

**Luke 16:18 (NASB95)**

<sup>18</sup> "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

**Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (NASB95)**

<sup>1</sup> "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, <sup>2</sup> and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's *wife*, <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> *then* her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.

**Matthew 19:3-12 (NASB95)**

<sup>3</sup> *Some* Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" <sup>4</sup> And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, <sup>5</sup> 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'? <sup>6</sup> "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

<sup>7</sup> They said\* to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND *her* AWAY?" <sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

<sup>10</sup> The disciples said\* to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry."

<sup>11</sup> But He said to them, "Not all men *can* accept this statement, but *only* those to whom it has been given. <sup>12</sup> "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 5:27-32 (NASB95)**

<sup>27</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; <sup>28</sup> but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> "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. <sup>30</sup> "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.

<sup>31</sup> "It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE'; <sup>32</sup> but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

**1 Corinthians 7:10-16 (NASB95)**

<sup>10</sup> But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband <sup>11</sup> (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.

<sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.

<sup>16</sup> 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 7:39-40 (NASB95)**

<sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

**Romans 7:1-3 (NASB95)**

<sup>1</sup> Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? <sup>2</sup> 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 the husband. <sup>3</sup> 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.

## **1 Corinthians 7:25-35 (NASB95)**

<sup>25</sup> Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. <sup>26</sup> I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.

<sup>27</sup> Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. <sup>28</sup> But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you. <sup>29</sup> But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; <sup>30</sup> and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; <sup>31</sup> and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.

<sup>32</sup> But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; <sup>33</sup> but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, <sup>34</sup> and *his interests* are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. <sup>35</sup> This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to *secure* undistracted devotion to the Lord.

### ● **Divorce and remarriage**

As regarding divorce and remarriage, a thorough understanding of the biblical teaching on divorce must be achieved before one can even begin to address the issue of remarriage.

Scripture insists marriage is dissolved by God only upon the death of a spouse. Unless it is established that man *can* separate by legal action, sin or ritual what God has joined, divorce remains a non-entity in reality.

God clearly, in both the Old and New Testaments, draws close parallels between the operation of a man and a woman in marriage *and* His own relationship to elect ancient national Israel and His bride the New Testament Church, together the One True Israel. If we make adjustments to our theology regarding the one, the other must also be revised to reflect the coherency of Scripture and rational thought. The unwavering fidelity, eternal commitment and tireless forgiveness which God exemplifies in His relationship with the True Church must be the standard for Christian marriage. To this standard we must become calibrated.

The Christian life, which emanates from the Cross, demands forgiveness in marriage (even for unfaithfulness) and a sacrificial love for even our enemies -- how much more so our spouses, with which we are one flesh. To believe that the sin of a spouse legitimizes a lack of forgiveness, and therefore divorce, is to miss the centrality of the Gospel's message of God's unconditional love, which we as believers are *commanded* to emulate. God's relationship with believers would be in a sorry state of affairs if the permissibility of divorce due to sin were in view. What would be the meaning or utility of Grace in such an economy? With such a view in mind, who could ever become and remain saved? Further, in man's case, to attribute innocence to the partner who has been wronged, fails to recognize that the prosecuting partner has also failed in many other areas of the marriage, as we all sin and fall short. To single out marital sexual physical adultery as the sole criterion to support the dissolution of marriage is to patently ignore all the teaching about the issues of the heart, which God has found important enough to bring to our attention time and again in both Testaments. The obligations, responsibilities and commitments in marriage are much more broad than merely physical fidelity.

The mandate for the Christian life is given in 1 Corinthians 13. The certain supernatural consequence of God's spiritual regeneration of every believer is evidenced in a life of love. Patience, kindness, selflessness, humility, politeness, consideration, *no account of wrongs*, protection, trust, hope, preservation and triumph are the hallmark by-products of this regeneration. They are what God has in view as the qualities of love, and love is the chief among faith and hope. Can the Christian believe God expects less in one's behavior toward the spouse they promised to love?

Remarriage needs to be assessed on a very individual and personal basis. It needs to be understood after serious examination, investigation, pensive reflection and prayer. This is true for both the couple contemplating remarriage as well as the church body which is deciding whether it would support such action.

Sadly, ever since sin has entered the world tragedy and tears have prevailed. Since the Fall, our world has become incredibly complex and our choices less than clear in certain cases. We sometimes make decisions and take actions that make reconciliation of our original marriage impossible. To fail to recognize this is to fail to own and perceive the gravity of the Fall and its effect on all creation, especially us. Unfortunately there are situations where separation, even permanent separation, is necessary to protect the well being of a spouse or a child/children when the husband *and/or* wife are not living a Christian life. The resultant loneliness as well as the grave impact of rejection and its destructive influence on the family are not things to be taken lightly.

Scripture declares marriage is dissolved only upon the death of a spouse -- this is my counsel to those not yet "divorced", -- for those already "divorced" and remarried, there remains God's grace, forgiveness and love.

The reality of our living in a sinful world results in many situations which are not fixed or fixable on this side of the grave. Our ability to restore, even in Christian love, is limited, yet restoration should be the church's target objective concerning those who have divorced. Ultimately we find ourselves awaiting God's final eschatological consummation, and with it the removal of all our tears.