

TOPICAL STUDIES

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE



SUMMARY: The Biblical requirements for divorce are considerably stricter than contemporary civil laws and if we do not very specifically teach the scriptural truths, our kids will accept the civil definitions as true. Failure to do this will make the difficulty of discerning the scriptural truth in the emotional stress of a marriage difficulty will be at least partially our fault.

1. MARRIAGE

- 1.1 Marriage was of divine origin (Gen. 2:18)
- 1.2 Marriage was one woman and one man (I Cor. 7:2)
- 1.3 Marriage was male and female (Gen. 2:24)
- 1.4 God joins the two (Matthew 19:6)
- 1.5 The two become one (Matthew 19:6)
- 1.6 Marriage is intended between members of the Church (II Corinthians 6:14-15)
- 1.7 What is the minimum qualifications for marriage?
 - 1.7.1 Point is not specifically addressed in the N.T. (See Matthew 19:4-6)
 - 1.7.2 Cohabitation and sex are the only requirements in the O.T. (Genesis 24:67, Genesis 29:21-30)
 - 1.7.3 Romans 13 instructs us to be subject to our civil governments and this would apply to following our civil laws relating to marriage. This does not mean that contemporary "living together" and saying that you are not married exempts you from God's laws. It is likely that each event of "living together" is a marriage according to God

2. DIVORCE & SEPARATION

- 2.1 Bible accepts that there are going to be divorces and separations (Matthew 5:31-32 & I Cor. 7:10-16)
- 2.2 If a Christian is married to a non-Christian and the non-Christian decides to leave, the Christian is not in bondage (i.e. slavery) to stay with the non-Christian. (I Cor. 7:15) There is no indication that the removal of this "bondage" allows remarriage in conflict with other teachings of the Bible.

2.3 What are classes of divorce:

2.3.1 Divorce for adultery (Matt. 5:32, Matt. 19:9)

2.3.2 Divorce not for adultery (Matt 5:32, Matt. 19:9)

2.4 What is the minimum qualifications for divorce in God's eyes? The New Testament acknowledges divorce without giving the qualification(s) for it, leading to the conclusion that the qualifications in the Old Testament still apply. God apparently accepted a divorce in which a spouse was sent out with a written certificate of divorce in the Old Testament (Deut. 24:1-4). Again we are obliged to follow the civil statutes to be divorced in the "eyes of the civil government" (Rom. 13).

2.5 Reference verses: Ex. 21:7-11, Deut. 21:10-14, Deut. 24:1-4, Ezra 10:1-16, Neh. 13:23-30, Jer. 3:1, Mal. 2:14-16, Matt. 5:31-32, Matt. 19:3-12, Luke 16:18, I Cor. 7:10-17 (All references to divorce found)

3. **REMARRIAGE**

3.1 CAN GET RE-MARRIED IF:

3.1.1 After divorce of spouse for cause of spouse's fornication (Matthew 5:31-32 & Matthew 19:9)

3.1.2 After death of spouse (I Tim. 5:14) (Does death of separated and divorced spouse release remaining person?)

3.2 CANNOT GET REMARRIED IF:

3.2.1 If you divorce your spouse for reasons other than fornication (Matthew 19:9)

3.2.2 If you were divorced by your spouse for any reason (Matthew 5:32 Inferred that if one party is committing adultery, the other is sinning also.)

3.2.3 If your spouse leaves for reasons other than adultery, you must remain unmarried (I Cor. 7:10-11)

1. 4. **MISCELLANEOUS**

4.1 Divorce must be for reason of adultery to allow for remarriage, adultery after the divorce would not meet this criteria and allow remarriage. (Matthew 19:9)

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- 4.2 Adultery after separation when innocent party is attempting reconciliation probably qualifies innocent party for remarriage. (no scriptural basis)
- 4.3 This applies to Christians and non-Christians: There is no example in the Bible of ignorance excusing from the following of the law.
- 4.4 Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19:9 do not say that remarriage is a sin, but rather remarriage leads to adultery. If remarriage can occur without sex (if that can be called marriage and is possible), then it is possible that it would not be sinful to remarry. If the adultery is a sin, and not the marriage, then conversion in this state would remove all sins of adultery in the past. Future adultery in that relationship would not be excused.

This leads to the conclusion that if two people were remarried outside the church "unscripturally", then the adultery of necessity must stop upon conversion, but not the marriage. (Conversion forgives past but not future sins)
- 4.5 John 8:1-11: Discussion regarding Jesus forgiving adulterous woman.
- 4.6 Romans 7:1-6: Relates that death is an acceptable reason for remarriage.

The following verses are paraphrased without indication of sex for the convenience of the reader:

Matt. 5:32 but I say to you that every one who divorces their spouse, except for the cause of unchastity, makes the divorcee commit adultery; and whosoever marries a divorcee commits adultery.

Matt. 19:9 And I say to you, whoever divorces their spouse, except for immorality, and marries another commits adultery.

I Cor. 7:10-16 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that you should not leave your spouse (but if you do leave, remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to your spouse), and that you should not send your spouse away. But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any member has a spouse who is an unbeliever, and the spouse consents to live with the member, let the member not send the unbelieving spouse away. (13 & 14 same) For the unbelieving is sanctified through the believer; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, so be it; the member is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O believer, whether you will save your unbelieving spouse?

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FOLLOWING A DIVORCE WITHOUT ADULTERY BEING INVOLVED:

SPOUSE "1"	SPOUSE "1"
COMMITTS ADULTERY (I.E. REMARRIAGE)	DIES

BELIEF A: DIVORCE WAS NOT RECOGNIZED BY GOD

SPOUSE "2" WILL COMMIT ADULTERY IF REMARRIES	SPOUSE "2" WILL COMMIT ADULTERY IF REMARRIES {NOT A WIDOW(ER) BECAUSE NOT MARRIED}
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BELIEF B: DIVORCE WAS RECOGNIZED BY GOD

SPOUSE "2" IS FREE TO REMARRY	SPOUSE "2" IS FREE TO REMARRY
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The distinction between BELIEF A and BELIEF B are important to consider as a believer of BELIEF A would have to withdraw from a sincere person who followed BELIEF B as a non-adultery divorcee.

BELIEF A follows the pattern as set forth in the New Testament as the concept of "divorce in God's eyes" being different from a civil divorce which has no scriptural basis. Both individuals are considered as divorced with respect to the marriage and neither is qualified to ever remarry, other than rejoining the same spouse (w/o intermediate marriage, Deut. 24:4). Matthew 19:9 clearly teaches that you can divorce your spouse without committing adultery. Adultery is an exception which allows remarriage of the innocent spouse. A civil divorce today eliminates any Biblical requirements for divorce. (See Deut. 24:1-4 for God's requirements for divorce in the Old Law.)

Some within the church feel that BELIEF B is true in that in Matthew 19:6 "let not man separate" means that man cannot separate or divorce marriages "in God's eyes". This means that after a civil divorce for reasons other than adultery, the couple is still married in God's eyes. Later, upon the adultery of one of the spouses, God divorces them "in His eyes" and the innocent party becomes free to remarry. This belief is subjected to the condition that the intent of the heart was right, that the innocent party was not merely outwaiting the spouse which eventually committed adultery. The same line of reasoning would apply to the death of a divorced spouse. BELIEF B would put the elders of a congregation in an unreasonable

position of judging the heart and motives of an individual who had remarried in their decision to fellowship them or to withdraw from them for adultery.

DOES “LET NO MAN SEPARATE” MEAN THAT MAN CANNOT SEPARATE?

Matthew 19:6 "Consequently, they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate" (NAS)

This statement "let no man separate" in Matthew 19:6 has been taken by some to mean that man cannot separate couples in marriage by civil means. Couples therefore divorced by civil authorities without adultery being the cause are actually still married in God's eyes.

The term "let no" is "let not" in the King James Version and is used 15 times in the New Testament (Ref.: compuBIBLE, KJV). A point of specific interest is I Cor 7:10-11: "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband. But if she depart.....". Clearly, the Lord is commanding "let not" and immediately follows what should happen when the command is violated.

All listing of "let not" from compuBible are Matt. 6:3, Matt. 19:6, Matt. 19:9, Luke 21:21, John 14:1, John 14:27, Romans 6:12, Romans 14:3, Romans 14:16, I Cor. 7:10, I Cor 7:11, Eph. 4:26, I Tim. 5:9, I Tim. 5:16, and James 1:17. In every one of these verses other than the one under question the "let not" can clearly be violated by man. What reason would we have to believe that the other uses and commands with this terminology can be violated by man, but this one is a special case? I can find none.

Note:

The terminology in the first part of Matthew 19:6 "Consequently, they are no more two, but one flesh" is also used in connection with sexual relations with a harlot In I Corinthians 6:16. (See also Gen. 2:24, Mark 10:8-9).

POSITIONS ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

1. Death is the only cause for remarriage
2. Divorce and remarriage for innocent if cause is fornication
3. Divorce and remarriage OK if before baptism because sin washed away
4. Divorce and remarriage OK if before baptism because not subject to Christ's law
5. Believer forsaken by unbeliever free to remarry
6. Both parties in divorce free to remarry if for fornication

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7. Divorce and remarriage for any legal cause
8. Divorce and remarriage without cause
9. A person has an inalienable right to be married.
10. The act of remarriage is sin, which can be repented of and still retain the benefits of the union.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE THE POSITION?

1. Andy marries Alice and Brian marries Bertha **in the church**. They each divorce for irreconcilable differences. Two years later Andy meets Bertha and they marry. When Andy and Bertha approach your church for attendance, what would you say?
2. Andy marries Alice and Brian marries Bertha **in a denomination**. They each divorce for irreconcilable differences. Two years later Andy meets Bertha and they marry. When Andy and Bertha approach your church for attendance, what would you say?
3. Andy marries Alice and Brian marries Bertha **in South Texas where they had never seen a Bible although they had heard of Jesus**. They each divorce for irreconcilable differences. Two years later Andy meets Bertha and they marry. When Andy and Bertha approach your church for attendance, what would you say?
4. Andy marries Alice and Brian marries Bertha **in darkest Africa where they have never heard of Jesus**. They each divorce for irreconcilable differences. Two years later Andy meets Bertha and they marry. When Andy and Bertha approach your church for attendance, what would you say?
5. Andy marries Alice and Brian marries Bertha **in India in marriages arranged by their parents. They had never met before the marriage ceremony**. They each divorce for irreconcilable differences. Two years later Andy meets Bertha and they marry. When Andy and Bertha approach your church for attendance, what would you say?