affairs that we are in. Rather than being the exception, the church has merged with the world and has marred her understanding of God's intentions for this holiest of unions.

In this world, roughly one in four marriages (including those of Christians) ends in divorce. Why? I believe that it is because we have a wrong understanding of both love and marriage, and that we are poorly prepared for what marriage truly requires (not saying anything of the lack of preparation we tend to face as individuals). In this book, I seek to address the cause of the church's misunderstanding, as well as looking at relationships and marriage the way that God intended them to be.

*[God's] truth is not to [certain individual's] taste. We all know how soon a man will contrive, against the strongest evidence, to reason himself out of the belief of what he dislikes.* That quote from Matthew Henry sums it up perfectly. If people are offended by what I have to say, good! The truth hurts.

Somebody needs to stand up for love in a world that substitutes it with lust, infatuation, emotion, and passion of the moment. I realize that many are not going to like what I have to say, but someone has to say it. Many will even start attacking me as an individual, or my character, or what I have to say, but the truth of the matter is that they are not attacking me—they are attacking God. I am merely the channel by which their attack is directed.

When I was in Bible College some years ago, I had mentioned to the father of my friend Jessica my desire to write such a book. He told me that I was inadequate to write about marriage because I had never experienced it personally. I directed him toward the Bible, saying, "Excuse me, Sir, but David was a shepherd boy who had *never* experienced battle, yet he slew a giant veteran of war. Noah had *never* built a boat before, yet as an amateur he built one that rivalled that of the Titanic, which was built by professionals." As long as I am looking to God for my wisdom and relying on Him for my strength, I am more than adequate. Why? Because my Heavenly Father wrote the book on marriage.

The Bible is man's handbook for life. When we have questions, we should search the Scriptures to see what God has had to say about it. Not all questions are answered in a direct fashion, but God's Word *does* provide an answer.

The entire subject of divorce and re-marriage is a complex and emotionally charged issue. It is one of the most vexing problems the church faces in these modern days. On this subject, *many* godly preachers, teachers, and authors are less than forthright and honest. They approach this subject not from expositional exegesis, but from personal feelings and opinions. They tell people what they *want* to hear rather than telling them *the truth*, and they do so from the depths of their own depraved, perverted, and sinful hearts.

Complicated cases that would tax even the wisdom of Solomon continue to arise. I do not pretend to have those answers, and I am not about to try and give advice to people in those situations. In this book, however, I *will* tell it to you the way it is found in God's Word. Anything beyond that, *you* need to pray and earnestly seek God, listening for that still small voice and heeding His wisdom and leading. I warn you: *do not* project your desires upon God as if they are God's words to you, as if they are God's answer to you. You *do not* want to presume upon God. One of the worst mistakes you can make is to tell yourself or convince yourself, "*Well, God will forgive me.*" *Do not* presume upon the forgiveness of God!

I cannot stress this enough to you, my reader: There is *no book* you can read that will make your relationship or marriage better; there is *no person* you can talk to who can make your relationship or marriage better. That responsibility is *yours* and *yours alone*. You can read all the books you want on how to have a godly relationship or a godly marriage, but unless *you* put forth

some effort and apply what you read, it will do you no good. I have heard of couples who claim to have found the "best book" for making their marriage work, and so they begin to hold seminars for other couples who want to achieve the same thing. The problem is that it works for a while, and then their marriage falls back into the same old rut, the same state it was in before. Then they are on to the next "best book" for making their marriage work. There are *no* quick fixes.

If you are looking for a book that offers quick fixes for a life-long commitment, then I suggest you put this one down because you will not find such things here. If you are looking for a book that offers a no-holds-barred approach toward love and marriage, speaking straight from the heart while feeding you God's Word on the subjects, then may you be blessed by this book. May God penetrate your heart by the words contained herein and challenge you to live up to the responsibilities which are yours in a relationship and the responsibilities with which you *vowed* (promised, committed, covenanted, pledged, swore by word of honour) to uphold on your wedding day.

There are several excellent examples of love in the Bible. Three such examples are Hosea and Gomer, God and Israel, and Christ and His church. Neither God, Christ, nor Hosea gave up on love. God's faithfulness *to* His bride was *never* conditioned upon the faithfulness *of* His bride. I am sure I do not have to tell you the numerous times in the Bible where Israel was unfaithful to God, committing adultery against Him. Likewise, when our sin nailed Christ to the cross, His love never gave up on us. True love never gives up, never quits, and never surrenders. It "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:7).

Marriage is *my* reformation; what is *your* reformation?

PART 1

# MARRIAGE

CHAPTER

# 1

# Love

*Love* is the most overused, misunderstood, and misused word in the English language. Just as most people fail to grasp or comprehend the precise and full meaning of the word *hate*, so too do most people fail to grasp or comprehend the precise and full meaning of the word *love*. How many times have you heard people utter the words, "Oh! I *lo-o-ove* such-and-such"? People love their work, love their dog, love to eat, and love their spouse. Hopefully *love* means something different in each of those cases.

People most frequently associate love as a feeling or an emotion, but love is *not* a feeling or an emotion. Feelings and emotions come and go. One moment you will feel love for your spouse, while the next moment you will not feel love for your spouse. Lacking that feeling *does not* mean that you do not actually love them. For that matter, nor does having that feeling mean that you actually love somebody. Quite often, the world confuses and associates *love* with lust, infatuation, emotion, or passion of the moment. They associate "fireworks"—that eventually fizzle out—with the feeling of love, thinking that they have found their match. *Sigh*.

True, genuine love is a decision. Decisions last for a life time. When parents have children, if love were just a mere feeling, then when that day arrives where you do not feel love toward them, you would simply get rid of them (like some people do with their spouse when they falsely claim as an excuse, "We fell out of love"). Parents *choose* to love their children. Jesus *chose* to love us. He did not have to. He did not have to die on that cross. He *chose* to do so. "I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it

away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again" (John 10:17-18). Most marriages in biblical times were likely arranged marriages, so *choosing* to love your spouse was a huge step.

There are four different Greek words for the word *love*: *philia*, *storge*, *eros*, and *agape*. Only two of these words appear in the Bible: *philia* and *agape*.

**Philia (φιλία) Love:**

*Philia* is that love found between friends, as found between David and Jonathan (1 Sam. 18). Nowadays, true friendship is a lost art. C. S. Lewis said, "to the Ancients, Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue. The modern world, in comparison, ignores it." Modern society does not value the worth of *philia* love because so few have experienced true friendship. Nowadays, everyone is out for themselves and will quickly and readily throw you under the bus if it means they can get ahead in life. Friendship is a strong bond that exists between people who share common interests or activities. *Philia* love is freely chosen; there is nothing biological about it. You are not obligated to be someone's friend.

**Storge (στοργή) Love:**

*Storge* is that love through familiarity, such as brotherly love or familial love (love between family members). It is affectionate. *Storge* love is the most natural, emotive, and widely diffused (the ability to overlook one's faults and accept one as one is). It is natural because it does not have to be coerced out of another person. It includes give and take. Its give is what C. S. Lewis called "Gift-love," and its take is what he called "Need-love." *Storge* love's strength is also its weakness, however, in that people come to expect it irrespective of their behaviour and its natural consequences. We can see another of its weaknesses in modern society where, because of one's love for one's family, they become blind to justice, conscience, logic, and common sense.

**Eros (ἔρως) Love:**

*Eros* is that sensual and/or romantic love. It is the sense of "being in love" or "loving" someone. Eros love can be good or bad, as C. S. Lewis says, "Eros in all his splendour...may urge to evil as well as good." Walter Hooper said that *eros* love turns need-pleasure into the most appreciative of all pleasures, while Lewis warned against the modern tendency for *eros* love to become a god to people who fully submit themselves to it. Sadly, this is precisely what we see on a colossal scale in our modern society. *Eros* love has become a god to the people; the need-pleasure rules their lives and their beliefs,

justifying every sexually perverse deed they do: swingers, orgies, homosexuals, etc.

**Agape (ἀγάπη) Love:**

*Agape* is that love that is unconditional, selfless, and self-sacrificing. It is a love that loves irrespective of whether the other person deserves that love or has earned that love. This is the love that husbands and wives are commanded to give unto one another (Eph. 5). *Agape* is the greatest of loves. It has no expectations or agendas behind it. In a world where arranged marriages were normal, the command to show *agape* love puts an even greater understanding upon the duties of both husband and wife. *Agape love is the love with which God loves us. We do not deserve His love, and we sure have not earned His love. What Jesus did for us on the cross was the highest demonstration of agape* love.

CHAPTER

# 2

# What Is Marriage?

Marriage is a divinely created institution. It is the foundation of the family, the church, and the country. Because of its great importance, its definition is regularly under attack. Therefore, it is imperative that we, as Christians, have affirmed these things to be true in their entirety, for one day we will give an account (Heb. 13:17) of how marriage was upheld before God:

**Intentions for Marriage:**

A. *God's intention for marriage is repeatedly established in both the Old and New Testaments of Scripture.*
   1. *The purpose of heterosexual partnership/companionship.*
      "Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."" **Genesis 2:18**
   2. *The purpose of parenthood.*
      "And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."" **Genesis 1:28**
      "Behold, children are a gift of the LORD; The fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They shall not be ashamed, When they speak with their enemies in the gate." **Psalm**

**127:3-5**

3. *The purpose of pleasure.*
   "Drink water from your own cistern, and fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be yours alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; be exhilarated always with her love. For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress, and embrace the bosom of a foreigner?" **Proverbs 5:15-20**
   "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." **Hebrews 13:4**
4. *The purpose of preventing fornication.*
   "But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control." **1 Corinthians 7:2-5**
5. *The purpose of picturing the church.*
   "FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband." **Ephesians 5:31-33**

**Definition of Marriage:**

B. *God ordained marriage as a voluntary union of one man and one woman for life.*
   "And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man 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." For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh." **Genesis 2:22-24**

"and said, 'FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." **Matthew 19:5-6**

"FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." **Ephesians 5:31**

C. *Christian marriage is not simply a contract between a man and a woman, but is a covenant ratified in the presence of God.*

"To deliver you from the strange woman, from the adulteress who flatters with her words; that leaves the companion of her youth, and forgets the covenant of her God;" **Proverbs 2:16-17**

"Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant." **Malachi 2:14**

"And He answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created [them] from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and said, 'FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."" **Matthew 19:4-6**

D. *A healthy marriage is the best foundation for families and raising children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

"Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and do not forsake your mother's teaching; Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head, and ornaments about your neck." **Proverbs 1:8-9**

"My son, observe the commandment of your father, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck. When you walk about, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk to you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life," **Proverbs 6:20-23**

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." **Ephesians 6:1-4**

**Sexual Fulfillment Within Marriage:**

E. *Sexual intimacy is legitimate only within the bounds of marriage.*
"The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; He who would destroy himself does it." **Proverbs 6:32**
"Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come," **Colossians 3:5-6**
"Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." **Hebrews 13:4**
"Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul." **1 Peter 2:11**

F. *It is the Christian church's intention not only to teach and preach abstinence before marriage and purity during marriage, but also sexual fulfillment in marriage.*
"You shall not commit adultery." **Exodus 20:14**
"The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; He who would destroy himself does it." **Proverbs 6:32**
"But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control." **1 Corinthians 7:2-5**
"As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; be exhilarated always with her love." **Proverbs 5:19**

CHAPTER

# 3

# The True Recipients of Marriage

In order to understand the truth about something, one must start at the very beginning. In the case of sexuality, our beginning is man's beginning, where God first created man and woman. The creation account does not say anything about homosexuality because *it does not have to*. It presents a *very clear* picture of God's standard and intention for *all* men and women, which is maintained and upheld throughout the *entire* Bible.

Homosexuals attempt to argue that because Jesus said nothing about homosexuality, therefore it is permissible. Jesus *did* address homosexuality—*indirectly*. By His very address of heterosexuality, Jesus quite clearly *did* say something about homosexuality: *He condemned it*! It is *not* an appropriate or permissible form of sexuality. By the very *fact* that Jesus addressed, directed toward, and upheld heterosexuality tells you everything you need to know. A marriage is between *one man* and *one woman*. Anything outside of this is perversion and it is forbidden.

Marriage was instituted *by God* and is defined *by God* as consisting of *one man* and *one woman* for life. Heterosexuality is the *only* appropriate and permissible form of sexuality, upheld throughout the entire Bible as well as by Jesus and the Apostles Paul and Peter. Homosexuality is a perversion of *both* human *and* sexual natures. Anything outside of the union of *one man* and *one woman* is simply, purely, and completely *wrong*! Your opinion *does not* matter. Your feelings *do not* matter. Truth does not change because you want it to.

Hebrews 13:4 says, “Marriage is to be held in honor *among all*, and the

marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." The institute of marriage is to be held in high regard *among all*—the saved and unsaved alike. Ever-changing and shifting societies *do not* determine what is or is not permissible or acceptable. Just because some culture or society deems rape to be legal *does not* make it so. *God's* laws override man's laws. If man's laws contradict God's laws, man *does not* have to abide by them. Allow me to explain.

In Exodus 1:1 to 2:10, Pharoah issued a command to the Israelite midwives to kill all the newborn male babies. The midwives *knew* that this command, this law, was *wrong*, and so they disobeyed it. Their disobedience was lawful, but their dissemblance was not. If any kind of authority issues a command or law that is contradictory to God's moral law, it is lawful for men to disobey it. Our example in this should be the character, attitude, behaviour, and words of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They refused to obey the King's law (to bow down to the golden idol), but they also did not hide their true motives, feelings, or beliefs. If you are to be punished for obeying God rather than men, then welcome that punishment as Jesus' *true* followers did in history past. Remember, "And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; but *he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God*" (Luke 12:8-9). "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:28; Luke 9:26).

Because of homosexuals, society is pressing Christians to bow down to that golden idol—to give in to, accept, and support homosexuality. If you refuse, your livelihood is threatened. When your faith is tested, such as your obedience to men or to God, will you pass the test? Will you choose God over men and deny yourself, taking up your cross and following Jesus? Remember that if you cannot do this, you cannot be Jesus' follower—you cannot be a Christian (Luke 14:26-33; cf. Matt: 16:24; Mark 8:34). Or will you try to save your life by turning your back on God? If you side with God against men, and persecution comes where you are threatened with punishment, what will you do then? Will you deny Jesus? Will you recant your decision to disobey men? Will you try to save your life by trying to avoid persecution and punishment?

> "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matt. 16:25)
>
> "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it." (Mark 8:35)

> "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it." (Luke 9:24)
>
> "Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it." (Luke 17:33)

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26; Mark 8:36-37; Luke 9:25). Anyone who desires to be a follower of Jesus is commanded to "count the cost" of what it means, or may mean, to follow Jesus. If you are not willing to go the distance, then you *cannot* be a follower of Jesus—you *cannot* be a Christian. You can pretend to be one all you want, and falsely call yourself one, but on the day of judgment Matthew 7:21-23 will be true of you.

Two homosexuals *do not* constitute a marriage, *nor* do they constitute a family by adopting children. A marriage is *one man* and *one woman*, and a family consists of *one man*, *one woman*, and their *children*. A broken family is precisely that—broken.

## HUMANITY BY DESIGN

### God Created Humanity in *This* Way:

> "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female" (Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6).

God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18a). Any man; every man; all encompassed in Adam, our head and representative. God then continued by saying, "I will make a helper suitable for him" (Gen. 2:18b). The phrase "meet for" (KJV) in Genesis 2:18 comes from two Hebrew words. The first, #5048, is a preposition indicating *before, in front of, opposite*. The second, #3509.1, is *a marker of comparison: as, like; a marker of similarity or correspondence*. The phrase "meet for" in the Hebrew indicates something that is both *similar* yet *different*; something that was similar to Adam yet completely different from him. *Not* a mirrored image, which is entirely *the same* and *identical*. As other translations render it (more accurately, I might add), *this* is what was "suitable" for not only Adam but for *every* man—*woman*. Every animal in the animal kingdom had its suitable pair, something that was similar but different—its female counterpart. The similarity was in its kind; the difference was in its make up. Adam saw that every animal had its appropriate pair while he did not. Thus, God said "It is not good for man to be alone." In creating the "suitable" helper for Adam, He created *woman*. Woman is similar to Adam, being of the same species; but different from him, being a woman and having womanly parts rather than manly parts. This dif-

ference would be key to the mandate that God would give to the two of them, which is the same mandate given to *all mankind*—"Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28).

**God Intended Human Relationships to Function Like *This*:**

> "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7-8).

The creation account gives a *very* clear picture—a standard—of God's intention for *all* human relationships. The *only* standard for sexual expression you will find consistently praised in *both* Testaments is that of heterosexual monogamy. Throughout the *entire* Bible, only *that* standard is upheld. Both Jesus and the Apostle Paul upheld the standard of heterosexuality. If I uphold the life of a child in the womb, I am *necessarily* opposed to abortion. Likewise, Scripture, Jesus, and the Apostle Paul, while upholding the standard of heterosexuality, are *necessarily* opposed to homosexuality (and every other sexual deviation). The statement encompasses *every* man; *all* men: "For this reason *a man* [any man, every man, all men] shall leave his father and his mother, and *be joined to his wife*; and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Jesus made the point of directing his listeners back to the beginning, the creation of humanity, which tells us *everything* we need to know about God's design, plan, and intention for human relationships. Anything outside of *this* union—*one man* and *one woman*—is a perverse, abnormal, unnatural, abominable sexual deviation.

**God Gave Humanity *This* Mandate:**

> "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:22).

Man and woman were perfectly designed for each other; *both* for pleasure *and* for procreation: "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28). The genital parts of both man and woman were designed differently yet complimentary—they fit together perfectly. They are, by design, perfectly fit for each other; perfectly matched. Like a light bulb and a socket, a plug and an outlet, a bolt and a nut, male and female genitalia were *perfectly* designed for complimentary union. This union of *man* and *woman* is the *only* means with which to create progeny and carry on one's family name as well as the human race. Humanity would die outside of this union and this mandate. *Every* living creature that God created, those in the water, those in the air, and those on the land, were *all* given the mandate to "be fruitful and multiply." They could not fill the waters and the air and the land otherwise. Humanity was given the same mandate, which is an *expectancy* of how God intended human relationships to

function, the standard upheld by *both* Jesus and the Apostle Paul.

CHAPTER

# 4

# Whom Should I Marry?

People frequently ask this question. In fact, they treat this question as if it is some sort of mystical mystery, and so they pray to God asking Him to reveal His will and to give them a spouse. Problem is, there is *nothing* mystical or mysterious pertaining to this question. All you need to do is follow four simple steps:

1. *Pray about it.* Is God leading you into marriage, or is He leading you into singleness? What does *God* want for your life?
2. *Obey the Bible.* God has already revealed His will as to the person you should marry. Everything you need to know in order to answer this question has already been answered in the Bible. Not a Christian? Do not marry them! Just because they say they are a Christian and attend church does not mean that they are. Make sure you know you are getting and what you are getting into.
3. *Seek godly counsel.* What does your pastor, the elders of your church, and other godly couples think of your potential partner? Heed their advice.
4. *Make a decision!* The choice is up to *you*. If ten people of the opposite sex are interested in you, and they all meet biblical criteria, and you like all of them, *it does not matter which one you choose*. That person is the person you were meant to be with. If you decide to ignore the first three steps and you choose to marry an unsaved person, then that person is who you were meant to be with. God already knew

who you would choose before you ever chose them.

These four steps also apply to every other area of life, too. Where should I live? Pray about it, obey the Bible, seek godly counsel, and make a decision. What school should I go to? Pray about it, obey the Bible, seek godly counsel, and make a decision. What job should I apply to? Pray about it, obey the Bible, seek godly counsel, and make a decision. *Stop* treating God like He is some sort of magic genie. You can pray about these things until you are blue in the face and God will do nothing. Why? Because He has given you a brain to think and desires to follow (as long as they do not lead you into sin). As long as you are not denying and going against scriptural principles, all you need to do is *make a decision*. We make choices every day of our lives. These ones are no different. Do not treat God's will as if it is some unknown mystery that we need to pray for and ask about. He has given us His will in His Word. Read it, believe it, apply the principles, and *make a decision*.

**THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN A SPOUSE**

This section is the advice that my father gave to us children many years ago. I have held on to it for a long time, and now I will share it with you. The person you choose to marry is a huge life-altering decision. You do not want to take this decision lightly. The utmost care should be taken in your decision of whom you will spend the rest of your life with.

| | |
|---|---|
| **1st Life** | Let the dead marry the dead. Make sure they're saved, that they're a genuine believer in Christ. |
| **2nd Character** | A person's standards, scruples, morals, values, etc.<br>The foundation of a person, without which all the rest becomes a farce and you wind up with balloon people (everything on the outside, nothing on the inside).<br>A person of good character does what is right because it is right.<br>What do they stand for? What do they stand against? Why?<br>Don't just ask them what they believe. What is the basis of their beliefs? Did Martians tell them? Anyone throwing darts can accidentally hit a bulls-eye—you want the one who hits them consistently. |
| **3rd Personality** | You'll have more desire to spend time with someone polite, easygoing, refreshing, and other-centered rather than a self-centered, energy-sucking grump. |
| **4th Looks** | If you hit with the first three, they could look like potatoes and you wouldn't care. |

**WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A LIFE PARTNER**

This section comes from an article written by my theology professor, Dr. David Doherty, published in the New Brunswick Bible Institute's bulletin. These words will benefit you greatly as well.

> The choice of a life partner will determine much of your future; it will seriously influence your children's eternal destiny, and it will impact the testimony of your church. It is the most important decision you will ever make next to your salvation. Scripture has much to say about this subject! God has also given us examples of people who married unfit partners, i.e. David and Michal, Abigail and Nabal. Be careful! Look for these features in your "special friend." He/she…
>
> 1. **Must Be Converted.**
> The Bible dogmatically declares that Christians are not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Co. 6:14-18). Literally, we are not to be in a state of becoming unequally yoked with unbelievers. Find someone who deeply loves the Lord and he/she will have no trouble loving you for a lifetime.
> 2. **Must Be Consecrated.**
> Many people can "talk up a storm" of good intentions and lofty goals, but what is more important is what they actually accomplish. A glowing testimony is not necessarily a true picture of reality. Look for consistent godly living in a potential life partner. Any relationship will be as stable and meaningful as it is spiritually. Spirituality is never static. Look for honest spiritual growth in yourself and in your "super buddy." Ask, is Jesus number one in his/her life?
> 3. **Must Be Controlled.**
> No one wants to be a "yo-yo" on someone's emotional string. Make sure that a potential life partner is controlled by the Word of God and that he/she is honestly Spirit-led in emotions, attitudes.
> 4. **Must Be Compatible.**
> Don't date anyone who exhibits qualities which would disqualify from being your life partner. Don't marry anyone that you don't deeply love or anyone who doesn't truly love you. Make certain you are both being led by the Lord in the same direction for life. Ask yourself, "What attracts us to each other?" Learn to pray together, to laugh together, and to enjoy life together. Take all the time necessary to

know the will of God in this vital area of life.

No one wants a miserable life and an unhappy marriage; such is not God's desire for His children. With parental care and wisdom, God has provided us with counsel regarding what to look for in a potential life partner. Biblical credentials for a suitable life partner:

1. **A Godly Wife:**
   Titus 2 presents basic qualities for a Christian wife. She is to be a "taught" person (v.4). Her teachers are not the worldly, unbelieving professors of man's wisdom. Rather, her teachers are mature, spiritual women who know by experience what they are teaching. These older women teach six "courses." They are: (1). *Sober-mindedness*: This course produces purposeful discipline and wise choices. Graduates are serious, committed and sensible. They do not have "butterfly" personalities. (2.) *Love*: This study teaches them to love their own husbands…a hard course! By loving the Lord, accepting their calling from God for their lives, graduates will resolve to love (to give and to receive love) their husbands. Don't marry a flirt, or someone who is not committed to purity. (3.) *Discretion*: Students in this course "study" to make wise choices…they don't live by flashes of impulse buying. Careful thought goes before their words and actions. (4.) *Purity*: This study avoids the psychological "mind-field" of immorality. Graduates don't have bitter regrets and shameful memories. They have dedicated themselves to the Lord and to the man they will marry for life. (5.) *Home Management*: A godly wife will keep her home loving, fresh, clean and rejoicing. Her home will be her earthly priority. (6.) *Obedience*: This course advocates loving cooperation with her husband. She is not a female "lone ranger." Graduates form a happy "team" relationship with their husbands.
2. **A Godly Husband:**
   Scripture has something to say to young men who plan to be husbands in God's time. A potential husband must be marked with: (1.) *Sober-mindedness*: He must be thoughtful, weigh his words and actions and be sensitive to other. Scripture must be his Guide. (2.) *Good Works*: He must be a worker! All his works must have the adjective "good" before them. He must seek to be a blessing, a breath of heavenly fresh air, to others. Good works motivate him. He must be

consistent in his goodness. (3.) *Doctrinal Purity*: Right beliefs are foundational to right behaviour. A suitable husband must know the Lord, walk closely with Him and now the Word of God and live it out in daily life. To know sound doctrine is a good start towards living a life that is marked with "uncorruptness." He has no moral rot. (4.) *Sound Speech*: A potential husband must know how to speak in such a way that others will not condemn him. He must be honest, true to Scripture, kind and gracious in all he says on a regular basis.

CHAPTER

# 5

# Count the Cost

Jesus said, “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’” (Luke 14:28-30)

The context is clear as to what He was referring. However, an application *can* be drawn from this and applied to marriage. I do not want you to misunderstand me here; this passage *is not* speaking with regard to marriage, *but* it does have an application than can be used toward marriage.

I am a young man in my early 30’s (as of my initial writing of this—to give you context). In today’s society, little to no consideration is put into marriage. People enter into it blindly, thinking that it is somehow supposed to be a fairy tale romance with a happy ending and no problems along the road whatsoever. They are blinded and self-deceived. They stand at the altar vainly and emptily uttering those sacred covenant committing vows, “to love, honour, and cherish, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health.” Yet, when the first sign of trouble comes along, or something pathetically unimportant (such as leaving the toilet seat up or hair in the drain), they run for divorce. Just to give you a bit of a wake up call here in order to save you from loads of embarrassing disappointment, you are *never* going to find a relationship where problems do not exist! *Ever*! The two of you are both sinful, selfish, self-centered individuals. You are going to clash. There is *no one*

whom you are compatible with. You need to *learn* to be compatible; you need to *learn* to be one, rather than two; you need to *learn* to love each other; you need to *learn* to give of yourself sacrificially to each other; you need to *learn* to reconcile through apology and forgiveness; you need to *learn* to be gracious and merciful toward one another in love. These things *do not* come easily.

When it comes to marriage, you *need* to take it seriously. You need to take a good hard look at it and ask yourself if you *truly* love the other person or if it is merely lust, infatuation, emotion, passion of the moment, or the love of them fitting a certain mold you have created for them in your mind. Remember, *life happens*. For example, what if your spouse has gorgeous hair and they get cancer and then lose all of their hair. Are they going to somehow be different in your eyes now? Less beautiful than they once were? What if your spouse is involved in a terrible car accident that either renders them without the use of their legs for the rest of their life or they go through the windshield and their face is horribly cut up? Do you *honestly* love them enough to fulfill your vows of covenantal commitment "for better or for worse" and to remain with them? Or will you run for the door like a coward, proving you never truly loved them to begin with but merely loved a mold you had for them in your mind as long as they fit it?

This is where the application can be drawn from Jesus' words and applied to marriage. *Count the cost*! Marriage is not something to be taken lightly. It is a serious matter. It is for *life*! It is not a car that, when you get tired of it, you can just trade it in. That is the most awful and unloving manner in which you can look at your spouse. It says that they have no value in your eyes other than a particular role they fill. The above examples are just *some* of the ways in which you need to *seriously* count the cost of what it means to get married. You need to count the cost of what freedoms as a single person you will be giving up. You need to count the cost of the various bumps in the road that you are going to experience and have to deal with. You need to count the cost of what it is going to mean when particular troubles rear their ugly heads. Talk to married couples and find out what obstacles and hurdles they have had to face in their marriages and then count the cost in regard to the possibility that those same things might occur in your own marriage.

Even the most perfect marriage on the face of this Earth has its disagreements and arguments. Marriage does not come easy; it requires hard work from which you are *never* allowed a vacation (i.e., you cannot clock out on your marriage). You have to continually put effort into it to make it what you desire it to be. If you think it should be a fairy tale romance, then you have a *ton* of work that *you* need to put into it to make it so. Until the both of you learn to co-operate and agree and work together, you will always clash because you are both sinful, selfish, self-centered, individually-minded people

who have your own ideas of how things ought to be. You need to communicate with each other, you need to sacrifice every now and then, and you need to grow in love, grace, mercy, patience, forgiveness, etc., etc., toward one another. You need to display toward your spouse what Christ Jesus has already displayed toward you.

Marriage is not for the faint of heart. It is a serious covenantal commitment for life. If you enter into it lightly with no concern for the gravity thereof, statistical chances are that you are going to ruin someone else's life. What is your purpose and/or desire for wanting to get married? Examine your heart motive and make sure that it is a godly response and not a selfish one. If you cannot come up with a good response, then you should not be married—or you are not ready to be married. Count the cost of it!

CHAPTER

# 6

# Servitude: Have This Attitude In You

"Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean." So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the

> Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.""
>
> (John 13:1-17)

When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, He was displaying humility and servitude. He was giving us an example to follow (v. 15). The example is *not* that we should be washing each other's feet, but that we are to *serve* one another. However it might look.

> "...by love serve one another."
>
> (Galatians 5:13)

> "...give preference to one another in honor;"
>
> (Rom. 12:10b)

> "...with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."
>
> (Philippians 2:3-4)

For the husband and wife, they are not to look out for their own interests, but they are to serve one another in lowliness of heart and mind, seeking to build one another up in humility and love. When we have the heart of a servant, we will be greatly blessed. When my wife and I got married, we washed each other's feet as part of our ceremony in order to demonstrate to our guests our promise and commitment to serve one another. It is our desire to repeat this symbolic action every anniversary in order to remind us of our promise and commitment. Because Christ Jesus served us, we ought to serve one another. Especially a husband and wife toward one another.

> "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus

> EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
>
> (Philippians 2:5-11)

Christ Jesus had the attitude of servitude. Though He was above *all* things, for He had created *all* things, nevertheless He placed Himself lower than the angels and became flesh, dwelling among us. He became a servant to those who ought to serve Him. We are not only to have this attitude toward others, but especially toward our spouse. Husband and wife are to serve one another.

If you are trying to live your marriage for what is best for you, then you are attempting to live as though you are still separate. "So they are no longer two, but one flesh" (Matt. 19:6a; Mark 10:8b). You are two. Your individual paths have merged. You now walk the same path together, forging a new singular path together. If you are trying to live your life separate from your spouse, as you did before you were married, then you are not honouring your marriage or your spouse.

Servitude looks different for every couple and in every situation. You know your life, your marriage, your situation better than anyone else. Assess it closely and look for ways in which you can serve your spouse. What may work for someone else may not work for you. Maybe it is doing something for him/her that he/she normally does for himself/herself. Hopefully they are mature enough to appreciate your efforts even if you do not do it exactly as they would, remembering that it is the thought that counts. Maybe it is offering to do something so he/she does not have to. Dishes, laundry, garbage, etc. Maybe it is encouraging him/her to have a day out or night out with the guys/girls. Read through Scripture and take note of the passages pertaining to servitude. Use them as inspiration for what you might do for your spouse. Love serves, even when opposed or unappreciated.

CHAPTER

# 7

# Stop Comparing Yourself To Me!

In marriage, there is a tendency to compare yourself and how you were raised with your spouse and how he/she was raised: "Your mother cooks differently than my mother." "Why don't you squeeze the toothpaste from the bottom up the way I do, instead of from the middle?" "Your family has some strange ways of doing things." "Why don't you hang your towel up to dry the way I do after a shower?" "How come or why do you do this that way?" This kind of comparison is unhealthy. What you are essentially saying is, "You and your family are different from me and mine; therefore, you and your family are wrong." You are basically saying that you are better than they are. Being different does not equate with being wrong. Being wrong equates with being wrong (such as where sin in concerned). Being different is just that—different.

My wife and I come from two different countries and cultures. I am Canadian while she is Peruvian. Because of our different cultures and upbringings, there is a tendency to want to compare ourselves with each other and accuse the other person of doing something wrong simply because they do it differently. This behaviour is not unique to our life and situation. This behaviour happens with couples who grew up in the same culture together, lived in the same town together, went to the same church together, etc. You will be hard-pressed to find another family who did everything *exactly* the same as your family did. Thus, comparisons: "Why do you do this that way?"

You and your spouse were raised on two different paths. Your lives were headed down two different paths. When you were single, the paths you walked were very different from each other in numerous and varying ways. You pursued

your own interests and desires. Now that you are married, you are to create one new path *together*. Your lives are no longer separate. You are no longer your own; you no longer belong to yourself. You are responsible for and accountable to each other. "So they are no longer two, but one flesh" (Matt. 19:6a; Mark 10:8b). "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4).

A healthy way of comparing yourselves and creating your new path *together* is by comparing notes and seeing if you agree. You were raised differently, you probably have different ideas of how to do things, so sit down and compare notes. Communicate. Discuss your differences and look for compromise and solutions. Perhaps with this item, his way of doing it yields the best results. Perhaps with that item, her way of doing it yields the best results. Assess the information honestly and humbly; *not* with a proud and stubborn heart that wants to look at every way *you* have been taught as being the *only* way of yielding the best results. If that is how you are looking at it, then you are *still* comparing yourself to your spouse as if you are somehow better than he/she is. You are still saying, "You and your family are wrong."

If there is a better way of doing something, then *gently* and *lovingly* suggest it to your spouse. Compliment them, compliment the positive aspects of the way they do something, and then *lovingly* offer an alternative method. Do not just shoot down anything and everything they do or say, because then they can develop the mentality that nothing they do or say is ever good enough for you. Is that truly and honestly how you intend for your spouse to feel? Is that truly and honestly the kind of marriage you want to have? That nothing they do or say is ever satisfactory for you?

Your spouse *can never* and *will never* live up to the expectations you place upon him/her. You *can never* and *will never* live up to the expectations your spouse places on you. Is that how you desire your marriage to be? Unrealistic and unfulfilled expectations where the both of you feel miserable and resentful, like you are unable to please or satisfy one another, etc.? This will only produce anger and bitterness. It will create a wedge in your marriage that you *do not* want to exist. Wedges create gaps; gaps increase; suddenly you find yourself in a place you never intended yourself to be and are unsure of how to repair. Preventative maintenance goes a long way! Seek to bind your hearts together, to strengthen your relationship.

When you compare yourself with others, someone is *always* bound to end up getting hurt. They may even become defensive. When you compare yourself to others, either you will feel proud and self-righteous, if you deem others as inferior to yourself; or you will feel miserable and resentful, if you deem yourself inferior to others. If you feel the need to compare yourself to your spouse, turn around and compare yourself to Jesus. Once you have done this, you ought to be humbled enough to realize that you are really no better than your spouse.

God created us. He made each of us to be different. Your spouse is different from you because God made it that way. Thank God that He did! Our differences are good things. How boring would life be if we were all exactly alike? Yes, I know, there are legalistic cult-like Christian sects out there whose churches try to force their members to be cookie-cutter clones of one another if they want to be accepted. However, the *only* person whom we should be striving to imitate and emulate is the Lord Jesus. We ought to be comparing ourselves and our lives to Him, confessing and repenting of our shortcomings, praying for the Holy Spirit to help us to become more like Christ, and then striving to be precisely that—more like Jesus.

*Stop* trying to compare yourself to other people; especially to your spouse! Recognize and understand that the two of you are different and will do things completely different from one another. If they do something that irritates you in some way, *gently* and *lovingly* bring it to their attention and ask them to try and change it. You may even preface your request by paying them three compliments about things they do that you appreciate or are thankful for. If they squeeze the toothpaste from the middle of the tube instead of from the end, this is *not* an issue to get angry over and yell at them about. Why make a mountain out of a mole hill? There certainly is *no excuse* for you to begin attacking them personally!

Arguments and disagreements are inevitable in marriage. Keep the argument or disagreement about the argument or disagreement. *Never* should you start assassinating each other's character, cutting the legs out from under one another. That is not very loving or Christ-like. Not to mention that you are *one flesh* and that by doing such a thing you are only hurting yourself. Your spouse is an extension of yourself. When you hurt them, you are hurting yourself because you are causing damage to your own marriage. Build each other up; do not tear each other down: "Therefore encourage one another and build up one another" (1 Thess. 5:11a).

How does Jesus command you to behave? Multiply that by a factor of ten for marriage. Marriage is a good place for you to start to put into practice the disciplines you are commanded to show your brothers and sisters in the faith. When Scripture commands you to behave a certain way toward your brothers and sisters in the faith, marriage is where you ought to be practicing these disciplines the most (even if you are married to a non-believer): "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?" (1 Cor. 7:16); "so that...they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives" (1 Pet. 3:1).

CHAPTER

# 8

# Who Pays For Your Spouse's Sin?

What is the Gospel in a nutshell? *Jesus saves those who could not save themselves*. In other words, *Jesus paid for our sins*. Throughout the entire Old Testament, we see that there had to be a payment for sin. It could not go unpunished. Before Adam and Eve had sinned, God had already instituted a plan to redeem mankind. God the Son would come down to Earth, take on flesh, dwell among us, live a perfect sinless life, and give His life as a sacrifice for ours on a cross that we rightly deserved. He would take our sin upon Himself and take our punishment as His own. Why? Because God demands justice for sin. Either Jesus paid for our sin or else we will pay for it for eternity when He comes to judge the world.

If your spouse sins against you and you get angry with him/her, you are punishing him/her for their sin against you. You are acting as judge and demanding justice for what they have done. Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. As described in Ephesians 5, the husband is to be Christ to his wife. When the church sins, does Christ get angry with us and judge us, demanding justice? No, because He has already paid it. When we, as children of God, sin, Jesus does not punish us for it. We have already been forgiven. Past, present, and future. When your husband/wife sins against you, by getting angry with them you are punishing them. You have completely missed the Gospel.

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

If Jesus does not make *you* pay for *your* sins, why, then, do you attempt to make your spouse pay for his/her sins? Are you now in the place of God? If you truly understand the Gospel in any situation where someone sins against you, especially your spouse, your response should be that of Jesus. Instead of punishing your spouse when he/she sins against you, you ought to forgive him/her as Christ has forgiven you. By getting angry and demanding justice for his/her sin against you, you are repaying sin for sin because you are sinning in response to their sin. You ought to demonstrate Gospel-motivated sacrifice in your behaviour—*not* self-centered punishment.

Our goal ought to be for our spouse to walk in holiness. When we respond to each other the way Christ would respond to us, we lift each other up before the throne of grace and encourage each other to become more like Christ. We spur each other on. When we punish each other and attack each other, we not only hinder the Gospel and distort it, but we also hinder each other's growth. When we punish our spouse for their sin against us instead of forgiving them, we make it more difficult for them to become more Christ-like and walk in holiness.

You profess to be a Christian, but is the Gospel real to you? Is the Gospel real to you in every moment of your life? If your spouse spent money that was required to pay some important bill, is the Gospel real to you in this moment? If you discover your spouse is addicted to porn, is the Gospel real to you in this moment? If you find out that your spouse committed adultery against you, is the Gospel real to you in this moment? (More about this in the next chapter.)

When you sin, you should not punish yourself over it because your punishment has already been paid. You need to appropriate the Gospel and believe it. Likewise, when your spouse sins against you, instead of punishing him/her for his/her sin, appropriate the Gospel and do what Christ has already done for you: forgive. Sacrifice what your heart desperately wants—justice—and forgive as you have been forgiven.

This attitude and behaviour is most required from the husband since he is commanded to "love [his wife], just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless" (Eph. 5:25-27). Being that the husband is the head of the home, he is primarily responsible for implementing this pattern in his marriage.

CHAPTER

# 9

# Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Long before my wife and I had gotten married, we had been discussing adultery one night. We both know that divorce is not an option (Mal. 2:3-6; Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:7-9), and that if we were to separate, we are commanded to either reconcile or remain single for the rest of our lives (1 Cor. 7:10-11, 39; Rom. 7:2-3). We addressed the fact that, just like David, neither of us is above falling into this sin because every one of us has the capacity to commit this sin. This is why we need to guard our hearts and protect the sanctity of our marriage, not allowing ourselves to be placed in compromising situations (1 Thess. 5:22) that could open us to temptation and lead us into sin (James 1:14-15), thereby defiling the marriage bed (Heb. 13:4; Prov. 6:32).

My wife had said that if I were to commit adultery, she could forgive me but she would leave and never return. Sadly, this tends to be our natural human response. I pointed out to her that if that were her response, then she would not have truly forgiven me. She would only be telling herself that she has forgiven me in order to appease her own conscience.

I illustrated that if she were to commit adultery against me, I would indeed be hurt, I would indeed be angry, I would indeed feel betrayed, and it would indeed be difficult to trust her again—but not impossible. As much as her adultery would hurt me, if I consider all the heinous sins that I have committed against Jesus throughout my entire life, minute after minute, day after day, year after year, how much pain did I cause Christ? How much pain did He feel on His way to the cross because of my sins? How much pain did He feel when God's wrath was poured on Him because of my sins? If Christ can

forgive me of all my sins against Him, then surely I can forgive my wife for committing adultery against me. If I am to be anything like Christ, I must.

Jesus said that if we have anything against our brother, we need to go and be reconciled to him (Matt. 5:23-24). In order to be reconciled to him, there must be forgiveness. If there is forgiveness, there will be reconciliation. The two go hand in hand. Jesus said that we must forgive 70 multiplied by 7 times (Matt. 18:22), which means there should be no end to our forgiveness. If we are genuinely forgiving, then there will be reconciliation because that is what forgiveness does—it reconciles.

I explained that when Jesus forgives us, we are reconciled to the Father (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18). If we were not reconciled to the Father, then we would not truly have forgiveness. The same is true within marriage. If either of us committed adultery against the other, genuine forgiveness would, and must, result in reconciliation. If we are who and what we claim to be—Christians, and if we desire to be like Christ, then this is a command for us. We need to think of Christ, think like Christ, and act like Christ.

Marriage is not only a picture of Christ and the church, but it is also a picture of the Gospel. The Gospel teaches us that despite all our sins we can have forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14) and reconciliation to God the Father (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18). What does it say to the world about Christ and His church if a married couple cannot forgive and be reconciled to each other? What does it say to the world about the Gospel of Christ Jesus if a married couple cannot forgive and be reconciled to each other? Forgiveness ought to lead to reconciliation. Anyone who does not believe this does not believe the Gospel.

Even with the sin of adultery, husband and wife can forgive and be reconciled and the marriage can be healed and prosper. Harmony can be restored and the home can be rebuilt. These are the works of God. This is the power of God. If we are Christians and if we are Christ-like, these are our works because we are the image of Christ. Even if adultery took place, we are commanded to forgive and to be reconciled because of what marriage pictures and represents.

It is my prayer that the enemy, the devil, would not be granted a foothold in my marriage in order to try and destroy it. It is my prayer that God would guard my wife and me and to protect our hearts, drawing us ever closer to Himself and to each other. It is my prayer that we would build a strong marriage, a strong love, a strong life, a strong family, and a strong home together, built upon our Rock, Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER

# 10

# Why Reconciliation In Marriage Is the *Only* Option

Why should reconciliation be pursued in your marriage rather than divorce? I will give you four reasons.

1. If you consider *all* the sins that you have committed *every single day* of your life, you have committed *many* and *repeated* grievous sins against Christ Jesus. Your sins nailed Jesus to the cross. Your spouse's sin of adultery committed against you pales in comparison to the *many* heinous sins you have committed against Christ. Yet, you want to be his/her judge? You want to punish your spouse for their sin against you, yet you expect your *many* sins against God to be forgiven? Hypocrite! "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7). "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matt. 7:3-5; Luke 6:41-42). You think that by your spouse committing adultery against you that he/she has somehow sinned much greater against you than *all* the sins you have committed against Christ Jesus? You call yourself a Christian and yet do not practice the Gospel in your life or marriage!

2. Your *many* sins committed against God have been forgiven you. De-

spite how much forgiveness you have received for your sins, do you refuse to offer forgiveness to your spouse for his/her sin against you? Hypocrite! After speaking the parable of the Unforgiving Debtor in Matthew 18:21-35, Jesus says, "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart." What will He likewise do to us? What was He saying? "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions" (Matt. 6:14-15; Mark 11:25-26; Luke 6:37c; cf. Eph. 4:32b; Col. 3:13). In the parable of the Two Debtors in Luke 7:36-50, Jesus says that, "he who is forgiven little, loves little" (v. 47). In other words, if you have been forgiven much, you will forgive much. This application can be drawn from Luke 12:48: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be required." You have been given *much* forgiveness for your *many* and *repeated* sins against Christ Jesus. So how much ought you to be forgiving others, including your spouse? According to Jesus, "seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22).

3. Marriage is a picture of the Gospel. The Gospel says that *Jesus paid for our sins*, forgave us, and has reconciled us to the Father. Is the Gospel real in your life? Do you live according to the Gospel? Do you speak the Gospel to yourself every day? Do you apply the Gospel in every moment to every situation that occurs in your life? Do you apply the Gospel to others in your life? The Gospel is about forgiveness and reconciliation. You want forgiveness and reconciliation from God the Father, yet you do not want to forgive and reconcile with your spouse? Hypocrite!

4. Marriage is a picture of Jesus and the church. God instituted marriage in order to provide an earthly symbolism for the heavenly reality. When you divorce, you distort that picture. It is like having a clear image on your television set and then playing with the dials in order to mess up the horizonal and vertical holds. (For those of you who do not understand this illustration, ask someone who is at least 30 years old or older to explain it to you.) When two people get married, especially two Christians, you are portraying Christ and the church. Your entire marriage, the way the husband and wife treat each other, should portray Christ and the church. When you divorce, what does that say about Christ and the church? What does that say to the world about Christ and the church? As we are in the image of God, marriage is in the image of Christ and the church. Would you mar this image?

If you believe in the Gospel, then forgiveness flows from what *God* has

done for you—*not* what your spouse did to you.

> "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you."
>
> (Matthew 7:1-2)

> "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned."
>
> (Luke 6:37)

CHAPTER

# 11

# Lessons Husbands and Wives Can Learn From Ephesians 4:25-5:33

1. Speak the truth in love.
2. Be angry, but do not sin in your anger. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. Deal with the problem. If you do not, you give opportunity to Satan.
3. Let no corrupt talk come from your mouths, but only such as is good for building each other up—as fits the occasion—that it may give grace to those who hear.
4. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit!
5. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and slander (gossip) be put away from you, along with malice.
6. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another.
7. Be imitators of God!
8. Walk in love.
9. "*But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*"
10. Do not associate with those who walk in darkness.
11. Walk as children of light.
12. Discern what is pleasing to the Lord.
13. Take no part in unfruitful works of darkness, but expose them instead.
14. Watch how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of your time because the days are evil.

15. Understand what the will of the Lord is.
16. Give thanks in everything.
17. Submit to each other in reverence for Christ. Serve one another.
18. "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything."
19. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband."

CHAPTER

# 12

# Questions Regarding Marriage

During my courtship with my wife, I issued a small Bible study for the two of us to participate in. We each had similar questions to answer, and we had one week to complete it. I was to study out the answers to my questions, while my wife was to study out the answers to her questions. When we were finished, we shared what we had learned from our study with each other. The questions were as follows:

**For the man:**

- Read and meditate on Ephesians 5:25-33. What does this mean and how can you make it evident in your life as a man/husband?
- What does it mean to "love" your wife? (Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19)
- What does it mean to love unconditionally?
  What does it mean to love sacrificially?
- What does it mean to be a man/husband?
- What is marriage and what does marriage entail?

**For the woman:**

- Read and meditate on Proverbs 31:10-31. What does this mean and how can you make it evident in your life as a woman/wife?
- What does it mean to "submit" to your husband? (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18)
- What does it mean to love unconditionally?
  What does it mean to love sacrificially?
- What does it mean to be a woman/wife?
- What is marriage and what does marriage entail?

- What ways can aid toward a harmonious marriage, and how can you invest yourself in order to assure you have a harmonious marriage?
- Read Galatians 5:22-23; James 3:17; and 2 Peter 1:5-9. How can you develop these Christian character traits and how can they enhance your marriage?
- How can you be sure that Jesus Christ has the pre-eminence in your marriage and that He remains on the throne of your marriage, being the Center and Refuge of all things pertaining to your marriage?
- What significance do these passages teach the man? 1 Peter 3:7; Hebrews 13:4; Titus 2:2, 7-8; 1 Timothy 3:4. How can they become evident in your life?


- What ways can aid toward a harmonious marriage, and how can you invest yourself in order to assure you have a harmonious marriage?
- Read Galatians 5:22-23; James 3:17; and 2 Peter 1:5-9. How can you develop these Christian character traits and how can they enhance your marriage?
- How can you be sure that Jesus Christ has the pre-eminence in your marriage and that He remains on the throne of your marriage, being the Center and Refuge of all things pertaining to your marriage?

- What significance do these passages teach the woman? 1 Peter 3:4; Hebrews 13:4; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Timothy 2:9. How can they become evident in your life?

In order to hopefully help you in your study of and preparation for marriage, I have included most of my answers to the questions that I was required to answer for our small Bible study.

**What does it mean to "love" your wife?**

At least twice in Scripture the husband is commanded to love his wife (Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19). In the first, Christ is given as the example, His love being sincere, pure, ardent, and constant affection. Even with the imperfections and failures a wife has (and husbands have them, too), a husband is to love his wife in this manner at all times, which we can derive from the command given in 1 Pet. 3:7.

A wife might do things that boggle her husband, and he might wish that she were stronger in these areas than she is, but he is to understand that she is a woman as God created her. Her weaknesses are so the husband can come alongside her and be her protector and guard her in such areas. Husband and wife are complementary.

To love your wife is to place her first before yourself. That does not mean that you allow yourself to be walked upon by becoming placid, quiet, and submissive. No, the husband is to stand up for himself and be a fighter, a mighty man of valour. But as Phil. 2:3-4 says: *"…count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you not only look to his own interests but*

*also to the interests of others.*" If your interests conflict, providing they fit the pattern of Phil. 4:8, then be willing to sacrifice your interest for the sake of your wife's interest. For a wife to reverence her husband means that she does not tear him down, but that she must build him up.

In the second, husbands must love their wives with a tender and faithful affection. They must not be bitter toward them, not use them unkindly, not use harsh language or severe treatment, but be kind and obliging to them in all things. Husbands are to live with their wives in a wise and sober manner, not according to lust or passion. They must give due respect to her, protecting her person, supporting her credit, delighting in her conversation, affording her a handsome maintenance, and placing a due trust and confidence in her. To love your wife is to behave lovingly and peaceably toward her, cherishing her.

The word in Eph. 5:25 is "*agapao*," the highest kind of love. It is spontaneous, a love irrespective of rights that makes much of a person. The gentile bride that Samson chose to love proved to be unworthy of him and his love. She allowed fear and family pressure to turn her away from him. A wife might act in such a sinful way that people would say, "she has no right to his love," but this command in Scripture tells husbands to love their wives whether they deserve that love or not. The church did not deserve Christ's love, and yet He loved her anyway and gave His life for her.

A husband who loves his wife would die for her rather than put her in harm's way. He would sacrifice his life for hers. A husband should so love his wife in his heart that no sacrifice would seem too great for him to make for her. Just as a man must take care of his body, so he must see to his wife's comfort. He must protect her from harm, desire her well-being, and pay close attention to the signals she sends. He needs to help her develop her potential, nourish her, and cherish her.

The husband is not to do his best to imitate Christ, he *is* to imitate Christ. The key to making the principles of marriage work is *faith*.

To love my wife is to put into practice the acts of love mentioned in 1 Corinthians from verses 4 through 8a: "*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; love is not arrogant or rude; love does not insist on its own way* (sacrifice for the sake of your wife)*; love is not irritable or resentful; love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.*" "*Love never ends!*" Another rendering is "*Love never fails.*" You can fail-proof your marriage! If a person truly and honestly loves their spouse, the marriage cannot fail because they have fail-proofed it. If a person does not purely and sincerely love their spouse out of the depths of their heart, having made that decision to do so irrespective of rights, the devil and the world will try and work on them to either cheat on their spouse or to divorce their spouse, both of which are great sins.

How will we have the type of love that "*is kind…is not provoked,* [and] *thinks no evil*"? The only way is by allowing nothing of the old life to remain, and by having only simple, perfect trust in God – such a trust that we no longer want God's blessings, but only want God Himself. Have we come to the point where God can withdraw His blessings from us without our trust in Him being affected?

**What does it mean to love unconditionally?**

To love unconditionally does not mean that if and when my wife sins I merely overlook it without saying anything to her. No, if I love her unconditionally, I will speak to her of her sin so that she might repent toward God and forsake her sin. Unconditional love seeks her best at all times. To love unconditionally means that if and when she sins, after having repented and forsook her sin, I am to forgive her and not hold her sin over her head or lord her sin over her as if I am perfect and never sin, which would be a lie. "The way in which you measure others will be measured unto you." Even in her sin, I do not stop loving her.

To love unconditionally means that no matter what circumstances might arise or what tragedies might befall my wife, I do not give up on her and/or stop loving her. If she gets cancer and her hair falls out, I remain by her side, reminding her that she is still beautiful, pouring my love upon her because she will be in need of it, knowing that my love has not wavered for her and that I do not look at her any differently or any less. If she is in an accident that leaves her paralyzed, I remain by her side, showing her that she is still precious and worthy to me and that my love has not wavered, nor do I look at her any differently or any less. I continue bestowing my love upon her, letting her know that she is not a burden in any way to me and showing her that she is no less in my eyes and heart than she had been before.

Unconditional love does not give up on the other person, nor does it walk out when times get tough or trials arise and weigh down upon us. True love loves at all times in all situations without waning even an ounce. "*Agapao*," the highest form of love, is a principle, a fact that relates to the will, a decision. "*Phileo*" is associated with fondness, emotions. Unconditional love is based upon "*agapao*," whereas fleeting love, if it can be called love at all, is based upon "*phileo*."

**What does it mean to love sacrificially?**

Christ was the perfect example of sacrifice. If need be, the husband is to give himself up for his wife; he is to lay his life down for his wife, to protect her at all costs. Even die for her. But this is ultimate sacrifice. In every day life with his wife, he is to sacrifice for her, put her best interest before his own. He is to kill his selfishness and sacrifice his time for his wife. He is to show

her honour.

**What is marriage? What does marriage entail?**

"*Marriage is honourable in all!*" Marriage is a sacred and holy covenant made between a man and a woman in the sight of God and men. It is a covenant that is made for life or until death separates you. It is a time where you invest your life into the life of another, seeking to fulfill their needs while helping them to grow in their relationship with the Lord and become more Christ-like in character. It is a time where you can genuinely and sincerely love another person from the heart and pour yourself into them. Marriage requires unconditional love, sacrifice, and great intimacy. Intimacy requires:

- Trust
    - No lying
    - No going back on words
    - No changing
- Truthfulness
- Time

As the husband, it is my duty to be gentle toward my wife. After all, she is a precious gift from God. I am commanded to love my wife – at all times, in every way. Many today have this idea that their spouse must earn or be deserving of their love, but this command is given regardless of whether she earns or deserves it. I am to treat her like a queen – like she is the most precious gift on Earth. I am to respect her, cherish her, and adore her. It is my privilege and right to encourage her to become more Christ-like in her attitude, speech, behaviour, and every day life. I am to minister to her daily. I am to appreciate her in public. This will give great testimony to our marriage and will give outsiders a high view of how wonderful my wife is. I am never to speak negatively about my wife to anyone – friend or family – or to tell others of her flaws or weaknesses. I am to build her up in the eyes of others. Any negative things should be discussed between my wife and I only, and resolved between the two of us and before God Almighty. To bring these outside the marriage and discuss them with other people is to breech the integrity and honour of the marriage covenant and my promise to "uphold her," which means to appraise her highly and valuably before others for her worth – those God-given qualities that God has instilled in her that make her a wonderful partner and beautiful wife. I am to guard her heart – at all times. It is my duty to protect her – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. God has entrusted me with this beautiful young woman, His daughter, and I am to look after her with the utmost and greatest care. I am commanded to love her as I love my own body. As a husband, if I want a harmonious marriage, it is my responsibility to obey God's command to me and to "love my wife." If I love her the way I ought, that will cure half the problems that many people face in

their marriages.

As Proverbs 5:18-20 puts it: "*May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A love doe, a graceful deer – may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love. Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife?*" This is the key to a happy marriage. The woman you marry is the wife of your heart.

Men are responsible for the spiritual covering of their household. A husband should live marriage for what's best for his wife – not himself. He should put his desires on the shelf.

**How can I invest myself in order to make sure I have a harmonious marriage? What ways can aid toward having a harmonious marriage?**

Speaking gently toward my wife, especially if I am upset, is one way in which I can strive toward a harmonious marriage. Strong words have great power to harm; softer words have great power to heal. If my wife makes a decision in poor judgment, I do not need to get irate with her and yell at her or make her feel inferior or insignificant. Am I always perfect in what I do? I need to be understanding with her, realizing that she is the weaker sex. I need to be gentle with her. After all, she is a precious gift from God.

I need to watch for and listen to the wisdom of my wife. She will often see the softer side of things (such as feelings and relationships), whereas I will not. She will be able to make great impressions on me with her wisdom given from God.

A man treats a woman as he sees her. If he sees her as worthless, he will treat her as worthless. No man who has valued a woman far above her worth has ever treated her like filth. Would you treat a rare diamond as if it were a piece of coal? A husband is to appreciate his wife for the worth that God has poured so lovingly into her! If a husband loves his wife in the manner in which God commands him to, that does great wonders toward having a harmonious marriage full of grace, truth, love, joy, peace, and patience.

**Read Galatians 5:22-23; James 3:17 and 2 Peter 1:5-9. How can I develop and live out these Christian character traits in marriage?**

James 3:17 is very imperative in marriage. Earlier in James we are told that if we ask for wisdom, God will grant it. Without wisdom, it will be impossible for the other characteristics in this verse to be achieved and expressed. Marriage can be peaceful if wisdom is used. The husband can be gentle with his wife if he has wisdom. If he lacks wisdom, chances are that if his wife makes an err in judgment, he will react harshly toward her rather than with understanding, grace and love. Husbands and wives need to be open to reason (willing to listen to each other), full of mercy and good works (toward

each other and others), impartial (if your spouse does something wrong, you need to call them on it and not take their side just because they are your spouse - you take the side of truth, no matter which side that is), and to be sincere with each other. Without wisdom, it will be difficult to live these out in marriage.

**How can we be sure that Christ has the pre-eminence in our marriage and that He remains on the throne of our marriage, being the Center and Refuge of all things pertaining to our marriage?**

One of the ways in which we can be sure that Christ reigns supreme in our hearts during marriage is to read the Bible together, pray together, and study God's Word together. If you make sure that you have this focus on God, then you will not focus so much on the other person and put them on the throne of your heart. To share in these things is to remove the focus from each other and to focus it where it needs to be. You have to have this time where God is the center focus and not each other. Focusing on each other is not bad, so long as it is kept in perspective. But apart from this time of sharing together the things of God, you also have to be involved in these things yourself each day. Then you can share what you have learned and what God has taught you through your private Bible readings and meditations of His Word. If you do not have the private time, you cannot expect to grow spiritually. Your spouse will grow spiritually in leaps and bounds, but you will remain stagnant. It is important to have time alone with God in prayer and Bible reading, but it is also important to share time together with God in prayer and Bible reading. Both are essential. Time alone will enable you to grow as an individual. Time together will enable you to grow as a couple.

**What other things has God taught you?**

Well, the first thing God taught me about is what we consider to be a "joke" or to be funny. When we joke with others, that is when we lack spiritual discernment the most. We tend to think certain things, especially sinful things, are humourous, even though those things are what put Christ on the cross for us. Humour has a way of making things acceptable. If someone tells a joke about homosexuals and we laugh, we are laughing at sin as if it is no big deal. If someone makes a sexual remark or a sexual "joke" and we laugh, we are laughing at sin. If we are watching a "comedian" on TV and he/she is making sexual innuendos, our laughing at these is sin. We are making light of sin in the face of how grave it really is. Do we honestly believe that Christ is laughing along with us? We need to check Ephesians 5: "*But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking* (compare 4:29)*, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanks-*

*giving. For you may be sure of this, that <u>everyone</u> who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), <u>has no</u> 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 <u>do not</u> associate with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. <u>Take no part</u> in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is <u>shameful</u> even to speak of the things that they do in secret.*" How, being saved, can we laugh at those things for which the wrath of God is coming? A "comedian" tells a "joke" about two homosexuals (male or female) and we laugh? Do we not realize that *all* homosexuals will have their part in the Lake of Fire? And we are laughing at their sin? We need to repent greatly before our God! Our hearts are wicked. That is why we needed a Saviour to die for all the times we have laughed at what He was crucified for. The lesson: Do not laugh at sin, because it put Christ on the cross!

The second thing God taught me is that most of us develop our Christianity along the lines of our own nature, not along the lines of God's nature. We need His supernatural grace in order to live twenty-four hours of every day as a saint, going through the drudgery, and living an ordinary, unnoticed, and ignored existence as a disciple of Jesus. It is ingrained in us that we have to do exceptional things for God – but we do not. We have to be exceptional in the ordinary things of life (such as our marriage), and holy on the ordinary streets, among ordinary people.

CHAPTER

# 13

# 230 Questions To Ask Before Marriage

When my wife and I were first getting to know each other, I put together a list of 220 questions for us to discuss together in order for us to *actually* get to know each other. The problem with couples today is that they *do not* spend *any* amount of time trying to *really* get to know the other person. After they get married, they find out that they have *nothing* in common and that they know *next to nothing* about the other person. This person is the person whom you are choosing to spend the rest of your life with, and yet you do not put in the time or effort to *truly* get to know who they are and what they are like? You put more time and effort into trivial nonsense, but one of the most serious aspects of your entire life you put next to no time or effort into it. Does that seem wise or intelligent to you?

These questions are meant to be discussed when you begin to pursue marriage. They are not meant to be asked all at once, as if in an interrogation. They should be used as conversations throughout your dating or courtship in order to make sure you do not enter into a marriage that you never intended for yourself in the first place. After all, the entire purpose of dating or courtship is to find a partner and get married.

There are 12 different categories of questions. Many more questions could be asked, and perhaps in your conversations you will think of others to ask. I am providing the questions my wife and I used in order to give you a springboard of sorts. May these questions be as helpful to you as they were for us.

**PERSONAL**

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. How do you think I see you?
3. How well do you know me? yourself?
4. What object can you not live without?
5. What sort of things are you afraid of?
6. What is the worst feeling in the world?
7. What sort of things do you like/dislike?
8. What is your greatest disappointment in life? greatest enjoyment in life?
9. What never ceases to cheer you up?
10. What do you want most out of a relationship?
11. What is the first thing you notice about the opposite sex?
12. What are some major turn-ons for you? major turn-offs for you?
13. What is the dumbest thing you have ever done in your life?
14. Have you ever done anything illegal? Stolen things from the office? Been to prison?
15. If you could have one super power, what would it be? Why?
16. Do I treat you differently when others are not around?
17. If you could change one thing about me right now, what would you change?
18. Do we have compatible life goals?
19. Do we have what it takes – enough shared ideals, beliefs and attitudes – to keep our relationship loving and relevant?
20. Have you been able to work through the past? (Past romantic and sexual history, if there was any.)

**HOME**

21. Why do you want to get married?
22. Why have you chosen me as a potential spouse?
23. What is your concept of marriage?
24. Have you been married before?
25. What are your expectations of marriage?
26. How would you react if your expectations are not met?
27. Can you love and accept me as I am?
28. Do you/can you respect my character?
29. Why are you getting married? (Pregnancy, financial security, loneliness or wanting to get our of the family home are not valid reasons to get married.)
30. Where would you like to go for your honeymoon?
31. What percentage of our income are we prepared to spend to purchase and maintain our home on a monthly or annual basis?
32. Do you aspire to a large and luxurious home, or will you settle for

less?

33. Do you want to live in the heart of the city, in the suburbs, or in an isolated rural setting?
34. What do we, as a couple, want out of life?
35. How will we make decisions together?
36. Are you willing to consult with your spouse on any decision?
37. Are we both willing to face into difficult areas or do we try to avoid conflict?
38. Do we handle conflict well?
39. Are we both willing to work on our communication skills and to share intimately with each other?

**FINANCIAL**

40. What is your definition of wealth?
41. What is your definition of success?
42. Are you a saver or spender when it comes to money?
43. How do you spend money?
44. How do you save money?
45. Do you give money to charities?
46. How do you think that your use of money will change after marriage?
47. When you decide to buy something, will you consult your spouse in making the decision?
48. Do you have any debts now? If so, how are you making progress to eliminate them?
49. Who are the people to whom you are financially responsible?
50. Do you use credit cards?
51. How much credit card debt do you have? When we get married, how will it be paid off?
52. Do you support the idea of taking loans to buy a new home?
53. What are you expecting from your spouse financially?
54. What is your financial responsibility in the marriage?
55. What are our financial goals?
56. How much money do we earn together?
57. Do you currently use a budget to manage your finances?
58. Do you want to have a budget?
59. What are our categories of expense (rent, clothing, insurance, travel)?
60. How much do we spend monthly/annually in each category?
61. How much do we want to be able to spend? to save?
62. After marriage, which stores will you frequent when shopping for clothes?
63. Should we have a joint chequing account or separate accounts or both?
64. Who will balance our cheque book?
65. Who is going to be responsible for making sure that bills are paid on

time?

**WORK**

66. Do you have a job? Are you content with your job? If not, why?
67. How much time will each of us spend at work, and during what hours?
68. Do you begin work early? Will you prefer to work into the evening?
69. In your work life, what do you expect of me in terms of support and encouragement?
70. How do you need me to support your professional goals?
71. When, if ever, do we want to retire?
72. What would happen if one of us loses our job and money gets tight?
73. How ambitious are you?
74. Are you comfortable with my level of ambition?
75. Do you support the idea of a working wife?
76. If so, how do you think a dual-income family should manage funds?
77. Will you allow your spouse to continue and/or return to education?

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

78. What are your goals in life? (long and short term)
79. Identify three things that you want to accomplish in the near future.
80. Identify three things that you want to accomplish long term.
81. What sort of plans do you have in store for attaining these goals?
82. How do you make important and less important decisions in your life?
83. Do you stick firmly to your decisions?
84. How do you make decisions? Do you rely on your own wisdom? Do you consult others?
85. Will you pitch in and co-operate in family chores?
86. How are we going to divide up the household chores?
87. Who is responsible for keeping our house and yard cared for and organized?
88. Are we different in our needs for cleanliness and organization?
89. Is one or both of us neat? messy? a "pack-rat"?
90. When there is a dispute in our marriage, religious or otherwise, how should the conflict get resolved?
91. Do you remain optimistic that things will get better, and that after every difficulty comes ease?

**LEISURE TIME/ACTIVITIES**

92. Do you read? What do you read?
93. Do you watch movies? What do you watch?
94. Do you play sports? What kinds?
95. Do you travel?
96. How do you spend your vacations?
97. How do you think your spouse should spend vacations?
98. What are the things that you do in your free time?

99. What are your expectations about how we will spend our free time?
100. Do you believe that we should be doing everything together?
101. Can we each pursue our own interests?
102. Do you need time alone?
103. How would you feel if I want a night out with my friends now and then?
104. How will we make sure we have quality time together?
105. Do you consider going to the movies and having a vacation every year a necessity or a luxury?

**HEALTH AND FOOD**

106. What is your understanding of proper health and nutrition?
107. How do you support your own health and nutrition?
108. Are you happy with my approach to health and nutrition?
109. Will we eat meals together?
110. Who is responsible for the food shopping?
111. Who prepares the meals?
112. Who cleans up afterward?
113. Do you insist on only eating the food of your own ethnic group, or are your tastes more eclectic?
114. Will you insist on having every meal cooked from scratch, or will you be able to have convenience food or take-out on busy days?
115. Do you have some strong preferences for meat, or will you "go vegetarian" some days?
116. Do I have habits or tendencies that concern you (i.e. smoking, excessive dieting, poor diet, etc)?
117. Do you smoke? Does any of your family or friends smoke? Will you let people smoke in your non-smoking home?
118. What is the worst sickness that you have ever had?
119. Do you suffer from any chronic disease or condition?
120. Is there any history of major illness in your family?

**FAMILY**

121. What is your vision of family life?
122. What was your childhood like?
123. Were you ever abused as a child?
124. Was your family an affectionate one?
125. What is your relationship with your family?
126. What is your relationship with your father?
127. What do you like and dislike about your family?
128. Tell me more about your father; your mother; your siblings; yourself.
129. Did you ever observe abuse from your father toward your mother? or vice versa?

130. Did your father ever cheat on your mother? or vice versa?
131. What do you expect your relationship with the family of your spouse to be?
132. What do you expect your spouse's relationship with your family to be?
133. What place does the other's family play in our family life?
134. How often do you want to see your family?
135. How often do we visit or socialize together with the other's family?
136. If we have out-of-town relatives, will we ask them to visit us for extended periods? How often? For what length of time?
137. Would we send our children to visit their extended family if they lived in another state or country?
138. If we have children, what kind of relationship do we hope our parents will have to their grandchildren? How much time will they spend together?
139. What type of relationship do you want our children to have with all their grandparents?
140. Do you think we will have problems with your family during the holidays?
141. If, for any reason, our relationship with our families turns sour, what should be done?
142. What values do you want to bring from your family into our marriage?
143. If there are members of our families that are not Christian, that are of different ethnicity or culture, what type of relationship do you want to have with them?
144. What place does your family have in your life? How much do you love them? Does your family take the place of God in your life, being the most important thing to you (idolatry)?

**CHILDREN**

145. Do you want to have children? If not, how come?
146. If you decide you do, how many children do you want to have?
147. How long would you like to be married before having children?
148. What type of birth control should we use if we want to postpone or prevent parenthood?
149. To the best of your understanding, are you able to have children?
150. How do you feel about adoption?
151. Would you have children prior to marriage?
152. How will having a child change the way we live now?
153. Will you pitch in and co-operate in the upbringing of children?
154. Do you have children now?
155. What is your relationship with your child now?

156. What is your relationship with their other parent?
157. What relationship do you expect your spouse to have with your children and their parent?
158. What kind of parent do you think you will be?
159. What is your parenting philosophy?
160. What is the best method(s) of raising children?
161. What is the best method(s) of disciplining children?
162. How were you raised?
163. How were you disciplined?
164. Do you believe in spanking children? Under what circumstances?
165. What are your views on education and schooling of children?
166. Do you believe in public school for your children?
167. Do you believe in Christian school for your children?
168. Do you believe in home schooling for your children?
169. Will you take part in the children's education?
170. Will you help teach them about God and the Bible?
171. What type of relationship should your children have with non-Christian classmates/friends?

**COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS**

172. Who are your friends? (Identify at least three.)
173. How did you get to know them?
174. Why are they your friends?
175. What do you like most about them?
176. What will your relationship with them be after marriage?
177. What type of relationship do you want your spouse to have with your friends?
178. Are you satisfied with the quality and quantity of friends you currently have?
179. How do you function in group settings? (Must be observed.)
180. Would you like to be more involved socially?
181. Are you overwhelmed socially, and need to cut back on such commitments?
182. What are your needs for cultivating and maintaining friendships outside of marriage?
183. How can I support those needs?
184. Do you love to have guests in your home for entertainment?
185. What are you expecting from your spouse when your friends come to the house?
186. Are you very keen to keep pets at home?
187. Do you have any allergies, dislikes, or phobias when it comes to animals?

**INTIMACY**

188. After marriage, do you think that you are one to express romantic feelings verbally?
189. After marriage, do you think that you want to express affection in public?
190. How do you express your admiration for someone that you know now?
191. How do you express your feelings to someone who has done a favour for you?
192. Do you like to write your feelings?
193. What are your expectations of our sexual relationship?
194. Are you comfortable discussing your sexual likes and dislikes?
195. Are you comfortable giving and receiving love, sexually?

**BAD HABITS**

196. Do you use foul language at home? In public? With family?
197. Do your friends use foul language?
198. Does your family use foul language?
199. How do you express anger?
200. How do you expect your spouse to express anger?
201. What do you do when you are angry?
202. Do you stop talking to the person involved?
203. Do you bear grudges?
204. Do you get angry when those who may be wiser disagree or suggest an alternative point of view?
205. Do you ever forgive those with whom you were angry?
206. Have you ever physically or mentally abused anyone with whom you were angry?
207. Define mental, verbal, emotional and physical abuse.
208. What would you do if you felt that you have been abused?
209. Who would you call for assistance if you were being abused?
210. What steps do you take to face and deal with pressure?
211. If you wrong someone, how do you apologize?
212. If someone has wronged you, how would you want him/her to apologize to you?
213. How much time passes before you can forgive someone?

**SPIRITUAL LIFE**

214. What is your image of God? Who is God?
215. Who is Jesus Christ to <u>you</u> personally?
216. Are you in love with the Gospel, and is it impacting your live?
217. What is your favourite Bible verse or passage?
218. Does Christianity play an important part in your life?
219. Are you a member of a local church?

220. Do you have an active participation in your church?
221. Are you volunteering in any Christian activities?
222. What is your relationship between yourself and the Christian community in your area?
223. Do you think faith and spirituality are important in a marriage?
224. What is your understanding of a Christian marriage?
225. Where do you stand regarding marriage/divorce/re-marriage?
226. What are you expecting of your spouse, religiously/spiritually?
227. What can you offer your spouse, religiously/spiritually?
228. What is the role of the husband?
229. What is the role of the wife?
230. Are you able to be honest with me about your sins and faults?

# PART 2

# DIVORCE
## AND
# RE-MARRIAGE

CHAPTER

# 14

# The Introduction

> [17]Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me. [18]When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die'; and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. [19]Yet if you have warned the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself. [20]Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I place an obstacle before him, he shall die; since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. [21]However, if you have warned the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; and you have delivered yourself.
>
> (Ezekiel 3:17-21)

According to that passage, would you say that I have a responsibility to warn others about certain things? I would agree. We *do* have responsibilities to warn others. Whether or not they heed our words (or those from Scripture) is between them and God, but *we* are responsible nonetheless.

"You *shall not* commit adultery.*"* (Ex. 20:14)

This command is clear and understandable. However, there seems to be a disconnect among people with regard to precisely what adultery entails. Most people, when they hear the term, automatically think about marital infidelity. But is this the only type of adultery that exists? Is this the only adultery made known in the Scriptures? No, it is not, as we are about to see.

Many Christians today like to turn to Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19:3-9 in order to support their belief regarding divorce. I believe that many of these Christians are no doubt either Liberal "Christians" or else simply misinformed Christians who have been taught incorrectly. Is there truly a cause for Christians to divorce, according to Scripture? Does Jesus truly give us occasion for divorce? Before looking at those passages, look with me to the account of Mary and Joseph and the coming of the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Christ Jesus. This is how Scripture tells the story:

> [18]Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together [married] she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. [19]And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away [divorce] secretly. [20]But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. [21]She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." [22]Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: [23] "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." [24]And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, [25]but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.
>
> (Matthew 1:18-25)

In that portion of Scripture, you will notice that Mary and Joseph were only betrothed—they were not yet married. Yet, they referred to each other as husband and wife. This is because in Jewish custom and culture of the day they had a betrothal period of about one year. Within that period, if one was unfaithful toward the other they could seek divorce. This is why Joseph sought to divorce Mary. He believed that she had been unfaithful to him in

their betrothal. But the angel of the Lord comforted him with the fact that she had not been unfaithful, but rather it was the doing of the Holy Spirit.

Please keep this passage in mind as you read the two passages from Matthew that speak of divorce. Look with me also at the parallel passages found in Mark and Luke. Scripture puts them this way:

> [31]It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE'; [32]but I say to you, that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity [fornication], makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
>
> (Matthew 5:31-32)

> [3]Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" [4]And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, [5]and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? [6]So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." [7]They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND HER AWAY?" [8]He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. [9]And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality [fornication], and marries another woman commits adultery."
>
> (Matthew 19:3-9)

> [2]Some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife. [3]And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" [4]They said, "Moses permitted a man TO WRITE A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND HER AWAY." [5]But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. [6]But from the beginning of the creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE. [7]FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, [8]AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. [9]What therefore God has joined to-

> gether, let no man separate." [10]In the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again. [11]And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman, commits adultery against her. [12]and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery."
>
> (Mark 10:2-12)

> [18]Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.
>
> (Luke 16:18)

Now, why is it that Matthew is the only book wherein you suppose you can find a cause for divorce? Why does it neither appear in Mark nor in Luke? Why does it not appear in any of Paul's writings? For your answer, you must ask yourself who Matthew was addressing when he wrote his book. The book of Matthew was written to the Jews. Therefore, you must consider what he is writing in context with their culture and customs of that day. You cannot take your culture and customs and impose them on the biblical text. That is called *eisegesis* (a reading into the text what is not there).

Mary and Joseph were not even married yet, and he was going to divorce her. How do you divorce someone you are not yet married to? Jesus is stating that if Mary had been guilty of what Joseph thought, then he would have been justified in divorcing her. But this is *before* they were married; and the language of all three passages in Matthew, Mark, and Luke regarding the committing of adultery is taking place *after* divorce. Once they were married, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

CHAPTER

# 15

# The Conversation

Most Christians, when regarding the issue of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, ignore what *all* the passages say as a whole and focus *only* on the two found in Matthew, latching onto the phrase "except for fornication" (KJV) at the cost of the rest of the context. Malachi 2:14-16 clearly states that God *hates* divorce: "'For I hate divorce,' says the LORD, the God of Israel" (v. 16). Now, are we to understand that Jesus, Who is God, Who *hates* divorce, turned around and gave a cause for divorce? Absolutely not! Jesus did no such thing, as Matthew 19:4-6 informs us.

The Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and asked if it was lawful to divorce for *any* reason. Jesus' response to their testing is found in verses 4-6. After Jesus made this statement, the Pharisees, who knew *exactly* what Jesus had just said, then tried to pit Moses against Jesus by asking Him why Moses allowed divorce. Jesus then sets them straight and tells them that Moses did so because of the hardness of their hearts, *but* it was not this way from the beginning. Let's break Matthew 19 down into a conversational script format so that we can understand the context clearly:

> **Pharisees:** "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?"
>
> **Jesus:** "Have you not read that He who created them from 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 they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."
>
> **Pharisees:** "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND HER AWAY?"
>
> **Jesus:** "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way."

When we read it this way, there is no mistake as to the flow of the conversation and precisely what is being said. Moses was merely *regulating* what they were *already* doing because of the hardness of their hearts in order to preserve purity. If the supposed "exception clause" is as most Christians understand it to be, then *why* does it appear *only* in the book of Matthew and *not* in any of the other books? It is important that Christians understand the correct teaching on this important issue and that they live it out practically with the help of the Holy Spirit. When two people are married, God joins them together as one flesh, and Jesus declared to the Pharisees, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

> There is no such fountain on Earth as marriage. Woman takes her being from man, man takes his well-being from woman. As God by creation made two of one, so again by marriage He made one of two.
>
> —Thomas Adams

More on this conversation in *Chapter 21*.

CHAPTER

# 16

# The Words of Paul

Some people even try to find a cause for divorce in the words of Paul. Look with me to what Paul had to say through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Here is how Scripture records Paul's words:

> [10]But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband [11](but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.
>
> (1 Corinthians 7:10-11)

In this passage, Paul sets forth his understanding of Jesus' teachings (and remember, Paul was taught of the Lord Jesus for three years [Gal. 1:12, 18] and his words were inspired by the Holy Spirit). Paul makes it abundantly clear in these two verses that what he is saying comes directly from the Lord and *not* from himself: "I give instructions, <u>not I</u>, but the Lord." According to these two verses, if a Christian separates, *God* commands you to pursue reconciliation rather than to re-marry. Otherwise, you are *commanded* to remain unmarried.

> Marriage of believers is for life, 10-11. The Christian wife is not to leave her husband. If she does, she is to forfeit marrying again.

> Likewise the Christian husband is not to leave his wife. Loose pagan views of marriage must be abandoned.[1]

Let us continue:

> [12]But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. [13]And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. [14]For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. [15]Yet if the unbelieving one separates, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. [16]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?
>
> (1 Corinthians 7:12-16)

In this Holy Spirit-inspired portion of Scripture, *Paul—not* the Lord—says, that if a Christian is married to an unbeliever—whether he/she married him/her by choice or was himself/herself saved later—and the unbeliever is content to remain with him/her, the Christian is *not* to seek divorce from the unbeliever *whatsoever*. The unbeliever is sanctified (made holy) because of the believer. You do not know whether or not you will save your spouse, so if they are content to stay with you, do not divorce them. But if the unbeliever decides to seek divorce, the Christian is to let him/her go because the Christian is not under bondage in such cases. This *does not* mean you are free to re-marry, as some pervert it to mean. You are called to peace and if you force them to stay, you will have none of it. Your life will reflect those verses found in Proverbs (21:9; 25:24; 27:15). What *Paul* advises here *does not* negate what *God* said first in verses 10 and 11!

If the words in verses 10-11 come *directly* from God, would it be wise of Paul to give commands in verses 12-16 that contradict what God has just said? If verse 15 allowed for divorce and re-marriage, it contradicts the context of Paul's words (vv. 12-14, 16) and the words of God (vv. 10-11). There is *nothing* in this passage that gives the Christian permission to re-marry.

The general principle is that insofar as possible every effort is to

[1] Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Handbook* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1998), 493.

> be made to maintain the status quo at the time of becoming a believer, 12-24. Applied to the marriage union, it means the saved partner is to do everything possible to maintain the union, and win the unsaved partner to the Lord. The children are privileged to be in a circle of Christian instruction when even one parent is saved, 14.[2]

Now, there *is* biblical grounds for separation (such as with an abusive spouse), *but* the end goal should *always* be reconciliation (get him/her some help, pray for his/her salvation, charge him/her with assault if need be, and restore what God joined together). Otherwise, you are *commanded* to remain single for the rest of your life, or until your spouse dies. More on this in *Chapter 20*.

[2] *Ibid*, 493.

CHAPTER

# 17

# The Law

With regard to Moses, there exists in the King James Version a translational error from the Hebrew that, when read, seems to imply the *instituting* of divorce. S. R. Driver says with reference to this passage:

> "The rend. of A.V., R.V., is not here quite exact; v. 1-3 form the protasis, stating the conditions of the case contemplated, v. 4 is the apodosis."[3]

However, if you read this passage in the New American Standard Bible or the English Standard Version (or in an Interlinear Bible) you will see that it is a *regulating* of divorce. Consider what Hebrew scholars C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch had to say concerning this passage:

> "In these verses ... divorce is not established as a right; all that is done is, that in case of a divorce a reunion with the divorced wife is forbidden, if in the meantime she had married another man, even though the second husband had also put her away, or had died. The four verses form a period, in which vv. 1-3 are the clauses of the protasis, which describe the matter treated about; and v. 4 contains the apodosis, with the law concerning the point

[3] S. R. Driver, *The International Critical Commentary, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1916), 269.

in question."[4]

Likewise, to the same effect, Joseph Reider comments:

> "The chief concern of the law is to prevent remarriage after divorce. Consequently vv. 1-3 must be construed as the protasis and v. 4 alone as the apodosis."[5]

Because of their hardness of heart, they were already divorcing; so Moses wrote to regulate their actions. Compare the three translations below:

> [1]When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. [2]And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. [3]And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; [4]Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.
>
> (Deuteronomy 24:1-4, KJV)

> [1]When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house, [2]and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife, [3]and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, [4]then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the

[4] Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 1:950.
[5] Joseph Reider, *Deuteronomy, with Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1937), 220.

land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.
(Deuteronomy 24:1-4, NASB)

[1]When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, [2]and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, [3]and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, [4]then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.
(Deuteronomy 24:1-4, ESV)

John Murray had this to say concerning the above observations:

"These observations with respect to construction are of primary importance because they show that this passage does not make divorce mandatory in the case of the indecency or uncleanness concerned. It is not even to be understood as encouraging or advising men to put away their wives in such a case."[6]

Concerning Deuteronomy 24:1-4, observe what R. L. Dabney shares:

Christ does not concede that [the Pharisees] interpreted Moses rightly; but indignantly clears the legislation of that holy man from their licentious perversions, and then, because of their abuse of it, repeals it by His plenary authority. He refers to that constitution of the marriage tie which was original, which preceded Moses, and was therefore binding when Moses wrote, to show that it was impossible he could have enacted what they claimed. What, then, did Moses enact? Let us explain it. In the ancient society of the East, females being reared in comparative seclusion, and marriage negotiated by intermediaries, the bridegroom had little opportunity for a familiar acquaintance even with the person of the bride. When she was brought to him at the nuptials, if he found her disfigured with some personal deformity

[6] John Murray, *Divorce* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1987), 6.

> or disease (the undoubted meaning of the phrase "some uncleanness"), which effectually changed desire into disgust, he was likely to regard himself as swindled in the treaty, and to send the rejected bride back with indignity to her father's house. There she was reluctantly received, and in the anomalous position of one in name a wife, yet without a husband, she dragged out a wretched existence, incapable of marriage, and regarded by her parents and brothers as a disgraceful [e]ncumbrance. It was to relieve the wretched fate of such a woman that Moses' law was framed. She was empowered to exact of her proposed husband a formal annulment of the unconsummated contract, and to resume the status of a single woman, eligible for another marriage. It is plain that Moses' law contemplates the case, only, in which no consummation of marriage takes place. She finds no favour in the eyes "of the bridegroom." He is so indignant and disgusted that desire is put to flight by repugnance. The same fact appears from the condition of the law, that she shall in no case return to this man, "after she is defiled," i.e., after actual cohabitation with another man had made her unapproachable (without moral defilement) by the first). Such was the narrow extent of this law. The act for which it provided was divorce only in name, where that *consensus, qui matrimonium facit,* in the words of the law maxim, had never been perfected.[7]

Compare that with what is said in Deuteronomy 22:13-21. With that understanding, Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Deuteronomy 22:13-21, and Matthew 1:18-25 complement each other, which makes the argument that Jesus provided an “exception clause” for divorce *after* marriage that much more less likely.

Given the information presented by R. L. Dabney concerning Deuteronomy 24:1-4, and what we know from the context of Scripture regarding Deuteronomy 22:13-21 and Matthew 1:18-25, Jesus' words, apart from those addressing Adam and Eve, *may* have *nothing* to do with the act of marriage itself whatsoever.

Consider this: In those days, it was common for arranged marriages. Given the information Mr. Dabney shared, it *could be possible* that Jesus' words addressing divorce and the committal of adultery thereafter, all have to do with the pre-marital period. Arranged marriages were entered into with agreements or pacts. The information Mr. Dabney presents shows that if a wife was maimed or disfigured or whatever, that the husband could break that

[7] R. L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2002), 408-409.

agreement or pact by issuing her a statement of divorce. The act itself was divorce in name only as the act of marriage had not yet taken place.

*Possibly*, what Jesus is saying, concerning their customs and practices, is that the *only* just cause for issuing such a statement of divorce is for the cause of pre-marital sex with another person. Meaning that an arranged marriage could no longer be broken simply because the spouse was maimed or disfigured or whatever. These are just some of my own personal considerations. Regardless whether His discourse on divorce and the inevitable committal of adultery applies to the pre-marital period or the marriage union, as far as the marriage union itself is concerned, Jesus makes it *abundantly clear* by addressing Adam and Eve that marriage is a *life-long* covenant dissolved *only* by death.

Remember, when the Pharisees approached Jesus and asked Him if it was lawful to divorce, He *immediately* referred them to Adam and Eve, quoting from Genesis, and informing them that what God has joined together, *no one* has the authority to separate. It is *after* this conclusion that the Pharisees ask Jesus why Moses commanded Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Then Jesus answers in accordance with that.

Our customs and practices of our culture are quite different. People get engaged and then, for whatever reasons, call off the engagement. Unfaithfulness could be a cause for doing so. Regardless of cultural customs and practices, the state of the marriage union remains the same from one end of the globe to the other. It is a *life-long* covenant commitment that can *only* be dissolved by *death*.

CHAPTER

# 18

# The Guilty

Let us look again at those passages pertaining to divorce. Many people fail to pay any attention to this, but the Bible actually informs us that re-marriage after divorce is adultery. You do not believe me? Let us allow Scripture to speak for itself:

> [32]Everyone who divorces his wife . . . makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
>
> (Matthew 5:32)

> [9]Whoever divorces his wife . . . and marries another woman commits adultery.
>
> (Matt. 19:9)

> [11]Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; [12]and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.
>
> (Mark 10:11-12)

> [18]Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.
>
> (Luke 16:18)

As you can see, adultery is taking place *after* the divorce. The grammar of the Greek word translated "commits" and "committing" in these verses is in the *middle voice*, meaning that it is *present tense continuous*, which is *a constant state of adultery*. For every minute they remain in their re-marriage, they are committing adultery. Why? Because the marriage covenant *has not* been disavowed. Malachi 2:14 says, "Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant." Do you see that? She *is* your companion and your wife *by covenant*! *Every* covenant in the Bible is until death, and marriage is no different, as is evidenced by our vows: "Until death do us part." With regard to vows, examine Ecclesiastes 5:4-5.

> [4]When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! [5]It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

Does any Christian remember Jephthah?

> [30]Jephthah made a vow to the LORD and said, "If You will indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, [31]then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."
>
> (Judges 11:30-31)

What was the result of Jephthah's vow?

> [34]When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, behold, his daughter was coming out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing. Now she was his one and only child; besides her he had no son or daughter. [35]When he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you are among those who trouble me; for I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot take it back." [36]So she said to him, "My father, you have given your word to the LORD; do to me as you have said, since the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the sons of Ammon." [37]She said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me; let me alone two months, that I may go to the mountains and weep because of my virginity, I and my companions." [38]Then he said, "Go." So he sent her away for two months; and she left with her companions, and wept on the mountains be-

> cause of her virginity. [39]At the end of two months she returned to her father, who did to her according to the vow which he had made; and she had no relations with a man. Thus it became a custom in Israel, [40]that the daughters of Israel went yearly to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.
>
> (Judges 11:34-40)

*Vows are sacred*! What is it that most Christians fail to grasp about that concept? "I, _____, take you, _____, to be my lawfully wedded (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, *until death us do part*." That means, *until death separates us*. Even if you think you are clever (which you are not) and remove that clause from your wedding vows, you are fooling *no one* except yourselves. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked" (Gal. 6:7a). God instituted marriage and He intended it to be *for life*, so whether you include that clause in your vows or not, it is *still* a binding constitution.

When we marry, we declare vows and enter into a covenant (*not* a contract) not only with our spouse but also with God, and we do so before God and our witnesses (friends and family). The marriage covenant is entered into by *three* people: God, the husband, and the wife. *Only* death can abolish the marriage covenant (and murder does not count), enabling a person to re-marry. The fact that this is true is verified by Scripture:

> [2]For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning her husband. [3]So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.
>
> (Romans 7:2-3)

> [39]A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.
>
> (1 Corinthians 7:39)

If we marry an unbeliever and they leave us, we are *still* bound by our vows and by our covenant. Why? Because two of the three covenant parties still remain locked in that covenant—God and the believer. If we value these things and desire to honour and glorify God, we will remain single for the rest

of our life *or* until God restores that relationship *or* until that spouse dies. In 1 Corinthians 7:12-16, which are Paul's words, not God's (although they are *still* inspired by the Holy Spirit), he *never* says that the Christian is free to re-marry—*ever*. In fact, doing so would contradict what he previously declared that God had said in verses 10-11.

In the New Testament, all parties involved in a divorce situation are guilty of adultery, as we shall soon see. Let us dummy-down what we have just looked at in the earlier chapters. We shall begin this examination by looking at the four persons involved:

- Husband of "Wife A"
- Wife of "Husband A"
- "Man B" (whether single or divorced)
- "Woman B" (whether single or divorced)

Because the issue Jesus is discussing is divorce, re-marriage, and adultery, we will identify the final combination of these persons:

1. Husband of "Wife A" marries "Woman B"
2. Wife of "Husband A" marries "Man B"
3. "Man B" marries Wife of "Husband A"
4. "Woman B" marries Husband of "Wife A"

Let us look at each passage in turn to determine precisely what Jesus is saying about these people. For the time being, we shall leave the "exception clause" out and deal with it later.

> "Everyone who divorces his wife...makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."
>
> (Matthew 5:32)

According to this passage:

1. Husband of "Wife A" marries "Woman B"
2. Wife of "Husband A" marries "Man B" — Guilty of adultery
3. "Man B" marries Wife of "Husband A" — Guilty of adultery
4. "Woman B" marries Husband of "Wife A"

> "Whoever divorces his wife...and marries another woman commits adultery."
>
> (Matthew 19:9)

> "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery."
>
> (Luke 16:18)

According to these passages, including the one we have already looked at:

1. Husband of "Wife A" marries "Woman B" — Guilty of adultery
2. Wife of "Husband A" marries "Man B" — Guilty of adultery
3. "Man B" marries Wife of "Husband A" — Guilty of adultery
4. "Woman B" marries Husband of "Wife A"

> "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery."
>
> (Mark 10:11-12)

According to this passage, including the ones we have already looked at:

1. Husband of "Wife A" marries "Woman B" — Guilty of adultery
2. Wife of "Husband A" marries "Man B" — Guilty of adultery
3. "Man B" marries Wife of "Husband A" — Guilty of adultery
4. "Woman B" marries Husband of "Wife A" — Guilty of adultery

As you can see, according to *the Bible*, re-marriage *after* divorce is committing adultery. All four individuals who could potentially be in this scenario are said to be committing adultery. Whether a marriage partner is active or passive in divorce proceedings is irrelevant. The reason why the passive partner is guilty of adultery is because *they are forced* to commit adultery when they re-marry (Matt. 5:32). This act renders them actively unfaithful to their first spouse upon re-marriage. Paul makes things more abundantly clear for us when he says that your options, if you divorce, are simple:

1. remain single for the rest of your life,
2. reconcile with your spouse, or
3. wait until your spouse dies before you can legitimately re-marry.

According to Scripture:

- Bathsheba is *never* referred to as David's wife, but *always* as Uriah's wife (Matt. 1:6). Had Uriah died naturally and then David married her, she would have been called David's wife. But such

was not the case.

- When Herodias divorced her husband Phillip and married Herod, John the baptizer referred to her as "Phillip's wife" (Matt. 14:3-4; Luke 3:19). In God's eyes, you are *still* the husband/wife of your divorced spouse because He *never* annulled that marriage.

This means that the government *does not* have the power or the authority to annul a marriage: "Let *no man* separate" (Emphasis supplied).

CHAPTER

# 19

# The Issue of Fornication

With regard to the supposed "exception clause" found in the book of Matthew, further help in discerning what Matthew was saying can be gleaned from the original Greek when we look at the words that he used. This is what John Piper had to say from his study on the subject:

> The second thing that began to disturb me was the question, why does Matthew use the Greek word πορνεία (*porneia*, "sexual immorality") instead of the word μοιχεία (*moicheia*) which means adultery? Sexual immorality in marriage would naturally be adultery. But the word Matthew uses to express Jesus' meaning is one that usually means *fornication* or *sexual immorality without reference to marital unfaithfulness*. Almost all commentators seem to make the assumption again that *porneia* refers to adultery in this context. The question nagged at me why Matthew would not use the word for adultery (*moicheia),* if that is in fact what he meant.
>
> Then I noticed something very interesting. The only other place besides Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 where Matthew uses the word *porneia* is in Matthew 15:19 where it is used alongside *moicheia*. Therefore, the primary contextual evidence for Matthew's usage is that he conceives of *porneia* as, in some sense, different than adultery. Could this mean, then, that in Matthew's record of Jesus' teaching he is thinking of *porneia* in its more usual sense of

fornication or incest or prostitution that does not denote marital unfaithfulness, that is, adultery?

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

The word for divorce (ἀπολῦσαι) is the same as the word in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. but most important of all, Matthew says that Joseph was "just" in making the decision to divorce Mary, presumably on account of her assumed *porneia*, fornication. In other words, this "divorce" was permitted according to Matthew.

Only Matthew has told that story of the crisis Joseph faced in whether to marry his betrothed even though she, as far as he knew at first, had committed fornication (πορνεία). In handling this crisis he called Joseph "just" in the plan to "divorce" her. That means that Matthew, as a follower of Jesus, would not consider this kind of "divorce" wrong. It would not have prevented Joseph (or Mary) from marrying another.

Since only Matthew had told this story and raised this question, he was the only Gospel writer who would feel any need to make clear that Jesus' absolute prohibition of divorce followed by remarriage did *not* include a situation like Joseph and Mary's. That is what I think he does with the exception clauses. He records Jesus saying, "Whoever divorces his wife—not including, of course, the case of fornication [πορνεία] between betrothed couples—and marries another, commits adultery."

A common objection to this interpretation is that both in Matthew 19:9 and in Matthew 5:31-32 the issue Jesus is responding to is marriage, not betrothal. The point is pressed that "except for fornication" is irrelevant to the context of marriage. My answer is that this irrelevancy is precisely the point of the exception clause. Whether it sounds irrelevant in the context depends on how you hear it. I don't think it sounds pointless if you hear it the way I just suggested or if Matthew 5:32 goes like this: "But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife—*excluding, of course, the case of fornication* [πορνεία] *during betrothal*—makes her commit adultery." In this way Jesus makes clear that the action his earthly father almost took—to "divorce" Mary be-

> cause of πορνεία—would not have been unjust. It would have been right. That is the kind of situation the exception clause is meant to exclude.
>
> This interpretation of the exception clause has several advantages:
>
> - It does not forces Matthew's Gospel to disagree with the seemingly plain, absolute meaning of Mark and Luke.
> - It provides an explanation for why the word *porneia* is used in Matthew's exception clause instead of *moicheia*.
> - It squares with Matthew's own use of porneia (for fornication) in distinction from moicheia (for adultery) in Matthew 15:19.
> - It fits Matthew's wider context concerning Joseph's contemplated "divorce" from Mary (Matt. 1:19).[8]

John Piper is correct. There is a difference between fornication (*porneia* [πορνεία]) and adultery (*moicheia* [μοιχεία]). Unfortunately, many preachers and teachers lie (intentionally or ignorantly) and claim that Jesus provided an "exception clause" for divorce with regard to adultery (marital infidelity). If Jesus (and Matthew's record of it) meant adultery, then the word for adultery—*moicheia*—would have been used, just as it appears *after* the so-called "exception" (5:32; 19:9). But it is not. The word used is *porneia*, which refers to sexual immorality *without* reference to marital unfaithfulness. Because of this glaring problem, these preachers and teachers lie further and claim that the word *porneia* includes adultery. The fact that these words *are not* synonyms of each other and *are not* interchangeable is seen within the multiple passages that use them side by side: Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21; Galatians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Hebrews 13:4. If *porneia* includes adultery, then why not simply use that word alone? To use *moicheia* alongside it is redundant if *porneia* refers to all sexual sins including adultery.

So let us get our terms accurate:

Adultery = Illicit sexual acts committed
by married persons. (Post-marital)
Fornication = Illicit sexual acts committed
by unmarried persons. (Pre-marital)

It is imperative to know that the Bible *does not* combine all sexually immoral behaviours, such as homosexuality, bestiality, pedophilia, prostitution, harlotry, etc., into the word "fornication." This is a false claim made by many

[8] John Piper, *What Jesus Demands From the World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 313-316.

preachers and teachers. It may be that the illicit pre-marital sexual act committed by the unmarried person could be one of those acts, but those acts are called by their own names. Fornication is, and has always been, defined as pre-marital sex between unmarried persons. Look up the 7 occurrences of *porneuo*, the 10 occurrences of *pornos*, and the 25 occurrences of *porneia* in the Bible and let the Bible define the meaning of these words. Therefore:

Adultery is *only* applicable to married persons.
Fornication is *only* applicable to unmarried or single persons.

The joining together of two people is more than merely physical joining. Through sexual intimacy, you are joined to the other person physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. That is why the book of 1 Corinthians warns, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."" (6:15-16). In the movie *Vanilla Sky*, with Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz, Cameron's character, Julie Gianni, asks, "Don't you know that when you sleep with someone, your body makes a promise whether you do or not?" That is putting Paul in contemporary lingo. Once a relationship becomes a unit, God intends it to remain that way. In her excellent book *Wait For Me*, Rebecca St. James uses this illustration:

> If you take one piece of paper and glue it to another piece of paper, both pieces tear when you pull them apart. It is impossible to wind up with two papers that are as flawless as when you started. Because of the glue, each piece of paper is forever left with some parts from the other paper.[9]

This is precisely how God designed sex, and He designed it for within marriage. If you go back to the beginning, which is where Jesus and Paul *always* directed their audience, you will notice that it says, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

In the Bible, divorce was allowed *only* if it was found that the spouse *had not been* a virgin when they married, as they *should have been* and *ought to be*. But typically this would end with her being stoned to death—not merely in divorce. Now, some people might look at that and devise a scheme (demonstrating just how wicked they truly are and revealing that they likely

[9] Rebecca St. James, *Wait For Me* (Wheaton, IL: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 59.

are not Christian to begin with) wherein, after a number of years of marriage, they will attempt to divorce their spouse because of this very issue. However, if you *knew* your spouse was not a virgin when you married him/her, yet you *chose* to marry him/her anyway, *accepting* his/her past indiscretions, you are *without excuse* and the divorce card is off the table. Let us see what the Old Testament has to say with regard to fornication:

> [13]If any man takes a wife and goes in to her and then turns against her, [14]and charges her with shameful deeds and publicly defames her, and says, 'I took this woman, but when I came near her, I did not find her a virgin,'
>
> (Deuteronomy 22:13-14)

Here we see the development of a "he said/she said" situation.

> [15]then the girl's father and her mother shall take and bring out the evidence of the girl's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. [16]The girl's father shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man for a wife, but he turned against her; [17]and behold, he has charged her with shameful deeds, saying, "I did not find your daughter a virgin." But this is the evidence of my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city. [18]So the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him,
>
> (Deuteronomy 22:15-18)

After having married his wife, and realizing that perhaps he made a mistake, this man accuses her of not having been a virgin after consummating their marriage. He desires to rid himself of her. Now it must be proven that she *was* a virgin when she married. If the husband's accusations are proven to be false, he might be wondering if he cannot simply divorce her anyway.

> [19]and they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver and give it to the girl's father, because he publicly defamed a virgin of Israel. And <u>she shall remain his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days</u>.
>
> (Deuteronomy 22:19)

The answer is a strong denial. He *cannot* divorce her all the days of his life. Malachi 2:14 provides a stronger case should a man divorce his wife without just cause: "Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though <u>she is your companion and your wife by covenant</u>."

> [20]But if this charge is true, that the girl was not found a virgin, [21]then they shall bring out the girl to the doorway of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death because she has committed an act of folly in Israel by playing the harlot in her father's house; thus you shall purge the evil from among you.
>
> (Deuteronomy 22:20-21)

If she is found to have not been a virgin, this leads us into our next chapter...

CHAPTER

# 20

# The Death Sentence and Release

What we have just read in Deuteronomy 22:20-21 is applicable to Mary and Joseph's situation. Even though they were not married, they were referred to as husband and wife. When Joseph found out that she was pregnant, he had thought that she was guilty of fornication and thus he was going to divorce her privately. In light of the Deuteronomy passage and the "exception clause" Jesus gives, had Joseph divorced Mary he would have been just in so doing. That is precisely what Jesus is informing us.

> [10]If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.
>
> (Leviticus 20:10)

With this verse and Deuteronomy 22:20-21, once the adulterer had been stoned to death their spouse was free to re-marry. We can see further evidence of death being the only dissolution of the marriage union in the New Testament as well.

> [3]So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.
>
> (Romans 7:3)

> [39]A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.
>
> (1 Corinthians 7:39)

In the New Testament, because capital punishment by stoning no longer exists (thanks to grace and mercy), we see a different scenario. Paul explains this when he gives his exposition on the subject.

> [10]"To the married I give instructions (not I, but the Lord),"
>
> (1 Corinthians 7:10a)

Paul makes it clear that what he is about to say comes *directly* from God and are not his words.

> the wife should not divorce her husband [11](but if she does, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.
>
> (1 Corinthians 7:10b-11)

The only dissolution of the marriage bond given in Scripture is that of death. The Bible *never* says that divorce is allowed on the grounds of marital infidelity *or* desertion. That is what *man* has said. Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church, a picture of the Gospel, a picture of forgiveness and reconciliation. The Bible says, "'For I hate divorce,' says the LORD, the God of Israel" (Mal. 2:16). Are we to understand that Jesus, Who is God, Who *hates* divorce, turned around and provided a cause for divorce? When the Christian commits spiritual adultery against Christ Jesus, should He divorce us for doing so and not offer us forgiveness and reconciliation once we repent of our sins? How can Christians expect to teach the world a better way when they corrupt what marriage represents?

Here is something to think about: Why do we no longer stone adulterers and adulteresses? The answer is simple: Because they would not be able to repent. If you pay attention to *everything* Jesus has said and taught throughout the *entire* New Testament, He is essentially saying this: "*You have heard it said, THE ADULTERER AND ADULTERESS SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH. But I say to you, forgive him/her and reconcile with him/her just as your heavenly Father has done for you in the case of your sins against Him.*" On that note, ponder promptly and heavily.

CHAPTER

# 21

# The Issue of Re-marriage

When we began this examination, in *Chapter 14*, we said that we would return to the conversation later. With regard to Matthew 19:10-12, there are two lines of thoughts: (1) This passage has to do with marriage, in light of everything Jesus had just said, and (2) This passage has to do with re-marriage, in light of everything Jesus had just said. In the first case, the disciples are commenting on the fact that if the marital relationship is not ideal and divorce is prohibited, then "it is better not to marry," to which the comments about eunuchs have to do with those who are able to remain celibate without ever marrying. In the second case, the disciples are commenting on the fact that if re-marriage constitutes adultery, then "it is better not to marry," to which the comments about eunuchs have to do with those who are able to refrain from re-marrying. Since this passage follows on the heels of what was said in verse 9, we will *assume* that it is speaking with regard to divorce and re-marriage (although I am prone to believe it is with regard to marriage, as I will discuss in *Chapter 22*). Immediately after everything Jesus had stated in response to the Pharisees, here is what follows:

> [10]The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry."
>
> (Matthew 19:10)

The disciples understood *exactly* what Jesus had been saying, which is why they say, "It is better not to marry." They reason that if a man obtains the

desired divorce, it is better that he not re-marry so that he will not be found guilty of adultery. Jesus does not disagree with their solution, but points out the problem with it:

> [11]But He said to them, "Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given. [12]For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it."
>
> (Matthew 19:11-12)

Jesus uses the word "eunuch" to make a point of permanence, adding finiteness to His former statement, indicating that there will be no further discussion on the subject of re-marriage. Let us look at the three examples Jesus provides:

1. **"*...born that way from their mother's womb*":** In this case, the person has never had a desire to be married since birth. Their first marriage was likely done primarily to satisfy family members and friends and, given the choice initially, they never would have married in the first place. We occasionally see this happen today.

2. **"*...made eunuchs by men*":** In this case, intervention takes place to prevent adultery from occurring. This is the most common scenario in our culture, but it depends on whether the divorcée obeys and submits themselves to the idea or not. Some will accept it, others will not, which is what Jesus stated. You might also consider the Catholic church where celibacy is imposed upon priests and nuns.

3. **"*...who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven*":** In this case, some people will not re-marry because they desire to commit their lives entirely to the ministry, overriding their natural tendencies and desire for a second mate.

Just as today, the disciples realized that many, if not most, divorced people will not adhere to any of the three cases above. They will generally have the desire to re-marry. Remember, every single one of Jesus' statements were difficult to accept. They revealed just how narrow a road it truly is and how only those who do the will of the Father Who is in heaven will receive eternal

life and inherit the kingdom of God. Even amongst professing Christians who believe they have received salvation, as we witness from Matthew 7:21-23.

CHAPTER

# 22

# An Alternate Understanding

As I said above, I am more prone to believe that Matthew 19:10-12 has to do with marriage, in light of everything Jesus had previously said. The disciples are commenting on the fact that if the marital relationship is not ideal and divorce is prohibited, then "it is better not to marry," to which the comments about eunuchs have to do with those who are able to remain celibate without ever marrying. I will provide Matthew Poole's commentary and Matthew Henry's commentary in answer to these verses:

> [10]The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry."
>
> (Matthew 19:10)

> "This is a very strange saying, and discovers to us both the imperfect state of Christ's disciples, and also the tyranny of a sinful practice grown up into a custom. The Jews had assumed a liberty of turning their wives out of doors upon every light and trivial offence or dislike; the disciples think, if this licentiousness may not be allowed it is not good to marry. So a holy institution of God, ordained for the propagation of mankind, for the restraint of extravagant lust, and for the solace and comfort of man's life, should be despised, rather than those unquiet lusts and corruptions mortified, the mortification of which would have made those irregular separations both needless and undesirable. Surely

they should rather have said, If the case of a man be so with his wife, then both husbands and wives had need to learn to deny themselves, to comply each with another, to silence their brutish and boisterous passions, that, being the same flesh, they might also have one and the same spirit, and not be like a diseased piece of flesh, where humours so quarrel that one piece need be cut off to preserve the other. But the best of men have their infirmities; and, as the Hebrews said, *Spiritus Dei non semper tangit corda prophetarum*, The Spirit of God was not always upon the hearts of the prophets; so it is as true, *Spiritus Dei non semper et ubique tangit corda fidelium*, All that the saints say is not gospel. Their flesh hath its turn to speak, as well as the Spirit in them. A sinful liberty conceded, indulged, or connived at, by the laws, or by the rulers of a church or place where we live, for a long time, is not easily restrained, and even good men may for a time be carried away with the error of it, so as they cannot discern it, be convinced of it, or be brought clear of it to a conformity to the will of God."[10] —Matthew Poole

"Here is a suggestion of the disciples against this law of Christ (v. 10); *If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is better not to marry*. It seems, the disciples themselves were loth to give up the liberty of divorces, thinking it a good expedient for preserving comfort in the married state; and therefore, like sullen children, if they have not what they would have, they will throw away what they have. If they may not be allowed to put away their wives when they please, they will have no wives at all; though, from the beginning, when no divorce was allowed, God said, *It is not good for man to be alone, and blessed them*, pronounced them blessed who were thus strictly joined together; yet, unless they may have a liberty of divorce, they think it good for a man not to marry. Note, 1. Corrupt nature is impatient of restraint, and would fain break Christ's bonds in sunder, and have a liberty for its own lusts. 2. It is a foolish, peevish thing for men to abandon the comforts of this life, because of the crosses that are commonly woven in with them, as if we must needs go out of the world, because we have not every thing to our mind in the world; or must enter into no useful calling or condition because it is made our duty to abide in it. No, whatever our condition is, we

[10] Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, undated), 3:89.

must bring out minds to it, be thankful for its comforts, submissive to its crosses, and, as God has done, *set the one over against the other*, and make the best of that which is, Eccl. 7:14. If the yoke of marriage may not be thrown off at pleasure, it does not follow that *therefore* we must not come under it; but *therefore*, when we do come under it, we must resolve to comport with it, by love, and meekness, and patience, which will make divorce the most unnecessary undesirable thing that can be."[11] — Matthew Henry

[11]But He said to them, "Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given. [12]For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it."

(Matthew 19:11-12)

"Our Saviour, knowing the sinful custom and practice of the Jewish nation now for many years, and giving some allowance for that, and his disciples' infirmities; so he doth not answer them severely, as what they said might deserve, but reproves them gently. What he saith amounts to thus much: You do not consider what you say. *All men*, without sinning against God, cannot abstain from marriage. An ability to live chastely without the use of marriage is a peculiar gift of God, and your saying hath no place in persons to whom God hath not given that gift, *for it is better to marry than to burn*. There are some whom God by nature hath made unfit for marriage. There are others whom men (wickedly) make unfit for it, that they may gratify their own jealousy. (Thus several courtiers were made eunuchs, and so betrusted with the care of princes' wives and concubines.) And there are some who have made themselves eunuchs, not castrating themselves, (that is wickedness,) but abstaining from marriage, and yet living chastely, (having mortified their lusts, and brought under their body,) that they might be less encumbered with the cares of the world, and be more free for the work of the ministry, or be able more to give up themselves to a holy life and

[11] Mathew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 5:218-219.

spiritual conversation. But God, who by his ordinance of marriage designed to people and continue the world, hath given to persons different tempers and constitutions; so as possibly the most of men and women cannot without making use of marriage govern their lusts. As to these, marriage is not a matter of choice and deliberation, and they may and ought to use it as an appointment of God, for the ends for which he hath instituted it. If there be any who can receive this saying, who can without marriage bridle his lust, and so live in a solute and single state as not to sin against God by any extravagancy of lusts, and impure desires and affections, and desire, and shall do so, that he may be more spiritual, and serve God with less distraction, and be a more fit instrument to promote the kingdom of God in the world, let him do it."[12] —Matthew Poole

"Christ's answer to this suggestion (v. 11, 12), in which,
1. He allows it good for some not to marry; *He that is able to receive it, let him receive it*. Christ allowed what the disciples said, *It is good not to marry*; not as an objection against the prohibition of divorce, as they intended it, but as giving them a rule (perhaps no less unpleasing to them), that they who have the gift of continence, and are not under any necessity of marrying, do best if they continue single (1 Cor. 7:1); for they that are unmarried have opportunity, if they have but a heart, to care more for *the things of the Lord, how they may please the Lord* (1 Cor. 7:32-34), being less encumbered with the cares of this life, and having a greater vacancy of thought and time to mind better things. The increase of grave is better than the increase of the family, and fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ is to be preferred before any other fellowship.
2. He disallows it, as utterly mischievous, to forbid marriage, because *all men cannot receive this saying*; indeed few can, and therefore the crosses of the married state must be borne, rather than that men should run themselves into temptation, to avoid them; *better marry than burn*.
Christ speaks here of a twofold unaptness to marriage.
(1.) That which is a calamity by the providence of God; such as those labour under who are born eunuchs, or made so by men, who, being incapable of answering one great end of marriage, ought not to marry. But to that calamity let them oppose the op-

[12] Poole, *A Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 3:89.

portunity that there is in the single state of serving God better, to balance it.

(2.) That which is a virtue by the grace of God; such is theirs who *have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake*. This is meant of an unaptness for marriage, not in body (which some, through mistake of this scripture, have foolishly and wickedly brought upon themselves), but in mind. Those have thus made themselves eunuchs who have attained a holy indifference to all the delights of the married state, have a fixed resolution, in the strength of God's grace, wholly to abstain from them; and by fasting, and other instances of mortification, have subdued all desires toward them. These are they that can *receive* this saying; and yet these are not to bind themselves by a vow that they will never marry, only that, in the mind they are now in, they purpose not to marry.

Now, [1.] This affection to the single state must be given of God; for none can receive it, *save they to whom it is given*. Note, Continence is a special gift of God to some, and not to others; and when a man, in the single state, finds by experience that he has this gift, he may determine with himself, and (as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 7:37), stand steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but having power over his own will, that he will keep himself so. But men, in this case, must take heed lest they boast of a false gift, Prov. 25:14.

[2.] This single state must be chosen for the kingdom of heaven's sake; in those who resolve never to marry, only that they may save charges, or may gratify a morose selfish humour, or have a greater liberty to serve other lusts and pleasures, it is so far from being a virtue, that it is an ill-natured vice; but when it is for religion's sake, not as in itself a meritorious act (which papists make it), but only as a means to keep our minds more entire for, and more intent upon, the services of religion, and that, having no families to provide for, we may do the more works of charity, then it is approved and accepted of God. Note, That condition is best for us, and to be chosen and stuck to accordingly, which is best for our souls, and tends most to the preparing of us for, and the preserving of us to, the kingdom of heaven."[13] — Matthew Henry

[13] Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, 5:219.

CHAPTER

# 23

# A Fearful Reality

According to the words of Jesus, re-marriage after divorce is actually committing adultery. According to the grammar of the Greek text, the word translated as "commits" and "committing" is in the *middle voice*, meaning that it is *present tense continuous*, which is *a constant state of adultery*. If this is indeed the case, then based on the following passages of Scripture, we have a serious problem on our hands that needs to be addressed. Observe:

> [9]Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, [10]nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
>
> (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

> [19]Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, sensuality, [20]idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, [21]envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
>
> (Galatians 5:19-21)

> [4]Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage

> bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.
> (Hebrews 13:4)

As we can see, adulterers are forbidden from entering the kingdom of God. How then can a professing Christian guilty of adultery due to re-marriage ensure they will inherit eternal life and enter the kingdom of God? First, they need to admit to themselves and confess to God that they have committed adultery. Second, they need to *repent* of their sin, which quite possibly might mean that they must *leave* the unsanctioned second union. If, as the Greek grammar suggests, it is *a constant state of adultery*, then every minute you remain in that union you are guilty of committing adultery. Technically, this union is *not* a marriage in the eyes of God, and as such He *will not* honour it in the least. The Bible *does not* say things just for the sake of saying them. It actually *means* them. Do not presume upon the forgiveness of God, or presume on your salvation when you are living in deliberate, willful, habitual sin. The Apostle John says in 1 John 3:

> [6]No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. [7]Little children, let no one deceive you; [8]the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.
> (1 John 3:6-8)

The Greek word for "practices" indicates a deliberate, willful, habitual state of sinning. John is saying, "Do not deceive yourselves. If you continue to live in sin, you *are not* saved." This is obvious because:

> [9]No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. [10]By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.
> (1 John 3:9-10)

John continues with this sobering declaration:

> [18]We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.
> (1 John 5:18 )

Statements like this are made consistently throughout the *entire* New Testament. Unfortunately, most Christians have been lied to and fed a false gospel that has convinced them, in contradiction to what we can plainly read from Scripture, that God will love them no matter what and forgive them even while living in deliberate, willful, disobedient, habitual sin. The Apostle Paul informs us that this is simply *not* the case:

> [13]For if you are living according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [14]For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
>
> (Romans 8:13-14)

The Apostle John informs us that:

> [3]By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.
>
> (1 John 2:3 )

Jesus had made similar statements earlier:

> [15]If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.
>
> (John 14:15)

> [21]He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.
>
> (John 14:21)

> [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 abode with him. [24]He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.'
>
> (John 14:23-24)

CHAPTER

# 24

# The Conclusion

*Christians*! *Stop* perverting the Word of God by forcing your feelings and opinions and eisegetical understanding upon the text. Our day and age *is not* the biblical day and age. *Pay attention* to the *words that are used*, the various *contexts*, and *compare Scripture with Scripture*. Understand *their* culture. *Do not* attempt to force modern culture and understanding upon the text. We know *nothing* about arranged marriages. We know *nothing* about the period of betrothal. These were normal during *biblical* times. Once you understand these things, and stop trying to impose *your* living conditions upon the text, the passages become clear. *Do not* read or interpret the Bible with *your* experiences in mind!

Is there just cause for Christians to divorce today? No! It is unbiblical, not to mention entirely saturated with selfishness. Despite Gomer's unfaithfulness to Hosea, did Hosea ever divorce Gomer? No. Despite Israel's unfaithfulness to God, did God ever divorce Israel? No. (See Appendix A.) Despite our unfaithfulness to Christ, does He ever divorce us? No. So why, after you have vowed those sacred vows of unity, "to love, honour, and cherish each other for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, for better or for worse," do you divorce your spouse? Why, after you have joined yourself to your spouse physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually through sexual intimacy, do you divorce your spouse?

As a Christian, there is *never* a just cause for filing for divorce. Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church, a picture of the Gospel, a picture of forgiveness and reconciliation. The Gospel teaches us that despite all our sins we

can have forgiveness through Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14) and reconciliation to God the Father (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18). If we, as Christians, divorce, what does that tell the world about Christ and His church? What does that tell the world about the Gospel of Christ Jesus if we cannot forgive and be reconciled to each other? Ask yourself, "*If Jesus forgave all of my iniquities, when they were great and heinous acts of rebellion against Him, why can I not—being made in His image and conforming to His likeness—forgive my spouse of his/her iniquities against me?*"

It does not matter that I am in the minority when it comes to understanding these passages. The majority of people interpret them from their perverse hearts, based on their emotional desires rather than on the context and proper exegesis. They tell people what they want to hear, rather than speaking the truth to them. What I feel has no bearing on the issue. It is about not marring the image of Christ and His church that marriage reflects, and it is about maintaining the Gospel. If your spouse commits adultery against you, there is no doubt that you will indeed be hurt, you will indeed be angry, you will indeed feel betrayed, and it will indeed be difficult for you to trust him/her again—but *not* impossible. As much as his/her adultery would hurt you, if you consider all the heinous sins you have committed against Jesus (minute after minute, day after day, year after year), how much pain did you cause Christ? How much pain did He feel on His way to the cross bearing *your* guilt and punishment because of *your* sins? How much pain did He feel when God's wrath was poured out on Him because of *your* sins? There is *no* comparison. If Christ can forgive you of all *your* sins against Him, then surely you can forgive your spouse for committing adultery against you. If you are to be anything like Christ, you must.

Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Not just among Christians. Among *all*! Marriage is a *serious* matter; a *serious* institution to enter into. It is *not* to be entered into or taken lightly! We need to guard our hearts and protect the sanctity of our marriage, not allowing ourselves to be placed in compromising situations (1 Thess. 5:22) that could open us to temptation and lead us into sin (James 1:14-15), thereby defiling the marriage bed (Heb. 13:4; Prov. 6:32). The problem today is that most parents are no longer preparing their children for marriage and most people do not know how to be married. Nobody takes marriage seriously any more; they think it is just a game. Most think the Hollywood-ized version of marriage is normal. God sees it quite differently, I assure you.

The Gospel—always, first and foremost.

We vow to love each other, by determination—not by mere emotion, "until death do us part." The Bible addresses the seriousness of vows:

> [4]When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! [5]It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.
>
> (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5)

The truth of everything we have just discussed in the last 10 chapters can be witnessed from two examples in Scripture.

1. Bathsheba is *never* referred to as David's wife, but *always* as Uriah's wife (Matt. 1:6). Had Uriah died naturally and then David married her, she would have been called David's wife. But such was not the case.
2. When Herodias divorced her husband Phillip and married Herod, John the baptizer referred to her as "Phillip's wife" (Matt. 14:3-4; Luke 3:19). In God's eyes, you are *still* the husband/wife of your divorced spouse because He *never* annulled that marriage.

A person can *only* re-marry if their spouse has died. If a person re-marries after a divorce has taken place, they are guilty of committing adultery and being in *a constant state of adultery* for as long as they remain in their second union. According to Scripture, if re-marriage is *a constant state of adultery*, then a person in this state *will not* enter heaven. They must first admit their sin to themselves, confess their sin to God, repent by leaving this second union, and obey Jesus' commandments. A divorced person has one of three options:

1. Remain single for the rest of your life,
2. Reconcile with your spouse, or
3. Wait until your spouse dies before you can legitimately re-marry. (In this case, for those wicked enough to contemplate it, murder does not free you to re-marry. It would be similar to David's case with Bathsheba, except instead of killing someone else's spouse, you kill your own. They are still your spouse and you are to remain single for the rest of your life.)

As I stated before, there *is* biblical grounds for separation (such as with an abusive spouse), *but* the end goal should *always* be reconciliation (get him/her some help, pray for his/her salvation, charge him/her with assault if need be, and restore what God joined together). Otherwise, you are *commanded* to remain single for the rest of your life, or until your spouse dies. I realize that many Christians will have a hard time swallowing these facts. That comes as no surprise seeing as how people during Jesus' time found His sayings to be hard and stopped following Him. If the church finds Jesus' saying to be easy,

then chances are pretty high that they are misinterpreting them in order to make themselves feel better. Do you honestly want to feel better about yourself while headed to Hell on a greased pole?

People often ask where grace comes in if you are not permitted to divorce and then re-marry. Do you *honestly* want to know where grace comes in? *Do you*? Grace comes in when you are able to forgive your spouse for having committed adultery against you and reconcile with him/her, strengthening your marriage more than it has ever been. People understand the sin perfectly well, yet are always trying to find some loophole that enables them to commit the sin. These people need to read and understand Matthew 19:12.

CHAPTER

# 25

# Gentle Words For the Divorced and Re-married

For those of you who have been divorced and/or re-married, *please* do not feel as though I am judging you or condemning you. I am not. The Lord will be your judge (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Heb. 13:4). However, do not sweep this issue under the rug as if it has no bearing upon you whatsoever. Remember that your sin is primarily against God. As David wrote after his murder of Uriah and subsequent adultery with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba: "Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight" (Ps. 51:4a). You need to realize that your actions were wrong and you need to kneel before the throne of God and confess your sin of separating what God joined together for life. He will offer you forgiveness, but only if you humble your heart enough to admit that you sinned against Him and wronged your spouse, and you repent of your sin. You also have the responsibility and clear duty, at the earliest possible time, to seek forgiveness from your spouse for having broken your marital vows (Matt. 5:23-24).

As I stated at the beginning of this book, the entire subject of divorce and re-marriage is one of the most vexing problems the church faces in these modern times. Complicated cases that would tax even the wisdom of Solomon continue to arise. For example:

- You divorce your spouse, without having had children, and marry another person, without having had children.
- You divorce your spouse, having had children, and marry another

person, without having had children.

- You divorce your spouse, without having had children, and marry another person, having had children.
- You divorce your spouse, having had children, and marry another person, having had children.

What do you do in these scenarios? With the first scenario, the answer seems obvious. But with each subsequent scenario, the answer becomes more difficult to discern. Do you break hearts? Do you tear apart families? Do you destroy lives? What is the right thing to do in these scenarios?

In the first two scenarios, especially the one involving previous children, I would think that the right thing to do would be to reconcile with your first spouse. If you obey God and seek to restore what He meant for life, if you seek to honour what God has joined together, He will bless you for it.

In the last two scenarios, because children are involved with the second spouse, I would think that the right thing to do would be (1) to admit to yourself that you have sinned and committed adultery by divorcing your first spouse and re-marrying, (2) to confess to God that you have sinned and committed adultery by divorcing your first spouse and re-marrying, (3) repenting, and (4) being obedient to God and being faithful in your second union.

Divorce and re-marriage *are not* the unpardonable sins. God *can* and *does* offer forgiveness for these sins. However, I do not know where the line of demarcation is as to where and how God dishes out His forgiveness. I will warn you *not* to presume upon the forgiveness of God. Matthew 7:21-23 ought to be a warning to *every* professing Christian. These people believed they were in the right with God. They did things in the name of God. Yet Jesus told them He had *never* known them.

I have shared with you the words of Scripture in this book. That is all I can do. I am not about to listen to the various complicated cases that exist and then attempt to dish out advice as to what you should or should not do. I am not going to attempt to Pope-ishly declare that any specific individual is now forgiven and can now continue in their re-marriage.

As I said, all I can do is tell you what Scripture says. Scripture says that God *hates* divorce (Mal. 2:16). Scripture says that when you divorce, you cause the other person to commit adultery (Matt. 5:32). Scripture says that re-marriage after divorce is adultery—*a constant state of adultery* (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). Scripture says that the only dissolution to marriage is death (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39). Scripture says that *if* you divorce, you are to remain single, reconcile with your spouse, or wait until your spouse dies in order for you to be free to re-marry (1 Cor. 7:10-11).

Yes, forgiveness is available for those who have committed the sins of divorce and re-marriage. Is it available to those who have admitted to them-

selves and confessed to God that they have sinned against Him and their spouse by divorcing them and re-marrying? Are they then allowed to remain in that second union? Or are they required to sever that second union that, according to the grammar of the text, is said to be *a constant state of adultery* and remain single for the rest of their life unless they reconcile with their first spouse? "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion" (Prov. 28:13). "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell" (Matt. 5:29-30).

Yes, I agree with you that it is not fair to the party wronged that they should have to endure the consequences of their spouse's sin. But our feelings and opinions have no say in the matter. Even if one person breaks their vows and deserts the other, there are *still* two people bound by those vows: God and the spouse who was wronged. Remember, *God* is the ultimate witness between a man and a woman in the marriage covenant. He gives testimony as to the sacred vows you took and promised to uphold.

If you have been divorced and/or re-married, *please* do not take this issue lightly. You need to pray and seek God's counsel. Earnestly seek Him. It may take days, weeks, or months. Plead with Him and listen for His leading. Listen for that still small voice. Again I will warn you, *do not* presume upon the forgiveness of God. *Do not* project your own desires upon God as if they are God's words to you, as if they are God's answer to you. To claim something as coming from the Lord that *has not* come from Him is to take the Lord's name in vain. You are attributing something to Him that did not originate from Him. That is akin to the false prophets speaking presumptuously in God's name. By doing so, you are merely heaping coals upon your own head. Seek God's wisdom. When you are sure you have heard from God, act in faith and obedience to it.

Sins of ignorance are not an excuse. Scripture says we are still guilty and accountable (Lev. 5:17-18). The Apostle Paul killed Christians and blasphemed the name of God in ignorance (1 Tim. 1:13), but he was not in any way excused from the guilt. When it was brought to his attention that he was persecuting the risen Christ, God Almighty, he confessed his sin and repented of it. How that repentance looks in each case, I cannot say. I have told you what the Scriptures have to say concerning marriage, divorce, and re-marriage. The rest is between you and God.

# APPENDICES

*Appendix A*

# Did God Divorce Israel?

Many pastors and authors who believe in exception clauses for divorce, because of the perverse and sinful nature of their hearts, attempt to use Jeremiah 3:8 and Isaiah 50:1 as some sort of proof texts in order to claim that God divorced Israel. If their claims are true, these people make God out to be a hypocrite, for He says, "I *hate* divorce" (Mal. 2:16), yet, He commits it Himself. Jay Adams even attempts to argue, "If God Himself becomes involved in divorce proceedings with Israel, it is surely wrong to condemn any and all divorce out of hand."[14] But *is* God involved in divorce proceedings? *No*, He is *not*! Observe their proof texts:

> "And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also."
>
> (Jeremiah 3:8)

> "Thus says the LORD, "Where is the certificate of divorce by which I have sent your mother away? Or to whom of My creditors did I sell you? Behold, you were sold for your iniquities, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away.""
>
> (Isaiah 50:1)

[14] Jay E. Adams, *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), 23.

What is God saying here? What does He mean? *Think about it*. What does a certificate of divorce do? What happens between the two parties? If God had divorced Israel, *why* did He restore her after the Babylonian captivity? If God cut ties with Israel and severed their relationship, *why* would He rescue her? *He would do no such thing*! Furthermore, when God and Israel entered into covenant at Mount Sinai, for God to divorce Israel would be for God to break His covenant promise. God would *never* do that. So, what is Jeremiah 3:8 *really* saying?

> *Given her a bill of divorce*; delivered her up into the hands of the Assyrian, where God took from her the title of being his church, 2 Kings xvii. 5, 6, &c., which he calls here a bill of divorce; not such a one as the Jews were allowed to give upon every slight ground, (for such a one God denies that ever he gave them, and challengeth them to produce it, Isa. l.1), but upon just and great occasion, viz. her playing the adulteress against him in her idolatries.[15]

The second verse that these pastors and authors claim teaches that God has divorced Israel is actually a verse that opposes their false claims. Observe:

> I. A challenge given them to prove, or produce any evidence, that the quarrel began on God's side. ... 1. He had been a husband to them; and husbands were then allowed a power to put away their wives upon any little disgust: if their wives found not favour in their eyes, they made nothing of giving them a bill of divorce, Deut. 24:1; Matt. 19:7. But they could not say that God had dealt so with them. It is true they were now separated from him, and had abode many days without ephod, alter, or sacrifice; but whose fault was that? They could not say that God had given their mother a bill of divorce; let them produce it if they can, for a bill of divorce was given into the hand of her that was divorced. 2. He had been a father to them; and fathers had then a power to sell their children for slaves to their creditors, in satisfaction for the debts they were not otherwise able to pay. Now it is true the Jews were sold to the Babylonians then, and afterwards to the Romans; but did God sell them for payment of his debts? No, he was not indebted to any of those to whom they were sold, or, if he had sold them, he *did not increase his wealth by their price*, Ps. 44:12.[16]

---

[15] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 2:500.
[16] Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, 4:222

> *For your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, &c.*; you can blame none but yourselves and your own sins for all your captivities and miseries.[17]

Israel was responsible for her own ruin. God *did not* divorce her; *precisely* the challenge issued in Isaiah 50:1 to the Israelites: "Produce the bill of divorcement. Prove that I have divorced you." The very verse that those who argue that God divorced Israel opposes their false teachings. This goes to show just how far a perverse heart will go in order to try and justify their sin and/or defend the desires of their heart and their false beliefs. God *did not* divorce Israel. Anyone who tells you otherwise is a *liar*. They are being dishonest with you, with themselves, and, more dangerously, with God's Word.

Why do we divorce? Because we are sinful selfish people who only think of ourselves. We do not think of the harm it causes our spouse, or the harm it causes our children, or even the harm it causes our communities (both secular and ecclesiastical). Far too many pastors and authors try to make occasions for divorce based solely and entirely upon their own personal feelings and opinions. Because of their perverse and sinful hearts, these pastors and authors try to justify the secret desires of their own hearts and their false beliefs, telling others what they *want* to hear rather than telling them *the truth*.

Books such as Jim Newheiser's *Marriage Divorce and Remarriage* attempt to demonize the "permanence view" and eisegetically argue for exception clauses that *cannot be found*, let alone supported, in the Scriptures. You have to ignore the context and twist Scripture in order to allow for divorce. Mr. Newheiser attempts to argue that the "permanence view" (the *biblical* view) is somehow related to Roman Catholicism, which is a fallacy. He also attempts to argue that not allowing for divorce harms the innocent and that divorce protects the rights of the innocent, which is again false. You *do not* require divorce in order to achieve such things. There is such a thing a *biblical separation*. You are allowed to separate from your spouse as long as the end goal is reconciliation; otherwise you are commanded to remain single for the rest of your life. You are *not* allowed to sleep around or shack up with another partner. *You are married*! If your spouse never receives help, then you are allowed to remain single, separated from him/her, for the rest of your life. Otherwise, seek reconciliation.

Mr. Newheiser also attempts to argue that the two passages in Matthew are "obscure," which no author or preacher I know of has ever attempted to argue. The fact is, they are *not* obscure. The exception is *very* clear when you pay attention to the rest of Scripture; paying attention to the *context*, as well as

[17] Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 2:440.

*comparing Scripture with Scripture*. You cannot force our culture and customs onto the Bible, and you cannot force your feelings and opinions onto the Bible. You *must* conform yourself to what the *text* has to say, whether you like it or not.

Remember, *God* is the ultimate witness between a man and a woman in the marriage covenant. He gives testimony as to the sacred vows you took and promised to uphold. And since God *hates* divorce (Mal. 2:16) and intended a man to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and become one flesh with her (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5-6; Mark 10:6-8), and since *no man* is allowed to separate what *God* has joined together, your answer is quite clear.

God *is not* involved in divorce proceedings, *nor* should we be! God *never* divorced Israel, *nor* should we divorce our spouse. Those who believe in occasions for divorce are creating escape hatches for themselves because of what is in their hearts. They are making convenient excuses rather than being honest and preaching the truth.

*Appendix B*

# Jay Adams On Re-marriage

> "Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you marry, you have not sinned."
>
> (1 Corinthians 7:27-28a)

In Jay E. Adams' *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible*, he argues:

> There are several particulars regarding this passage that should be noted:
>
> 1. The word translated "released" in both instances is the same word, *luo*.
> 2. To be *released* from a wife in the second instance must mean what it does in the first or the intended contrast that is set up would be lost.
> 3. It is plain that divorce is in view in both instances. Clearly, when Paul says that one must not *seek* to be released from a wife he doesn't mean by death! The release in view can mean only one thing—release by divorce. So too, the release in the second instance must refer to release from the bonds of marriage by divorce (N.B., to be "released" is the opposite of being "bound" to a wife).
> 4. Paul allows for the remarriage of those released from mar-

riage bonds (i.e., divorced) even in a time of severe persecution when marriage, in general, is discouraged (v. 28).

5. And, to boot, he affirms that there is no sin in remarrying.[18]

There are a lot of assumptions made here, as well as conclusions drawn on assumptions. First of all, the words in both instances are *not* the same. The first word is *lusis* (λύσις) [*Strong's* 3080] while the second word is *luo* (λύω) [*Strong's* 3089]. Regarding the second word, *AMG's The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament* says, "figuratively (Luke 13:16; 1 Cor 7:27, "Art thou free from a wife?" [a.t.] in antithesis with *dedesai*, bound, from *deo* [1210], to bind." Similarly, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* says, "spoken of a single man, whether he has already had a wife or has not yet married, 1 Co. vii. 27." Notice, please, how it says a "single man." A divorced man is *not* single. According to the synoptic gospels, a divorced man is *still* married (Matt. 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18) because he is *still bound* to his wife (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39). *Deo* (δέω) [*Strong's* 1210] is used in both Romans 7:2 and 1 Corinthians 7:39, and being the antithesis—direct opposite—to *luo* (λύω), it is highly unlikely that divorce is in view with 1 Corinthians 7:27-28a.

Second of all, Paul in *no way* allows for remarriage. To do so would be going against God. Anyone who says that Paul allows for divorce and remarriage is willfully blind to the plain reading and truth of Scripture. Paul made it clear in verse 10 where God stands regarding divorce and remarriage. For Paul to go against God would be disobedience and rebellion. "But to the married I give instructions, *not I, but the Lord*..." What was it that *God* said? "The wife should not divorce her husband (but if she does divorce, she must *remain unmarried*, or else *be reconciled to her husband*), and that the husband should not divorce his wife" (vv. 10-11). Why? Because "from the beginning of creation, God made them *male* and *female*. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become *one flesh*; so *they are no longer two*, but *one flesh*. Therefore, what *God* has joined together, let *no man* separate" (Mark 10:6-9).

Last of all, Paul *does not* say there is no sin in re-marrying; he says there is no sin in *marrying*. The single man who has never married before and the single man whose wife has passed away are both free to marry. A divorced man is *not* single because he is still bound to his wife, as expressed in the synoptic gospels (Matt. 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). Even Paul says that the *only* dissolution to marriage is death (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39).

When Christians fail to compare Scripture with Scripture in order to ob-

[18] Adams, *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible*, 84.

tain the full counsel of the Word of God, they inevitably make errors in translation and application. Verse-by-verse exposition of the Bible *cannot* ignore context *nor* should it be done in isolation of related passages. There is no doubt in my mind that Mr. Adams is a godly man, but unfortunately he is in error on this issue. When Paul says what he says in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, obviously his words in verses 12-16 and 27-28 *cannot* contradict this. If those instructions came directly from God, which Paul is making abundantly clear is the case, then Paul's own words *cannot* and *will not* go against those of God.

Yes, the issue of marriage, divorce, and re-marriage is a complex and emotionally charged issue. Nevertheless, we must speak the truth regardless of others' feelings, opinions, and hardness of heart. If people understood the meaning and purpose of marriage to begin with, they would have a different outlook on it and divorce would never be an option. Divorce and re-marriage are items that concern the selfish and self-centered who think only of themselves and think everything is all about *their* individual happiness. It has no thought of the spouse or of the children. Christians need to stop trying to pit Paul's words against those of God, turning Paul into a disobedient rebel. If your understanding of a passage contradicts the clear understanding of other passages, then you need to re-evaluate your understanding of that passage.

*Appendix C*

# Common-Law Marriages (John 4)

The story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well can be found in John 4:7-45. Generally, a particular part of this story is rendered by many, if not most, preachers and teachers thus: *Jesus recognized the five men the woman at the well had been married to as legitimate marriages. The man she was with now, living in common-law, was not her husband. Ergo, regardless of what any law might say, Jesus did not recognize common-law relationships as legitimate marriages.*

There is a problem with this interpretation, however. It is not biblical. It is not in keeping with the context of the passage. What is the problem, you ask? Let us examine it.

> [16]He said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here."
> [17]The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband';
> [18]for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."
>
> (John 4:16-18)

Notice her response: "I have *no* husband." In other words, "I'm not married. I've never been married." Where am I getting that from, you ask? I am glad you asked. Let me use a rendering that should help you to understand: "For you have had five husbands, and [the husband] you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."

The Greek word used for *have* in "the one whom you now have" is *echo* (ἔχω), and it infers possession. This same word is used for *have had* in "you have had five husbands." She had five husbands in the past and she has one now. Furthermore, we have the word "and," which carries on the same subject of the topic—another husband, which she possesses. She has had five husbands through sexual intimacy and the man she is now being sexually intimate with is her sixth husband.

Let us look at another passage dealing with marriage that illustrates the possession of the word *have* (*echo*, ἔχω) well: "For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her. For John had been saying to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.'" (Mark 6:17-18). The law John referred to for marriage was not civil or religious, but the law of God in the sexual intimacy of a male and female: "Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, 'THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.'" (1 Cor. 6:16). Sexual intimacy is *not* just a physical encounter. It is a *permanent* marital consequence. It could have been said to Herod, "*She whom you have* (your present wife you are married to) *is not your wife.*" Herodias was Philip's wife. Herod and Herodias were living in an adulterous marriage.

Let us simplify our understanding of Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman by exchanging the word "husband" for the word "orange," making it more revealing: "*For you have had five oranges, and the one you now have is not your orange.*" What do you possess? Right, an orange! A husband! Yet, not yours! The orange (or husband) belonged to someone else. She was in an adulterous affair with a legitimately married man, making him her husband. He was another woman's husband. Before this adulterous affair, the man was a legitimately married man. Her affair was defiling another woman's legitimate husband, and this is *precisely* what we see illustrated from Jesus' words in regard to divorce (Matt. 5:32; 19:9, Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). The Bible informs us that re-marriage after divorce is actually adultery.

Let us look at another statement made by the Samaritan woman:

> [29]"Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?"
>
> (John 4:29)

Note that she says, "all the things that I have done," and not "*everything that has befallen me.*" In other words, it is a statement of past deeds revealed. Not unfortunate circumstances, such as her past husbands dying or divorcing her. Jesus revealed not only the secrets of her life, but also the life of the man she was presently giving herself to sexually (marrying).

The problem with the typical interpretation of this passage made by many, if not most, preachers and teachers is that they make co-habitation, or common-law relationships, out to be of no importance and/or little value. Jesus *did* recognize common-law relationships, but it was of a graver magnitude. The law of marriage states that if you have sexual intimacy with a person, you are now married to them in the eyes of God. 1 Corinthians 6:16 is pretty clear; you cannot get any clearer than what it says. This is why abstinence before marriage is *so important*.

*Appendix D*

# Fornication (Physical and Spiritual)

Many modern translations of the Bible have falsely interpreted the Greek word *porneia* (πορνεία) as "immorality," "sexual immorality," or "marital unfaithfulness." Even several lexicons, dictionaries, preachers, teachers, and theologians have attempted to claim that all sorts of sexual perversion—incest, homosexuality, bestiality, prostitution, harlotry, etc.—is included in this Greek word—as well as adultery. However, this is *false*. This word is *correctly* interpreted as "fornication." An examination of *every passage* in the Bible where this word is used will show that if you let the Bible interpret itself—in *context*, in *none* of these passages does this word mean anything more than *illicit sexual acts committed by unmarried persons* (single, betrothed [engaged], or widowed). It *does not* include incest, homosexuality, bestiality, prostitution, harlotry, etc., *nor* does it include adultery.

If this word was inclusive of all sorts of sexual acts, as many unfortunately believe and teach, it becomes very problematic. First of all, if *porneia* includes adultery, then why are there so many passages where both Greek words are used side by side (Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21; Gal. 5:19; 1 Cor. 6:9; Heb. 13:4)? This becomes rather redundant. Second of all, if *porneia* includes other sexual acts, such as homosexuality, then, again, why are both words used side by side (1 Cor. 6:9)? Again, it would be rather redundant. When this word is understood correctly, it keeps us accountable for our actions and restricts our behaviour.

The Bible uses the terms *adultery* and *fornication* to address both physical and spiritual sin. When speaking of physical sin, adultery is *illicit sexual acts*

*committed by married persons* (currently married or previously married [divorced]), while fornication is *illicit sexual acts committed by unmarried persons* (single, betrothed [engaged], or widowed). Adultery is *only* applicable to married persons, while fornication is *only* applicable to unmarried or single persons. When speaking of spiritual sin, spiritual adultery is *the act of seeking after signs by unbelievers*, while spiritual fornication is *the act of seeking after signs by believers*. The *act* of adultery and the *act* of fornication are *identical*. Likewise, the *act* of spiritual adultery and the *act* of spiritual fornication are *identical*.

Here is a biblical look at spiritual adultery:

> "Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.""
>
> (Matthew 12:38-39)

> "Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed."
>
> (Matthew 16:1-4)

> "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."
>
> (Matthew 24:24)

> "Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation. . . . For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.""
>
> (Mark 8:11-12, 38)

> "Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven."
> (Luke 11:16)

> "So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?""
> (John 2:18)

> "Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.""
> (John 4:48)

> "Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work [miracle] will You do?""
> (John 6:30)

> "Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs [miracles].""
> (John 11:47)

> "But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,"
> (John 12:37)

Spiritual adultery = an evil generation (Matt. 12:39), a wicked generation (Matt. 16:4), a sinful generation that rejects the Word of God (Mark 8:11-12, 38), hypocrites (Matt.16:1-3), deception (Matt. 24:24), and unbelievers (John 4:48). In Luke 11:29-32, Jesus contrasts spiritual adultery with the wisdom of Solomon, the preaching of Jonah, and His own teachings.

If the church understood the Doctrine of Fornication correctly, and believed it earnestly, it would not be in the condition it is today. Marriages would not be in ruin due to preachers and teachers teaching lies that contradict the truths of Scripture. Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 do not say "except for adultery," as is taught and believed by a vast majority of professing Christians (unfortunately). Rather, it says "except for *fornication*." Every time Jesus spoke of adultery, He used the Greek word *moicheia*. But when He says, "except for," He uses the Greek word *porneia*. In other words, if Jesus intended to say "except for adultery," He would have used the word *moicheia*. But *He did not*! Any Christian who believes and teaches that these verses allow for divorce is a *liar* and a *false teacher*! If you are offended by my saying this, *good*! You deserve a wake-up call. I suggest cracking your Bible and studying

it a little more closely and a lot more in depth.

Marriage is *my* reformation, and I will strive to teach Christians the *truth* of this sacred institution until we take it back and look at it soberly and honourably, holding it in the highest regard (Heb. 13:4). Marriage is a *divine* institution and the cost *must* be counted before entering into it. If you cannot treat it the way it demands to be treated, then you ought not to marry because divorce is *not* an option!

*Appendix E*

# Timothy and Maria's Vows

**TIMOTHY:** As God intended from the very beginning, marriage is for all the life, only to be dissolved by death. I trust in God to give me the grace and compassion I require in order to love you the way God commands me to in Scripture. I promise to be your best friend, to guide you and to protect you through all of life's ups and downs. In the name of God, I, Timothy, take you, Maria, to be my wife, pledging myself to only you, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, forsaking all other women, being faithful to you for as long as God gives me life. I promise to love, honour, respect, trust, help, and cherish you until death should separate us, according to God's holy ordinance in the bond of marriage. I will forgive you as I have been forgiven, and I will speak the truth to you in love, seasoned with grace. This is my solemn vow in the presence of Almighty God, our Lord and Saviour.

**MARIA:** As God intended from the very beginning, marriage is for all the life, only to be dissolved by death. I trust in God to give me the grace and compassion I require in order to love you the way God commands me to in Scripture. I promise to be your best friend, to follow you and to support you through all of life's ups and downs. In the name of God, I, Maria, take you, Timothy, to be my husband, pledging myself to only you, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, forsaking all other men, being faithful to you for as long as God gives me life. I promise to love, honour, respect, trust, help, and cherish

you until death should separate us, according to God's holy ordinance in the bond of marriage. I will forgive you as I have been forgiven, and I will speak the truth to you in love, seasoned with grace. This is my solemn vow in the presence of Almighty God, our Lord and Saviour.