

# *Divorce & Remarriage*

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## **Directions:**

This is a booklet to aid you in your personal study of this challenging topic. The booklet is divided into two sections. The first section will be an examination of the scriptures that discuss the matter of marriage, divorce, and/or remarriage. The second section will be an examination of a number of teachings concerning divorce and remarriage.

Read through the text first, discovering God's precious truths for yourself. Write down your observations in the "Thoughts About The Text" section. Also, use this space to write down any questions you have from the reading. The text is provided for you to mark, color, and highlight things you find interesting and important. Use the margins on each side of the text and the backside of the page to make notations of the truths you discover and passages you do not understand. **When you believe you have seen all there is in text**, answer the questions in the booklet pertaining to that section of text. The questions are not an exhaustive list of things to look for in the text. The questions are simply intended to direct your mind to consider different points that could be drawn from the text. Be prepared to share your findings in class. Finally, write down your conclusions from the text concerning divorce and remarriage.

The purpose of study is not to confirm what you already believe. Approach this study with an attitude to examine the scriptures, drawing conclusions based upon what the scriptures teach, not upon what you already believe. We can never discover God's truths if we are studying with the attitude of trying to prove what we already believe. While your beliefs may be correct, do not read the scriptures trying to prove you are correct. Rather, read the scriptures and discover God's truths. Then determine if what you learned from the text is the same as your beliefs. Such an attitude will either strengthen your beliefs or cause you to change a previously held belief.

## *Section 1:* *Examining the Texts*

ESV

2:22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

HCSB

2:22 Then the LORD God made the rib He had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 And the man said: This one, at last, is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called woman, for she was taken from man.

24 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

## *Thoughts About The Text:*

1. *To whom was the marriage law given? Under what covenant was the marriage law given?*

2. *What is to happen in marriage?*

3. *What activities does the marriage law prohibit?*

ESV

24:1 “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.

5 “When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be liable for any other public duty. He shall be free at home one year to be happy with his wife whom he has taken.

*Thoughts About The Text:*

NIV

24:1 If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, 2 and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, 3 and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, 4 then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

5 If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.

NRSV

24:1 Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable about her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; she then leaves his house 2 and goes off to become another man’s wife. 3 Then suppose the second man dislikes her, writes her a bill of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house (or the second man who married her dies); 4 her first husband, who sent her away, is not permitted to take her again to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that would be abhorrent to the LORD, and you shall not bring guilt on the land that the LORD your God is giving you as a possession.

5 When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be charged with any related duty. He shall be free at home one year, to be happy with the wife whom he has married.

*Word Study- "indecency" (ESV): literally "nakedness"*

1. *What was the intention of this law?*

2. *Does this text teach that it was lawful to divorce? Consider similarly worded commands in Deuteronomy 22:28-30; Exodus 21:26-27.*

ESV

2:13 And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand.

14 But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. 15 Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.

16 "For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."

HCSB

2:13 And this is another thing you do: you cover the LORD'S altar with tears, with weeping and groaning, because He no longer respects your offerings or receives [them] gladly from your hands.

14 Yet you ask, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have acted treacherously against her, though she was your marriage partner and your wife by covenant. 15 Didn't the one [God] make [us] with a remnant of His life-breath? And what does the One seek? A godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously against the wife of your youth.

16 "If he hates and divorces [his wife]," says the LORD God of Israel, "he covers his garment with injustice," says the LORD of Hosts. Therefore, watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously.

## *Thoughts About The Text:*

- 1. What does God think about divorce?*
- 2. What other descriptions does God give to divorce? Why does God have this attitude toward divorce?*

ESV

5:27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

HCSB

5:27 “You have heard that it was said, Do not commit adultery. 28 But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell!

31 “It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce. 32 But I tell you, everyone who divorces his wife, except in a case of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

## *Thoughts About The Text:*

- 1. What were the Jewish leaders teaching the people concerning divorce?*
- 2. What did Jesus teach?*
- 3. Is Jesus giving a new law concerning divorce or clarifying the law of Moses? How do you know? Consider the context as you answer.*

ESV

10:1 And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.

2 And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

3 He answered them, "What did Moses command you?"

4 They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away."

5 And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

6 But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'

7 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, 8 and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

10 And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11 And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

HCSB

10:1 He set out from there and went to the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Then crowds converged on Him again and, as He usually did, He began teaching them once more.

2 Some Pharisees approached Him to test Him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce [his] wife?"

3 He replied to them, "What did Moses command you?"

4 They said, "Moses permitted us to write divorce papers and send her away."

5 But Jesus told them, "He wrote this commandment for you because of the hardness of your hearts. 6 But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female.

7 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother [and be joined to his wife,] 8 and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, man must not separate."

10 Now in the house the disciples questioned Him again about this matter. 11 And He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. 12 Also, if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

## *Thoughts About The Text:*

- 1. What additional information do we learn from this account?*
- 2. Explain verse 5. What does Jesus mean? What was the purpose of the command?*
- 3. What did Jesus teach?*
- 4. Is Jesus giving a new law concerning divorce or clarifying God's law? How do you know?*

ESV

19:1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast 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 not man separate." 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

10 The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

11 But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. 12 For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."

HCSB

19:1 When Jesus had finished this instruction, He departed from Galilee and went to the region of Judea across the Jordan. 2 Large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there.

3 Some Pharisees approached Him to test Him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife on any grounds?" 4 "Haven't you read," He replied, "that He who created them in the beginning made them male and female, 5 and He also said: For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, man must not separate." 7 "Why then," they asked Him, "did Moses command [us] to give divorce papers and to send her away?" 8 He told them, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of the hardness of your hearts. But it was not like that from the beginning. 9 And I tell you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

10 His disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of a man with his wife is like this, it's better not to marry!" 11 But He told them, "Not everyone can accept this saying, but only those it has been given to. 12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs who were made by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves that way because of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can."

## *Thoughts About The Text:*

1. *What additional information do we learn from the Matthew account?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. *What do we learn from the disciples' remarks in verses 10-12?*

ESV

16:16 “The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it. 17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void.

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

HCSB

16:16 “The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then, the good news of the kingdom of God has been proclaimed, and everyone is strongly urged to enter it. 17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter in the law to drop out.

18 “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and everyone who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

## *Thoughts About The Text:*

- 1. What additional information do we learn from the Luke account?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. Why do you think the divorce principle is stated differently here than in Matthew and Mark?*



## ESV

7:1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” 2 But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6 Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. 7 I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

## HCSB

7:1 About the things you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have relations with a woman.” 2 But because of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. 3 A husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. 4 A wife does not have authority over her own body, but her husband does. Equally, a husband does not have authority over his own body, but his wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another—except when you agree, for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6 I say this as a concession, not as a command. 7 I wish that all people were just like me. But each has his own gift from God, one this and another that.

### *Thoughts About The Text:*

1. *What are the responsibilities of marriage?*

2. *What commands does Paul give?*

3. *What recommendations does Paul give?*

7:8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. 9 But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

10 To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband 11 (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

12 To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13 If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. 16 For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

17 Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. 18 Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. 19 For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. 20 Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. 21 Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) 22 For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

7:8 I say to the unmarried and to widows: It is good for them if they remain as I am. 9 But if they do not have self-control, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with desire.

10 I command the married—not I, but the Lord—a wife is not to leave her husband. 11 But if she does leave, she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband—and a husband is not to leave his wife.

12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she is willing to live with him, he must not leave her. 13 Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband, and he is willing to live with her, she must not leave her husband. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the Christian husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to peace. 16 For you, wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Or you, husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife?

17 However, each one must live his life in the situation the Lord assigned when God called him. This is what I command in all the churches. 18 Was anyone already circumcised when he was called? He should not undo his circumcision. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? He should not get circumcised. 19 Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not matter, but keeping God's commandments does. 20 Each person should remain in the life situation in which he was called. 21 Were you called while a slave? It should not be a concern to you. But if you can become free, by all means take the opportunity. 22 For he who is called by the Lord as a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called as a free man is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brothers, each person should remain with God in whatever situation he was called.

*Thoughts About The Text:*



7:25 Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26 I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. 29 This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, 30 and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, 31 and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33 But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 35 I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

36 If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. 37 But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. 38 So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.

39 A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. 40 Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

7:25 About virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I do give an opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26 Therefore I consider this to be good because of the present distress: it is fine for a man to stay as he is. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 However, if you do get married, you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But such people will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you. 29 And I say this, brothers: the time is limited, so from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none, 30 those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, 31 and those who use the world as though they did not make full use of it. For this world in its current form is passing away.

32 I want you to be without concerns. An unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. 33 But a married man is concerned about the things of the world—how he may please his wife— 34 and he is divided. An unmarried woman or a virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. 35 Now I am saying this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but because of what is proper, and so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.

36 But if any man thinks he is acting improperly toward his virgin, if she is past marriageable age, and so it must be, he can do what he wants. He is not sinning; they can get married. 37 But he who stands firm in his heart (who is under no compulsion, but has control over his own will) and has decided in his heart to keep his own virgin, will do well. 38 So then he who marries his virgin does well, but he who does not marry will do better.

39 A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants—only in the Lord. 40 But she is happier if she remains as she is, in my opinion. And I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

*Thoughts About The Text:*

10. *What are the instructions to the betrothed (ESV) or virgins (HCSB)?*

11. *Why does Paul say that it is better not to get married?*

12. *Explain the instructions to the widows in verses 39-40.*

13. *What does it mean to marry "only in the Lord?" As you answer this question, consider other texts that speak about doing something "in the Lord." (cf. 1 Cor. 7:22, 11:11, 15:58; Eph. 6:1; Phil. 2:29, 4:4; Col. 3:18)*

ESV

7:1 Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? 2 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

HCSB

7:1 Since I am speaking to those who understand law, brothers, are you unaware that the law has authority over someone as long as he lives? 2 For example, a married woman is legally bound to her husband while he lives. But if her husband dies, she is released from the law regarding the husband. 3 So then, if she gives herself to another man while her husband is living, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law. Then, if she gives herself to another man, she is not an adulteress.

## *Thoughts About The Text:*

- 1. What do we learn about the bond of marriage in this text?*
- 2. How long is a person bound in marriage?*
- 3. Do our actions of divorce and remarriage change the bonds that have been established by God? Does civil law affect the bonds of marriage?*

ESV

6:16 But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." 17 For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. 18 For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." 19 And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, 20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.

HCSB

6:16 When Herod heard of it, he said, "John, the one I beheaded, has been raised!" 17 For Herod himself had given orders to arrest John and to chain him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. 18 John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife!" 19 So Herodias held a grudge against him and wanted to kill him. But she could not, 20 because Herod was in awe of John and was protecting him, knowing he was a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard him he would be very disturbed, yet would hear him gladly.

## *Thoughts About The Text:*

1. *What was John the Baptist preaching to Herod?*
2. *What do we learn about divorce and remarriage?*

## *Concluding Section 1:*

*Who has been given the right to be married?*

*Who has been given the right to be divorced?*

*Who have been given the right to be remarried?*

# *Section 2: Examining the Arguments*

*One would not think that marriage would have to be defined. However, in light of some of the arguments made concerning divorce, it is clear that defining marriage has become necessary. Genesis 2:24 has been used to teach that sexual relations are necessary to constitute (or consummate) a marriage. The Roman Catholic church teaches marriage as a sacrament of the church.*

*“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)*

1. *What unique situation do we read about in the scriptures where a couple was married but did not have sexual relations for quite some time? Were they still married even though there were no sexual relations for quite some time?*

2. *How do the scriptures define marriage?*

3. *To understand our definition of marriage fully, consider the following passages and write down what we learn about marriage:*

*Malachi 2:14*

*Matthew 19:6*

*Romans 7:2*

4. *What is the relationship between marriage and sexual relations? Consult 1 Corinthians 7:1-4 to assist in your answer.*

5. *Does this have on the Roman Catholic teaching of annulment? Is marriage a sacrament of the church?*





### *Are Unbelievers Under Christ's Marriage Laws?*

There have been a couple different variations teaching that unbelievers are not under the law of Christ and therefore are not under His marriage laws. In the 1950s, E.C. Fuqua taught that alien sinners were only under civil law, not the law of Christ.

**“Baptism is the dividing line between the World and the Church (1 Cor. 12:13). Up till then, civil laws control. After baptism, Christ’s law takes over.”** (*The Vindicator*; Dec 1951, p. 2)

Therefore, the world will be judged exclusively by civil law and will not be judged by God’s laws or the law of Christ. God rules the governments and alien sinners are only under this rule.

1. *What arguments would you present for or against the Fuqua position? What scriptures would you use?*

2. *Are there problems that arise if a unbeliever is only amenable to civil law?*

3. *Are there potentially people who have not broken civil law and are therefore sinless?*

In 1988, Homer Hailey’s position came to forefront. In 1991, he published a book on his view of divorce and marriage called *The Divorced and Remarried Who Would Come To God*. Homer Hailey argued that alien sinners are not under the law of Christ. Instead, sinners are under universal moral law (Romans 5:12-13). Just as the alien sinner is not required to partake of the Lord’s Supper because he or she is not under the law of Christ, so also the alien sinner is not under the legislation of Christ concerning divorce and remarriage. Further, Hailey argued that the marriage law was universally given. However, the marriage law was altered after Genesis 2 (after the beginning) because of sin, due to the observation that God did not condemn polygamy in the lives of people like Abraham and David. Therefore, the rules given in Matthew 19:9 and 1 Corinthians 7 do not apply to unbelievers. While apart from Christ, unbelievers can divorce and remarry for any cause without sin. When they come to Christ, they must remain with their current spouse, never divorcing them except for the cause of sexual immorality.

4. *What arguments would you present for or against the Hailey position? What scriptures would you use?*

5. *Under what covenant was the marriage law given?*

### *Does Baptism Wash Away All Sins?*

A popular approach to the problem of divorce and remarriage is to teach that baptism washes away sin, so a person does not have to worry about unscriptural divorce and remarriage problems encountered before coming to Christ. The sin of adultery has been forgiven at baptism.

- 1. Does baptism wash away all sins, including adultery? Explain your answer.  
“Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery....” (Luke 16:18; ESV)*
  
- 2. What is the definition of adultery? Use a Bible dictionary along with an English dictionary.*
  
- 3. Based upon your definition of adultery, is there a problem of teaching that adultery has been forgiven at baptism?*
  
- 4. Are there other problems that arise from accepting or rejecting this interpretation?*

### *Argument:*

Paul said that when we come to Christ, all things are made new. Therefore, a person can remain in their marriage when coming to Christ.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”  
(2 Corinthians 5:17; NKJV)

- 5. How would you answer this argument? What scriptures would you use?*

### *Non-Sexual Adultery?*

Olin Hicks presented a position that adultery is not just illicit sexual intercourse involving a spouse, but that it also includes other forms of covenant treachery or unfaithfulness to the marriage covenant other than illicit sexual intercourse. Adultery is defined as divorcing a spouse and marrying another, based upon Matthew 19:9 and Luke 16:18. **“Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery...” (Luke 16:18; ESV).** The point is that the putting away and remarrying is the adultery and Jesus does not say anything about sexual relations.

He uses the following illustration: “If one looks at Matt. 19:9 without prior misconception it says very simply that a man who puts away his wife without fornication as the cause, and marries another, commits adultery. Why would anyone not accept the idea that it [adultery] is committed in the doing of those two things? If someone says, “Whosoever aims the gun and pulls the trigger commits murder,” it conveys to us that idea that murder is committed in the doing of those two things.” (*Divorce and Remarriage, The Issues Made Clear*; 1990, p. 38)

1. *Use a Bible dictionary and an English dictionary to define adultery.*
  
2. *Jeremiah 3:9 is used a proof text that adultery does not include sexual relations. How do you respond to this argument?*
  - a. *Examine Luke 13:31-32, John 10:7, and John 15:1. How do these scriptures help in the argument?*
  
3. *Matthew 5:28 is also used as a proof text that adultery does not include sexual relations. Agree or disagree? How do you respond to this argument?*
  
4. *How do you answer the teaching that Jesus defined adultery as putting away and remarrying in Matthew 19:9 and Luke 16:18? How do you reconcile Jesus' teaching on adultery with the definition of adultery?*
  
5. *Respond to Mr. Hicks' gun illustration used above.*

### *Fornication Breaks The Marriage?*

Lloyd Moyer taught, "That first marriage has been destroyed by the sin of fornication (illicit or unlawful sexual intercourse)... Though adultery was committed when they first joined themselves together in intercourse because they were still the husband or wife of someone else, subsequent sexual intercourse between them is not adultery. They are no longer the husband or wife of someone else... And by this of adultery they cause their previous marriage to be dissolved... When a marriage is thus dissolved, the innocent is no longer married to the guilty, nor is the guilty any longer married to the innocent. No marriage exists. Where no marriage exists, the parties may marry someone else... We have shown that by the very act of adultery the first marriage was defiled, adulterated and therefore dissolved. Subsequent sexual intercourse would not be adultery. It would be simply a man and his wife cohabiting in the confines of marriage." (*Gospel Guardian*; 1963, p. 253,257)

In summary, the first act of fornication breaks one marriage and the second act of fornication creates a new marriage.

- 1. Does adultery sever the marriage covenant? What scriptures would you use to support your answer? What impact does this teaching have upon reconciliation of a marriage?*
- 2. Does fornication create a new marriage? Use the definition of adultery that we did a few lessons ago to help with your answer. What impact does this teaching have on sexual relations had before marriage?*
- 3. Moyer also states that "where no marriage exists, the parties may marry someone else." Is this true? What scriptures would you use to support or deny this statement?*

### *Remain In The Condition You Were Called?*

Another argument used to prove that unbelievers who come to Christ can maintain their current marriage, regardless of the cause for the divorce, is based on the apostle Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 7:20:

**Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called. (1 Corinthians 7:20; NASB)**

Therefore, no one is required to separate to come to Christ. Everyone can remain in the marital condition he or she is in when they obeyed Jesus. Read 1 Corinthians 7 and the context surrounding this verse. Then answer the following questions.

- 1. Who is Paul teaching "to remain in the condition in which he was called?" Who is Paul's audience?*
- 2. Based upon your answer in question 1, what did Paul mean when he taught "to remain in the condition in which he was called?"*
- 3. What arguments can you come up, for or against, concerning the teaching to "remain in the condition in which one is called?" Are there consequences if one interprets this verse in this way?*

### *Death Is The Only Cause For Remarriage?*

This position teaches that only death severs the bond of marriage (Romans 7:1-4). Therefore, there are no scriptural grounds for divorce and remarriage. Even divorce for sexual immorality is condemned and remarriage is also condemned. Those who hold this position argue that Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 are not applicable to Christians because Jesus was explaining the law of Moses to the Jews. Since the exception is found only in these two texts and is not found after Pentecost, it is taught that those exceptions do not apply today.

- 1. Was Jesus explaining the law of Moses to the Jews in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9?*
- 2. Does Jesus say anything in Matthew 19:3-9 would show that Jesus intended or did not intend his teaching to be applied to all people?*
- 3. What other arguments, for or against, that you can come up with concerning the teaching that there is no cause acceptable for divorce or for remarriage? Are there consequences if one interprets the scriptures this way?*





### *Put Away Fornicator Can Remarry?*

There are a number of different arguments used in an effort to prove that the one put away for committing sexual immorality has the right to remarry. We will look at many of the arguments used to teach that the put away fornicator can remarry.

#### **Argument #1**

“If the innocent party is loosed, then the guilty party is also loosed. When the bond is broken for one, it is broken for the other. Consider there are two people tied together with a rope or handcuffed together. If one of the parties is freed, the other one is freed automatically.”

1. *What arguments would you use for or against this first argument? What scriptures would you use?*

#### **Argument #2**

“Carefully read Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 and you will see that Jesus does not address the put away fornicator. Jesus speaks about those who have divorced NOT for the cause of fornication. Therefore, those who HAVE divorced for the cause of fornication, have the right to remarriage, both the innocent party and the put away fornicator.”

2. *What arguments would you use for or against this first argument? What scriptures would you use?*

### **Argument #3**

“When the innocent party remarries, the put away fornicator is no longer bound. Therefore, the put away fornicator can remarry. Otherwise, the innocent would be bound to two spouses. A person cannot be guilty of adultery if that one is no longer married.”

3. *What arguments would you use for or against this first argument? What scriptures would you use?*

### **Argument #4**

“To forbid a person to marry is a direct violation of the scriptures! See 1 Corinthians 7:2 and 1 Timothy 4:1-4.”

4. *What arguments would you use for or against this first argument? What scriptures would you use?*

### **Argument #5**

“Paul said that when a person was loosed and then married, he had not sinned (1 Corinthians 7:27-28). Therefore, the person loosed from marriage can remarry.”

“Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned.” (1 Corinthians 7:27-28)

5. *What arguments would you use for or against this first argument? What scriptures would you use?*

### *One Put Away Unjustly Can Remarry?*

This position states that when a man divorces his wife for any cause other than fornication and marries another, then the divorced wife may put him away for fornication. Further, she has the scriptural right to remarry. Or, stated another way, the scriptures teach that the innocent person (free of fornication) who has been put away without God's approval and against whom adultery has been committed may remarry. Some have begun to call this position "mental divorce," although this phrase invokes an immediate bias that ought to be avoided in the search for truth. As you answer the following the scenarios, be sure to base your argument on the scriptures.

#### *Noting The Problem:*

When this topic is discussed, the problem lies in understanding Jesus' instructions concerning putting a spouse away for fornication. During the law of Moses, civil law and God's law were one and the same. Today, however, civil law is not the same as God's law. For example, a person today can get a divorce for any cause by civil law, but not by God's law.

#### *Question to Consider:*

*Does civil law circumvent or take priority over God's law when it comes to marriage and divorce?*

*Reread Romans 7:1-4 and Mark 6:16-20. Does it seem that civil law is to take priority over God's law? That is, does God uphold what humans do through civil law?*

#### *Scenarios to Consider:*

- 1. The divorce is for fornication, but the guilty fornicator initiates the divorce procedure before the innocent spouse does. Can the innocent still put the guilty away for the cause of fornication and have the right to remarry?*

2. *The husband cheats on the wife. The wife decides to try to work it out. However, after trying to work it out for two years, she decides that the marriage has been ruined by his infidelity. Can she put him away, according to the scriptures, and have the right to remarry?*
  
3. *Assume the scenario in number 2. However, in the subsequent two years she finds another man that she would like to date. Can she put her husband away, who cheated on her two years earlier but has been faithful since, and have the right to remarry?*
  
4. *The divorce is for fornication, but the guilty fornicator puts her away before she can put him away for fornication. The guilty fornicator gets remarried to another person. Can she now put him away for fornication, and have the right to remarry?*
  
5. *The husband divorces the wife, not for fornication, and marries another woman. Can the wife now put away the husband for fornication (because he has married another woman), and have the right to remarry?*
  
6. *What problems can you come up with after considering the scenarios regarding putting a person away after a civil divorce has occurred? What consequences can you see if one interprets the scriptures this way?*

- 1. Under what circumstances do the scriptures give for a separation to take place?  
(Not a divorce, but a husband and wife not living together though they are still married.)*
- 2. Can a person lawfully get a divorce if the spouse is physically abusive? If the spouse is breaking the law with drugs in the home? Are there biblical principles that can be used to argue for or against this?*
- 3. "I can't live with my spouse and still be a Christian. Is separation or divorce permissible?"*
- 4. Is it unlawful for a Christian to marry a non-Christian? Explain 2 Corinthians 6:14.*
- 5. What should a local church do with people who come to Christ and are married to someone unlawfully?*
- 6. Should the sin of an unlawful marriage be treated differently than an alcoholic or a thief who comes to Christ?*

7. *Do the principles of 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 apply to people married without God's approval?*
  
8. *Must fellowship be immediately severed with Christians who are found to be in an unlawful marriage?*  
  
*-- Must fellowship be immediately severed with Christians who are found committing any other sin?*
  
9. *Must a person put away an unlawful spouse before being baptized?*
  
10. *What lessons and applications have you learned from this study of marriage, divorce, and remarriage?*

*Your Additional Questions:*

# *Divorce & Remarriage*

*What Do The Scriptures Teach?*

*Self-Study Guide*

*by: Brent Kercheville*