

(The length of this article, some 12 pages in Microsoft Word, speaks to the gravity of this week subject. For convenience, I am attaching a file that will open the article up in a web page (html) format for easier reading or for saving to your hard drive.)

Marriage, as intended by God, has a noble and lofty purpose. Marriage is a Divine institution, designed so that man might be happy while he is on earth. God intended that marriage should help (not hinder) man and woman to be faithful to Him so that Heaven might be theirs when death comes to them.

It is written, "**And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him**" (Gen. 2:18). Then we read,

**"And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him."** (Gen. 2:19-20)

One of the most precious passages in the entire Bible relative to marriage is the following:

**"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."** (Gen. 2:21-24)

**As God designed marriage, He made the man the head of the woman. Paul wrote, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). Man is to be the spiritual and physical leader in the home. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23). "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5:8). The husband is to love his wife enough to die for her; he should also love her as his own body (Eph. 5:25,28). The wife is to love and submit to her husband (Eph. 5:22-33).**

"Divorce" is alien to God's holy purpose for man. Jehovah, through a prophet, announced: "I hate divorce" (Mal. 2:16 – NASB). A divorce cannot occur without selfishness — a disregard for Heaven's will by at least one of the marital partners.

In a recently published book, **Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe in Marriage in Post-Modern Society**, author Glenn Stanton has assembled a massive array of evidence, surveying a century of social studies, which forcefully demonstrates the lasting trauma that divorce wreaks upon both adults and children. For example, divorcees are more likely to become addicted to alcohol, commit suicide, and be subject to depression, etc., than are members of stable marriages.

Too, children of divorced parents are much more prone to both mental and physical ailments than children of undivorced parents.

To understand how the dramatically the home has come under attack consider the following statistics from Divorce Magazine:

- In the United States, 49% of marriages end in divorce.
- Although 82% of all married couples will reach their fifth wedding anniversary, only 52% will celebrate 15 years of marriage.
- The median duration of first marriages that end in divorce is slightly less than eight years.
- Most people will wait about three years after a divorce to remarry.

- 75% of women and 80% of men remarry within 5 years after divorce
- Second marriages are at greater risk of ending in divorce than first marriages.
- More people are part of second marriages today than first marriages
- People between the ages of 25-39 make up 60% of all divorces
- The divorce rate in America for second marriage is 60%
- The divorce rate in America for third marriage is 73%

The effects of divorce on children have been widely studied. Consider the following divorce statistics related to children:

- The number of children living with both parents decreased from 85% to 68% between 1970 and 1996.
- About half of all children will witness the breakup of a parent's marriage. Of these kids, nearly half will also witness a parent's second divorce.
- Children who are raised in single-parent homes are less likely to marry and more likely to divorce.
- Teen girls from single parent homes are twice as likely to drop out of high school or give birth to an out-of-wedlock child.
- 70% of all children born in 1980 spent some time of their childhood in a single parent family
- Over 1 million children are affected by divorce each year

Wayne Jackson correctly stated in his article, "The Devastating Effects of Divorce":

***"Man did not live one day upon this earth apart from the environment of a home. In fact, the very foundation of society is the home. Marriage is that divine union between a man and a woman who love one another, and who have welded their lives together "so long as they both shall live." It is the cement that holds society together.***

***Moreover, it is this very societal cohesiveness that facilitates the spread of the redemptive gospel of Jesus Christ. When the family structure disintegrates, a significant factor in the growth of Christian faith is missing, and the gospel of God is hindered. Those who encourage capricious, unauthorized divorce undermine the cause for which the Savior died.***

***Divorce, generally speaking, is a tremendous evil. In fact, it is so bad that Jesus Christ allows it (together with a subsequent remarriage) on one basis only—that of fornication (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). Subsequent unions following divorce—for all parties other than the innocent victim of a marriage breached by fornication—constitute adulterous relationships."***

The question the Pharisees asked of Jesus in **Matthew 19:3** was an attempt to trap him in the dispute that was occurring at that time over the interpretation of Moses' statement in **Deuteronomy 24:1**. The expression rendered "uncleanness" comes from the Hebrew word 'ervah and means: nakedness, nudity, shame, pudenda (implying shameful exposure).

Hillel was very liberal in his interpretation and the Jews who followed his teachings believed that divorce could be obtained for the most trivial of reasons, i.e., for every cause. Shammai, emphasizing the word "nakedness" taught that there must be shameful conduct or unchastity. The question to Jesus was simply, "Whose side are you on?"

Jesus does not side with Hillel or Shammai but goes beyond Moses to the law of God for his answer. Question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Jesus answered NO! Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning:

1. Made them male and female
2. A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife
3. The two shall become ONE flesh

#### 4. What therefore *GOD HAS JOINED*, let not man put asunder (**Matthew 19:4-6**)

They replied, if this is the case, “Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away?” Jesus simply replies that this practice was allowed because of the hardness of their heart.

Question, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” Jesus answers NO! But from the beginning it (the practice of divorce) hath not been so.

Jesus then goes on to answer the question, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” again. “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

Marriage is a very happy relationship when both partners do their part (**Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Cor. 7:1-5**). Physical attraction between a man and a woman is not wrong, but physical intimacies approved by God are limited to marriage. Outside of marriage, physical intimacy is fornication: “**Marriage is honourable in all and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge**” (**Heb. 13:4**). Great emphasis should be placed upon making marriage successful. Therefore, it is important that we know, believe, and teach the truth relative to marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

**“Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment” (James 3:1)**

The Lord's church has had plenty of false, deceiving, doctrines arising from the inside. We have been plagued with supporters of false doctrines that have divided the body of Christ. More damage and destruction is often accomplished when men arise out of our own midst speaking perverse things. The results of traveling down the broad way, following these false doctrines, will be destruction in eternal hell (**Matt. 7:13-14**).

#### 1. Basic Argument Refuted

- 1.1. Some who teach false doctrine regarding divorce/remarriage use the argument that nowhere in the scriptures can you find the word **remarriage**. They contend it is an unscriptural term.
- 1.2. I do not intend to spend much time on something we were taught in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade English, but when you break down a word, it sometimes has different components. Remarriage just happens to have a prefix.
- 1.3. Re – as in repeating or doing again. Remarriage is at the crux of Jesus' thought in **Matt. 19:9**.

#### 2. God's Original Plan

- 2.1. When God created male and female in the beginning, he established the divine relationship that we know as the home

##### 2.1.1. **Genesis 2:18, 24**

- 2.1.1.1. This fact that man is to “leave” father and mother underscores the permanency of the marriage relationship.
- 2.1.1.2. The fact that he is to “cleave” to his wife emphasizes the commitment God expects in marriage.
- 2.1.1.3. The fact that God joined one man to one woman demonstrates:
  - 2.1.1.3.1. The marriage transpires between a man and a woman
  - 2.1.1.3.2. The singularity of marriage – not one man to many women or a multiplicity of partners
- 2.1.1.4. The fact that the couple becomes “one flesh” manifests the unity of the home
- 2.1.1.5. God's ideal plan is for one man and one woman, separated only by death

##### 2.1.2. **Ephesians 5:22-32**

- 2.1.2.1. Marriage is the closest of all earthly relationships and was used by Paul to indicate the relationship between Christ and the church

- 2.1.3. **Malachi 2:14-16 - Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because Jehovah hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? And wherefore one? He sought a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For I hate**

**putting away, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, and him that covereth his garment with violence, saith Jehovah of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously**

3. Biblical Definition of Divorce

3.1. We must understand that putting away or divorce in Biblical times, because the culture of that day almost universally carried the idea of remarriage. In the passages, both Jesus and Paul reason adultery will occur. This mindset, regarding divorce and remarriage, is much the same today!

3.2. The “Mosaic Concession”

3.2.1. When the Pharisees came to Jesus (**Matthew 19:3, 7-8**), they were referring to what is sometimes called the “Mosaic Concession” found in **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**.

3.2.2. In an effort to preserve marriage and for the protection of the wife, Moses stated what he did in **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**

3.2.3. Instead of just sending the wife on her way the husband was instructed to write her a bill of divorcement.

3.2.4. The preparation of the legal instrument, by the very nature of the case, would require time. During this period of time the husband had an opportunity to reconsider his actions.

3.2.5. Moses’ instructions were if he gave her a bill of divorcement and she remarried he could not change his mind and take her back, even if her husband died.

3.2.6. The document provided proof of the woman’s marital status so she was not forced into prostitution in order to be able to survive.

3.2.7. We must understand there is a difference in God sanctioned divorce and civil divorce.

3.3. Not all divorce implies the right to remarry!

3.4. Not all divorce terminates a marriage in the sight of God. Jesus shows that if one divorces for reasons other than fornication they were not free to remarry

3.5. There are two types of divorce that we will discuss, civil and God sanctioned.

3.5.1. Civil divorce is arrived at by determining I no longer want to live with the spouse I currently have, for whatever reason.

3.5.2. I then proceed to file the necessary secular paperwork and wait for the court to grant my divorce.

3.5.3. Civil divorce does **NOT** necessarily imply scriptural divorce.

3.6. God sanctioned divorce

3.6.1. In the Greek New Testament the verb translated “to divorce” is *apoluo*. The root meaning is to set free, release, pardon or let go. One of the most frequent usages of *apoluo* in the New Testament is in the sense of setting one free

3.6.1.1. **Mark 15:15; Acts 26:32; Heb. 13:23**

3.6.2. The noun form used in the New Testament, divorcement, is the Greek *apostasion*. It carries with it the idea of relinquishing property after sale or giving up one’s claim.

3.6.3. In the New Testament both the verb for divorce (*apoluo*) and the noun (*apostasion*) continue the Old Testament concept of complete dissolution of the marriage bond. In both testaments the meaning of divorce is clearly more than putting away the wife with separate bed and board. It is the granting of freedom for the party to marry again.

3.7. Civil and Divine Law

3.7.1. Some imply that divine law is subservient to civil law when attempting to apply the teachings of Jesus to various cases of divorce and remarriage.

3.7.2. Civil law is human law, and though we normally are to be subject to the “ordinance of man” (**1 Pet. 2:13**), such ordinances are valid only insofar as they are in harmony with the divine law (**Acts 5:29**).

3.7.3. Civil law may not authorize that which is wrong or prohibit that which is right. Civil law may vary in different countries and culture; divine law is stable. Civil law may change due to the fickle dispositions of men, but divine law will remain the same throughout the Christian age.

3.7.4. Guy N. Woods noted, “Divorce is civil, legal action having nothing whatsoever to do with determining the moral and religious principles involved. It is the Lord’s edict, not man’s that governs.”

3.7.5. Jesus, by implication, allows divorce and remarriage for the innocent victim in a union that has been violated by sexual infidelity.

- 3.7.5.1. Suppose that the state does not allow one to file for divorce on the ground of fornication or adultery? What if the only allowable civil cause is that ambiguous "irreconcilable differences"? Is the victim helpless in such a case? Must he or she forever remain single simply because civil authority does not specifically recognize the biblical cause?
- 3.7.5.2. OF COURSE NOT! Divine law cannot be negated by civil law.
- 3.7.5.3. Suppose Jane came home one day and found her husband committing adultery with another woman. Jane desperately wanted to save her marriage, and she offered to forgive her wayward husband. But he was not at all interested in reconciliation. He informed her that he no longer loved her and he left. She waited, hoping he would change. He moved in with the other woman and filed for divorce, which he subsequently obtained.
- 3.7.5.4. Some have suggested the Jane must forever remain single simply because he initiated the divorce. It is alleged that no "put away" person is authorized to remarry. The truth is, however, her husband's divorce procedure was not authorized by God; it was thus invalid. That the court sanctioned this unjustified action means nothing.
- 3.7.5.5. Jane had ample biblical reason to divorce her fornicating mate, and, if she eventually desired, to remarry. The fact that he beat her to court, and the fact that the law would not acknowledge her right of divorce, did not invalidate her God given privilege for a new, pure marriage.

3.7.5.6. **DIVINE LAW IS NOT SUBORDINATE TO CIVIL LAW**

4. Analysis of **Matthew 5:31-32** (Taken from Denton Lectureships 1995)

4.1. In His great Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared:

- 4.1.1. "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (**Matt. 5:31-32**).
- 4.1.2. The context is Christ's teaching that: (1) He had not come "to destroy" the law and prophets, "but to fulfill"; and (2) "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (**Matt. 5:17-20**). Christ fulfilled the Law of Moses, and therefore its authority ended (**Rom. 10:4; Col. 2:14-17**). The purpose of the law was to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Since faith is come, no one is under the Old Testament Law of Moses; instead we are under the New Testament. We are children of God by faith in Christ (**Gal. 3:23-27**).
- 4.1.3. In contrasting what He was demanding of His subjects with the tradition people had heard, He used the formula, "Ye have heard, or it hath been said ... But I say unto you." His examples included murder, adultery, divorce, perjury, retaliation, and benevolence (**Matt. 5:21-44**). In our study we will consider what He said about divorce. The teaching of **Matt. 5:32** is repeated substantially in **Matt. 19:9**, but with a different emphasis. In the latter passage, the focus is on the sin a husband commits if he puts away a chaste wife and marries another. In **Matt. 5:32**, the focus is on the sin he causes such a wife to commit by putting her away. Remarriage on his part is not under consideration in **Matt. 5:32**. The wife likewise commits adultery if she puts away her husband (except for fornication on his part, **Matt. 19:9**) and marries another (**Mark 10:11-12**).

4.2. "It Hath Been Said"

- 4.2.1. Jesus' reference was to **Deut. 24:1-2** - "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. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.
- 4.2.2. Jewish rabbis disagreed as to the grounds this passage allowed for divorce. Completely opposite views were held by the schools of Hillel and Shammai. One championed the liberal and popular view that "uncleanness" meant anything displeasing to the husband, while the other insisted that it referred only to unchastity or adultery.
- 4.2.3. It is obvious that the text falls short of stating specific grounds or setting definite limits. The expression under dispute ("uncleanness," literally, "a matter of nakedness," implying shame or disgrace) was too serious to include such whimsical and frivolous grounds as were upheld by some rabbis. However, "uncleanness" likely encompassed less than adultery, for that was punishable by death (**Deut. 22:22**).

- 4.2.4. God has always been opposed to adultery. The prophet Malachi warned: "Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away" (**Mal. 2:15-16**).
- 4.2.5. According to Jesus in **Matt. 19:7-8**, divorce had never been and still was not divinely intended, and Moses had neither instituted nor commanded it, as some seemed to think. It had only been tolerated because of the hardness of men's hearts -- to prevent greater evils. In a culture where the rights of wives were often not recognized, this allowance was no doubt to favor her as much as possible. It served to protect her from the abuses of impulsive and unceremonious expulsion from her home and children, and to provide her with legal proof of freedom to remarry should she be put away.
- 4.3. "But I Say unto You"
- 4.3.1. Jesus, however, going beyond Moses and setting specific limits, announced restrictions in substantial agreement with Shammai's interpretation of the law. Permission for divorce because of fornication was implied. Since the essence of marriage is "one flesh," and the union is for life, fornication is a fundamental breach of the marriage contract. If a woman should commit adultery after her husband had put her away for any cause other than fornication, he would be partially responsible for her sin by placing her in a position to be tempted.
- 4.3.2. If she married again, she would be guilty of adultery, because God did not recognize her as divorced. Likewise, whoever married her would be guilty of adultery because, in reality, he would be taking another man's wife. Further, while both parties to the new marriage would be guilty of adultery, the husband who put away the woman would also share in her guilt, for he put her away, but not for the Scriptural reason of her fornication at the time that he put her away.
- 4.4. Can a Couple "Live" in Adultery?
- 4.4.1. It should be pointed out that the partners in a forbidden marriage "live" in adultery. Sin is an act, but if it is unforgiven and persisted in, it also becomes a state in which one is said to "live" (**Rom. 6:1-2**). While the specific expression "live in adultery" does not occur in Scripture, **Col. 3:5-7** mentions a number of items of disobedience in which the readers had once "lived," one of which was "fornication," of which adultery is a species. If one can live in fornication, surely he or she can live in adultery. Furthermore, **Matt. 5:32** says that "whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." **Matt. 19:9** similarly says, "doth commit adultery." In both passages, the tense of the original word has the idea of continuing to commit. The force of the grammar is that, as long as the forbidden union exists between those who do not have a Scriptural right to marry, the couple "lives" in adultery.
5. Analysis of **Matthew 19:3-12** (Taken from Denton Lectureships 1995)
- 5.1. "And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Jesus made this statement during a conversation with some Pharisees. They, in an effort to trap Jesus into making a statement which they could use against him, had posed a question concerning the circumstances under which a man could put away his wife. With this statement, the Lord set forth fornication in one's spouse as the only circumstance under which one with a living former companion can remarry without sin. Jesus responded by referring them to the origin and design of marriage. This record is set out in **Gen. 2:18-24**, as already cited and quoted in our introduction.
- 5.2. What Jesus said in **Matt. 19:9** is quite simple: "Any person (saint or sinner) who is married and puts away his companion for any ground other than fornication, and then marries again, commits adultery!" Satan has beguiled many concerning the simplicity of this matter (**2 Cor. 11:3**). Jesus gave one and only one exception that would give anyone the right to put away his partner; that is, the innocent is permitted to put away the guilty partner, and marry an eligible (in God's sight) partner. (However, **Matt. 19:9** teaches just as plainly that the guilty one cannot marry a second time without committing adultery. This will be discussed more fully later.) If Jesus had given no exception, then every person who puts away his companion and marries again would be guilty of adultery. I would emphasize that God the Father and Christ the Son want everyone who marries to remain true to the original partner for life.
- 5.3. "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (**Rom. 7:2-3**).

- 5.4. However, Jesus gave one exception to this general law of "marriage for life" -- one man for one woman for life, with one exception (**Matt. 19:9**). When our hearts are open for information, we can easily see the meaning of an exception. If I said to an audience I was addressing that every person there would be shot when he goes out the door, except those who are men, would the women dare to leave? They might not believe me, but would they have any difficulty understanding me?
- 5.5. Jesus taught in **John 3:5**, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Even so, He taught in **Matt. 19:9**, using the same sort of language, ("... except it be for fornication ..."). **John 3:5** gives the one and only door into the kingdom of God, and **Matt. 19:9** gives the one and only door into a second marriage while one's partner lives.
- 5.6. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of believing, understanding, and practicing the great truth set out in **Matt. 19:9**. This passage constitutes the main defense against what I conceive to be the major problem facing the Lord's church on the question of divorce and remarriage. Whether one is in Heaven or in Hell in eternity may very well be determined by what is true of his relationship in marriage and by whether or not he respects Jesus' teaching in **Matt. 19:9**.
- 5.7. **Matt. 19:9** is an "exceptive sentence." The phrase, "except for fornication," makes **Matt. 19:9** an exceptive sentence
- 5.7.1. For example, the Dean announces: "All the students in this University except freshmen are eligible for course No. 301." The logical meaning of this sentence is: (1) All non-freshman students of this university are eligible for course No. 301; and (2) No freshman student of this University is eligible for course No. 301; and (3) A student of this University is eligible for course No. 301 if and only if he is a non-freshman.
6. Biblical Definition of Fornication and Adultery
- 6.1. **I Corinthians 6:19-20** - Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.
- 6.2. How does "fornication" differ from "adultery"? In the Bible, fornication is the broader term. It refers to all forms of sexual unchastity, including unlawful intercourse irrespective of marital status, whereas adultery consists of fornication practiced by persons, either or both of whom are married. Hence, all adultery is fornication, but not all fornication is adultery.
- 6.3. Fornication – The Greek word for fornication is *porneia*. The word covers all unlawful (**God's law**) sexual intercourse including that which will be specifically identified as adultery. The word covers all heterosexual intercourse that is not lawful, all homosexual intercourse (none of which is lawful), all intercourse between man and beast (none of which is lawful).
- 6.3.1. Descriptions of fornication in the Bible
- 6.3.1.1. **Matt. 19:9** – Jesus said that a wife could commit fornication. She could be guilty of unlawful sexual intercourse (intercourse with someone other than her husband)
- 6.3.1.2. **I Thes. 4:3-6; I Tim. 5:2** – According to scripture, sexual intercourse is confined to God authorized marriage. If a man has intercourse with a woman not his wife, as referred to in this text, then someone is wronged (a brother in this context).
- 6.3.1.3. **Gal. 5:19** – Fornication is described as a work of the flesh. The bible makes it clear that basically there are three ways that one can be tempted (**I John 2:15-17**):
- 6.3.1.3.1. Lust of the eyes
- 6.3.1.3.2. Lust of the flesh
- 6.3.1.3.3. Pride or vainglory
- 6.4. Adultery - The Greek word for "adultery" is *moicheia*. The classical Greek writers assigned a very clear meaning to the term. It had to do with the illicit sexual conduct of a married person, or with a married person.
- 6.4.1. Several years ago it would hardly have been necessary to discuss the meaning of "adultery." Virtually every educated person knew that "adultery" is a sexual relationship that somehow or another breaches a marriage relationship. In recent years though, a new view of adultery has been espoused by a minority element within the church. It is the notion that "adultery" is merely the act of repudiating one's marriage vows (whether or not the covenant-breaker ever enters a new marital union).
- 6.4.2. It suggests that if one commits adultery, i.e., he repudiates his marriage vow (admittedly an evil thing), then he may simply "repent" of that action, i.e., pledge not to do it henceforth, and, if he

desires at some subsequent point, he may secure a new mate. According to this view, one can abandon his spouse for any trivial reason, pledge to never do such again, and then enter a new “marriage” with God’s approval.

6.4.2.1. Such an ideology makes an absolute mockery of the New Testament teaching on divorce and remarriage.

6.4.3. One of the fundamental rules of New Testament interpretation is known as *usus loquendi*. This is a Latin phrase which suggests that the common meaning (or the prevalent usage) of a term is to be assumed, unless some special significance is demanded by the context. The question is, therefore: How did the ancient writers — both profane and sacred — employ the term “adultery?”

6.4.3.1. Xenophon (c. 401 B.C.) describes the adulterer who “enters the woman’s quarters, knowing that by committing adultery (*moicheuonti*) he is in danger of incurring the penalties threatened by the law . . . .” He suggested that this is foolish since “there are many remedies to relieve him of his carnal desire without risk”

6.4.3.2. In the 2nd century A.D., Sextus Empiricus wrote: “Adulterers (*moichous*) are, or course, punished by law with us, but amongst some peoples, intercourse with other men’s wives is indifferent . . . .”

6.4.3.3. There is no question about what the Greeks meant by “adultery.”

6.4.4. The Greek Old Testament

6.4.4.1. In the 3rd century B.C., the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into the Greek language. That version is known as the Septuagint. How is the term *moicheia* employed in the Greek Old Testament?

6.4.4.2. Moses wrote that the man who “commits adultery (*moicheusetai*) with another’s wife” is subject to death (**Lev. 20:10**). Note that “adultery” was not merely walking out on one’s spouse; it involved an act with another’s wife.

6.4.4.3. Concerning ancient Jerusalem, God said: “I have seen thine abominations, even thine adulteries (*moicheia*), and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy fornication, on the hills in the fields” (**Jer. 13:27**).

6.4.4.3.1. Though “adulteries” is here used figuratively of Judah’s apostasy, there are clear sexual overtones associated with the word. The fact is, sexual activity was a common feature of Canaanite idolatry.

6.4.4.4. In **Ezekiel 16**, Jehovah describes Jerusalem as “a wife that committeth adultery (*moichomene*) that taketh strangers instead of her husband!”. She had “opened [her] feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied [her] fornication”. The graphic nature of this language simply cannot be misconstrued.

6.4.4.5. Clearly, in the Old Testament, adultery had to do with a sexual violation of marriage

6.4.5. General New Testament Evidence

6.4.5.1. How does the New Testament use the term “adultery”? Is there any indication that the word means merely the abandonment of a marriage? We can confidently affirm that there is not a scrap of evidence supporting this idea. Let us consider several New Testament passages in which the word “adultery” occurs.

6.4.5.2. Jesus spoke of those who “look upon a woman to lust after her.” He says that such one has “committed adultery” with her in his heart (**Matt. 5:28**). The term “lust” demonstrates that a sexual inclination is involved. Do men lustfully fantasize about breaking covenants? Does man lust over tearing up a marriage certificate? That is not a viable viewpoint. Moreover, those who have “eyes full of adultery” (**2 Pet. 2:14**) are surely not ogling a marriage document with a view to tearing it up!

6.4.5.3. On a certain occasion the Pharisees brought a woman to Christ who had been caught “in adultery” (**John 8:4**). In the Greek text, the term is *moicheuomene*, a present tense participle. She was in the process of committing adultery when apprehended; the writer even emphasizes that she was “in the very act.” What was the act? Was she merely shredding a marriage license? Was she slamming the door as she abandoned her home? Can one really miss the meaning of “adultery” in this context?

6.4.5.4. The writer of the book of Hebrews admonishes Christians to “let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (**Heb. 13:4**). Exactly how does an adulterer “defile the bed?” Do they defile the bed by ripping up their marriage certificate? Let the Bible answer this question. According to the Old Testament text, Reuben, the son of Jacob, “went

up to [his] father's bed; then defiled it" (**Gen. 49:4**). What was his sin? He "lay with Bilhah his father's concubine" (**Gen. 35:22**). There is no question but that "adultery" has a sexual import in **Hebrews 13:4**. See also the connection between "bed" and "adultery" in **Revelation 2:22**

#### 6.4.6. Is Covenant Breaking Adultery?

6.4.6.1. The term "covenant breaking" is used to describe when one secures a divorce by putting away one's spouse for any cause or when a couple mutually agree to end their marriage by way of divorce, they break the marriage covenant. According to this **false doctrine**, the couple sins when they break the covenant or marriage contract (divorce).

6.4.6.2. This **false doctrine** further states that ones repentance consists of saying, "I'm sorry that I broke the covenant or contract."

6.4.6.3. It is furthered argued that since the contract is now broken, both parties are free from each other, and may marry whomever they wish with God's approval.

6.4.6.4. While it is understood that God did "suffer" (permit) under the Old Law to divorce by giving a writing of divorcement and contract another marriage, did Jesus ever say that such met with God's approval? (**Matt. 19:8**) NO! The new relationship caused by a trivial divorce (without scriptural cause) is not the same as under the Mosaic Law. Jesus called the new relationship adultery.

6.4.6.5. This theory which teaches that covenant breaking releases parties from God's covenant results from a lack of understanding of the nature of biblical covenants.

6.4.6.6. Covenants, which God creates between himself and man, are not bilateral agreements. God initiates the covenants that he makes with men and imposes the terms. (**Deut. 4:13**)

6.4.6.7. Being God's covenant, man is impotent in negotiating its regulations or blocking its restrictive power by way of rejection of the covenant. Regarding marriage, Jesus proves this very point in **Matthew 19:6**.

6.5. The distinction between fornication (porneia) and adultery (moicheia) lies in the fact that adultery is the specific act of illicit, sexual intercourse between a married man and a woman not his wife or between a married woman and a man not her husband.

### 7. Analysis of **I Corinthians 7:1-16**

7.1. Corinth was a city filled with sexual temptations. In fact, sexual intercourse was both an accepted and expected rite of pagan worship. Paul knew that this had become a problem for Christians at Corinth.

#### 7.1.1. **Verses 1-7**. Is marriage itself all right before God?

7.1.1.1. It is right for one to remain single

7.1.1.2. It is right for one to marry within the guidelines established by God.

7.1.1.3. Husbands and wives must be considerate of each other and must be careful not to "defraud" each other

7.1.1.4. Husbands and wives should help each other to avoid temptation

#### 7.1.2. **Verses 8, 9**. Should widowers and widows remain unmarried?

7.1.2.1. If they have self-control, it is good for them to remained unmarried

7.1.2.2. If they do not have self control, let them marry for it is better to marry than to burn with lust

#### 7.1.3. **Verses 10, 11**.

7.1.3.1. Remember our earlier discussion that there is a difference between a civil divorce and a God sanctioned divorce. There are those that believe the word "depart" (*chorizo*) in I Cor. 7:10 means a divorce derived from a civil proceeding. It is possible based on the understanding of the Greek language that this is so. Others contend that it simply means separated. Regardless, there are no grounds given for remarriage.

7.1.3.2. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "A wife is *not to depart* from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is *not to divorce* his wife" (NKJV).

7.1.3.3. "Depart" (v.10) is a translation of the same verb Jesus used in Mt. 19:6: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man *put asunder*" (KJV).

7.1.3.4. The woman who, contrary to the Lord's command, does "depart from" (i.e. divorce) her husband is said to be "*unmarried*" (v.11) — "unmarried" does not describe the status of one "separated."

7.1.3.5. In v.10 Paul said, "Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord"; but in v.12 he said, "But to the rest I, not the Lord, say."

- 7.1.3.6. There is a contrast here in who said what, but no contrast in the inspiration or authority of what is said.
- 7.1.3.7. “In verses 10,11 Paul says (in effect), ‘I am repeating — in a concrete way — the principle about divorce that the Lord (Jesus Christ) set forth in His teaching when He was with the disciples and spoke about divorce among God’s people.’ But in verses 12-16, he says (in effect), ‘Now I am going to deal with a question that did not arise, and, therefore, that Jesus did not mention when He lived among us.
- 7.1.3.8. This is not Paul’s own personal opinion! (**2 Timothy 3:16**)
- 7.1.3.9. The full, authoritative teaching of the Lord on any subject consists not only of the things He personally taught His apostles while He was with them, but also the things that were revealed to them later by the Holy Spirit - **Jn. 16:12-15**. Cf. **14:26; 15:26**.
- 7.1.3.10. **1 Cor. 7:10-13** not only does not allow divorce for any cause, it contains four consecutive statements that *emphatically prohibit* it!
- 7.1.3.10.1. “A wife is not to depart from her husband” (v.10).
- 7.1.3.10.2. “A husband is not to divorce his wife” (v.11).
- 7.1.3.10.3. “Let him not divorce her” (v.12).
- 7.1.3.10.4. “Let her not divorce him” (v.13).
- 7.1.3.11. A strikingly similar construction is in **1 Jn. 2:1**: “My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
- 7.1.3.11.1. Having said that the Christian is not to sin, John then affirms the advocacy of Jesus Christ in cases where, contrary to God’s will, sin is actually committed.
- 7.1.3.11.2. In this kind of statement, John certainly does not give any permission for the Christian to sin.
- 7.1.3.12. Similarly, in **1 Cor. 7:10,11**, Paul “is saying in effect, ‘If (civil divorce) has actually taken place, then certain provisions must be adhered to. Let the breach be healed. Failing that, under no condition may another marriage be undertaken.’ In other words, the parenthesis simply regulates the wrong when it has taken place but does not in the least make legitimate the (civil divorce) itself”
- 7.1.3.13. **1 Cor. 7:10,11** says *nothing about remarriage* on the part of the one who departs his/her mate.
- 7.1.3.14. The prohibition does not just apply if there are plans to remarry — the *divorce* is forbidden, with or without remarriage.
- 7.1.4. **Verses 12, 13**. Should the Christians who is married to a non-Christian leave the non-Christian?
- 7.1.4.1. Paul says that he, himself (as an inspired apostle) is giving the answer – that the Lord (in his public ministry) did not deal specifically with this matter.
- 7.1.4.2. If any brother has an unbelieving wife, and the wife is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her.
- 7.1.4.3. If any woman has an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave him!
- 7.1.5. Verses 14-16. What if the unbelieving companion departs upon his/her own?
- 7.1.5.1. Let them depart
- 7.1.5.2. The brother/sister is not bound to the unbeliever that he must give up Christ in order to hold the unbeliever. The believer has no obligation (and has never had) to yield to pressure to give up his Christianity to preserve his marriage.
- 7.1.5.3. The brother or sister has been called in peace.
- 7.1.5.4. The believer does not know that he/she will be able to save the unbelieving companion.
- 7.2. To fully understand God’s teaching on this subject, we must also understand the Biblical definition of repentance.
- 7.3. What Repentance is not
- 7.3.1. It is not simple regret. It is not just being sorry that one has committed sin
- 7.3.2. It is not the type of sorrow that comes from being caught in sin
- 7.3.3. Paul made clear in **II Corinthians 7:10** that “the sorrow of the world worketh death”
- 7.3.4. It is not internal conviction
- 7.3.5. It is not mere confession of sin

- 7.3.6. It is not asking for forgiveness through prayer
- 7.3.7. It is not simply a reformation of life
- 7.3.8. It is not suddenly beginning to do good works
- 7.3.9. It is not moving away, and starting over life anew
- 7.3.10. It is not simply going down the aisle and making an "if I've sinned" statement.
- 7.3.11. None of these things in and of themselves constitute genuine repentance
- 7.4. We see that God demands repentance (**Acts 17:30 - The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent**), but what does repentance demand?
- 7.5. There are two words used in the New Testament for repent or repentance and it is important we understand the difference.
- 7.6. The first comes from the Greek word *metamelomai* (*met-am-el'-lom-ahee*). It means to have a thought of remorse or regret
  - 7.6.1. Ex. **Mt 27:3** - Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, he repented, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders.
    - 7.6.1.1. Judas regretted his sin, but did not genuinely repent
  - 7.6.2. **2 Cor. 7:8** - For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent (regret), though I did repent (regret) for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.
    - 7.6.2.1. Paul doesn't regret sending them the letter because he knows they needed it sent to them, but he regretted having to send it to them.
- 7.7. The second word comes from the Greek word *metanoeo* (*met-an-o-eh'-o*). It means to "change one's mind which leads to a reformation of life"
  - 7.7.1. **Acts 2:38** - Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins
  - 7.7.2. **Acts 26:20** - but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.
  - 7.7.3. The word repentance here comes from the word repent in the same verse. This is what godly repentance demands.
- 7.8. **II Corinthians 7:8-10** - For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it (repent); though I did regret it (repent). For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.
  - 7.8.1. What kind of sorrow? Not worldly sorrow, it produces death
    - 7.8.1.1. "Worldly sorrow" is a SELFISH kind of sorrow
    - 7.8.1.2. E.g., when one is sorry because HE got caught
    - 7.8.1.3. E.g., when one is sorry because what one did made HIM look bad
    - 7.8.1.4. In "worldly sorrow", one is more concerned about SELF!
- 7.9. Godly sorrow produces repentance
  - 7.9.1. I.e., one is sorry because their actions are sins against a Holy God - **Ps 51:4**
  - 7.9.2. one is sorry for the price GOD must pay to have our sins removed
    - 7.9.2.1. What was that price?
    - 7.9.2.2. Christ death on the cross
  - 7.9.3. In "godly sorrow", one is more concerned with GOD than self!
  - 7.9.4. One must come to a point of viewing sin as a disgusting thing to participate in or do. This is how God views sin.
  - 7.9.5. Remember repent is a change of mind
- 7.10. We can know genuine (true) repentance (v 11)
  - 7.10.1. "diligence" (KJV, carefulness)
    - 7.10.1.1. This can be defined as "earnestness, zeal, sometimes with haste accompanying it"
    - 7.10.1.2. I.e., being quick to do what is right!
    - 7.10.1.3. Examples of conversion in ACTS demonstrate this diligence in that every case described in detail shows people obeying the gospel after just one lesson!

- 7.10.2. "clearing of yourselves"
  - 7.10.2.1. To clear one's self of blame
  - 7.10.2.2. E.g., quick to stop doing what is wrong, if such is the case
  - 7.10.2.3. E.g., quick to respond to the offer of forgiveness when one realizes their guilt
- 7.10.3. "indignation"
  - 7.10.3.1. This involves a sort of anger, or moral outrage
  - 7.10.3.2. I.e., toward the SIN which required the repentance
- 7.10.4. "fear"
  - 7.10.4.1. Lest the sin should be repeated
  - 7.10.4.2. Lest the sin should not be entirely removed
- 7.10.5. "vehement desire"
  - 7.10.5.1. I.e., a fervent wish
  - 7.10.5.2. Especially to be right in God's eyes
- 7.10.6. "zeal"
  - 7.10.6.1. This involves an "eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something"
  - 7.10.6.2. In this case, to turn from sin and turn to God
- 7.10.7. "vindication" (KJV, revenge)
  - 7.10.7.1. As the NIV puts it, "what readiness to see justice done"
  - 7.10.7.2. I.e., to do the right thing!
- 7.11. Genuine Repentance leads to a change of conduct or reformation of Life
  - 7.11.1. Some change of life can come upon someone without repentance.
    - 7.11.1.1. Murder etc
  - 7.11.2. Genuine repentance (as enjoined in the gospel of Christ), when coupled with knowledge of the will of God, always results in the correct reformation of life.
  - 7.11.3. This means you cease sinful practices (fornication, drunkenness, lying etc.)
    - 7.11.3.1. Paul, in **I Cor. 6:9-11** mentions those who WERE (past tense) living in sin - Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.
    - 7.11.3.2. Does anyone seriously believe for one moment that they continued in those sins after baptism with God's approval?
  - 7.11.4. Repentance requires restitution.
    - 7.11.4.1. People constantly ask if "repentance" results in restitution. Let us observe the following:
    - 7.11.4.2. In the Old Testament God required that recompense be made to the injured party, and a fifth part added to it, etc. (**Leviticus 6:1-7**)
    - 7.11.4.3. Christ approved of what Zacchaeus said in **Luke 19:3-9** - And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature. And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, Today is salvation come to this house
    - 7.11.4.4. Restitution, where possible, is certainly involved in the Biblical doctrine of repentance
- 7.12. This means you get out of sinful relationships
  - 7.12.1. This means marriages that are **NOT** authorized by God
  - 7.12.2. We can easily see and agree that a person who steals a car, watch or money makes restitution, to the best of their abilities, to truly repent.
  - 7.12.3. Why can't we see that the same applies in unscriptural marriages?
  - 7.12.4. Some suggest that baptism washes away their former adulterous relationship and allows them to continue together after baptism
  - 7.12.5. Some questions need to be asked of those who feel baptism or repentance (if one is already a Christian) makes an adulterous marriage holy

- 7.12.5.1. Could a polygamist continue with five wives after baptism or repentance with God's approval
- 7.12.5.2. Could an idolater continue in idolatry after baptism or repentance with God's approval
- 7.12.5.3. Could homosexuals continue in "marriage" after baptism or repentance with God's approval?
- 7.12.6. Can anyone honestly suggest that baptism or prayer (if already a Christian) sanctions as holy that which prior to baptism or prayer was unholy? Can anyone name one thing that is sinful before baptism, but which after baptism is not sinful?
- 7.12.7. Baptism or prayer is not some kind of magic that performs marriage ceremonies for adulterers.
- 7.13. Even true repentance requires us to suffer the earthly consequences of our sin, but it brings us back into the right state with God.
  - 7.13.1. Jail time, celibacy
- 7.14. We still have to abide God's commands

Brother Tom Warren stated correctly when he said there are only three classifications of people qualified to marry:

- 1) The person who has never been married
- 2) The person who is a widow/widower
- 3) The person whose spouse committed fornication and was put away (divorced) for that reason.

The teaching of **Matthew 19:9**, and **Matthew 5:32** is plain.