

# The Gospel Truth

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE  
MISSION FIELD WORLDWIDE.

## THE COURAGE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

*(Illustrative account taken from Mark 6:17-28 KJV.)*

Raucous laughter filled the grand hall as Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, feasted with his governors, military chiefs and nobles. The banquet was in honor of Herod's birthday. Alcohol flowed freely as he was toasted and cheered as a great leader. Salome, the daughter of his wife Herodias, began to dance before the men, pleasing them with her beauty and enticement.

In the exaltation and pride of the moment, Herod called her to him. "Ask me for whatever you want, and I will give you up to half of my kingdom."

Pondering her good fortune, Salome slipped out to consult with her mother. Herodias had left her first husband, Herod Philip, to live with his half-brother, Herod Antipas. She thought about this as she considered her daughter's request. Antipas had come to visit his brother and had fallen in love with her. He persuaded Herodias to leave her husband to come away with him. She consented to marry him if he

would forsake his own wife. In pursuit of love, ambition, and pleasure, they both divorced their companions for one another.



*"It is not lawful for thee  
to have thy brother's wife."*

With anger, Herodias thought about the holy man they called John the Baptist. She had coerced Herod to throw him in prison. The multitudes were being stirred by his preaching and

even Herod listened to him with gladness. This so-called prophet of God had told Herod and the people, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife."

With decision, Herodias ordered Salome to make haste and ask for the head of John the Baptist on a charger. Herod was sorrowful but he had made a public oath. Immediately, he had the executioner behead John in prison and delivered the head to Salome and Herodias.

John the Baptist, forerunner of Jesus Christ, lost his life because of his courage to proclaim the whole truth, irrespective of consequence. While other spiritual leaders were careful not to offend the leaders, John obeyed God and shared the uncompromising gospel.

The Jewish historian Josephus states: "Herodias took upon her to confound the laws of our country, and divorce herself from her husband while he was alive, and was married to Herod [Antipas], her husband's brother by the father's side" (*Antiquities* 18.136.5).

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# WHAT THE BIBLE Teaches About...

## **Word of God**

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

## **Relationship of Love**

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

## **Repentance**

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

## **New Birth**

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;

Eph. 2:1, 5-6

## **Freedom From Sin**

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

## **Infilling of the Holy Spirit**

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

## **Holiness**

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;

Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

## **Kingdom of God**

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

## **The Church**

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

## **Unity**

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

## **Ordinances**

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;

1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

## **Divine Healing**

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

## **Sanctity of Marriage**

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;

1 Cor. 7:10-11

## **Outward Appearance**

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

## **End of Time**

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Matt 25:31-46

## **Pacifism**

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

## **Worship**

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

## **Great Commission**

Mark 16:15

(Continued from page 1)

Herod and Herodias were in violation of the Jewish/Mosaic Law for multiple offences. It would have been easier for the man of God to ignore the prevalent sinfulness, but God had commissioned him to prepare the way of the Lord.

Society today is full of wickedness and spiritual darkness. Mankind is now living in the dispensation of grace and truth where Jesus has restored the sanctity and purity of marriage between one man and one woman for life. Godly marriage is a wonderful institution of God, but the political and social norms are moving further and further away from God's express plan for marriage. "Divorce and remarriage" is contrary to the principles of marriage itself and are in clear violation of God's law in the New Testament.

Many professing Christians have adulterous marriages which are excused and even condoned by many churches. Truth on this subject might offend the unrepentant, but it will set the captive free and provide caution and safety for those considering marriage. Compromise comes where there is silence for fear of offending.

Where are the John the Baptists of this time?

—mws

## THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Gospel Truth periodical is published in the name of the Lord for all people of all lands in the interest of establishing and encouraging them in the truth of God's Word. This publication teaches and promotes the truths of the Bible that have been established since the time of Christ and the apostles.

The Word of God is the singular, acceptable rule of faith. It teaches salvation and deliverance from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ; a subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct and empower; practical holiness in every area of life; and the unity and oneness of God's people. Acceptable service to God is through a personal relationship of love founded in truth. Special thanks to Patrice Doolittle for photography and artwork contributions for this issue.

Editors: Michael & René Smith

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# Editorial



*For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away...*  
—Malachi 2:16

It grieved God when, after He nurtured and cared for His people Israel, they still turned their back on Him and committed spiritual adultery by following after other gods. God created mankind for there to be oneness and unity, but in his sinfulness, man has brought brokenness and pain. God hates “putting away” and divorce, for He understands the consequences of such action.

The burden this quarter is on the subject of divorce and remarriage. Unless otherwise qualified, “Divorce and Remarriage” is referred to in this paper as a singular phrase. As on many subjects, I am limited in this publication and unable to adequately address some of the finer points in the scripture and every situation concerning the subject. My prayer is that the Lord will bless the reading of this paper and give proper understanding to a doctrine that is vital in our world today.

Divorce and remarriage is rampant not only amongst ungodly people but also amongst professing Christians. Jesus teaches clearly that divorce and remarriage is outside of God’s will. People have twisted the scriptures to try and find loop holes to allow marriage while there is a living companion. I heard of one minister of another Church of God fellowship who testified after divorcing his wife: “The Lord told me I did not have to live single.” The Holy Spirit will never lead us contrary to the Word of God.

Divorce and remarriage is a destructive force in families. Children are paying the price for their parents’ selfishness and sin. God intended for children to have both Dad and Mom living together. People seem to want the easy way out in our world. If something is worth having, it takes energy and effort. Nothing can substitute for a godly, fulfilling marriage, but it takes sacrifice. Remarriage is not the answer for a troubled marriage. It is time to get down to business with God and seek for greater grace, love, and forgiveness.

All of our lives have been touched by divorce and remarriage. It is imperative we do not allow its prevalence to stop us from declaring the whole counsel of God. As previously mentioned, it is silence that brings compromise.

I urge every parent, Sunday school teacher, and minister to teach the children and young people these important truths. Marriage is for life and cannot be thrown out as easily as the devil tries to make it seem. God has a wonderful plan for marriage. Do it God’s way!

Michael W. Smith

October 2015



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## Keys to a Happy Marriage

Love  
Listen  
Give  
Honor  
Forgive  
Accept  
Sacrifice  
Pray  
Encourage  
Trust  
Respect  
Support

# BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

## SUBJECT: DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

**Scripture Reading:** *Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery. —Luke 16:18*

### Summary:

Marriage, from the beginning, was a lifetime union between one man and one woman. This union was polluted with polygamy and divorce and remarriage. Jesus restored the sanctity of marriage. Remarriage while the first spouse is living is adultery.

### I. In the Beginning

- A. Gen 2:18 God created an help meet for Adam.
- B. Genesis 2:23-25 Union of one man and one woman.

### II. Homosexuality Forbidden

- A. Leviticus 20:13 An abomination.
- B. Romans 1:26-32 Reprobate mind.
- C. I Corinthians 6:9 Will not inherit the kingdom of God.

### III. Law of Moses

- A. Exodus 20:14 God forbids adultery.
- B. Deuteronomy 22:22-29 Punishment of death for adultery.
- C. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 Moses permitted divorce.
- D. Mark 10:2-5 Due to hardness of heart.

### IV. Law of Christ

- A. Mark 10:2-12
  - 1. Vss. 6-7 Marriage is between a man and woman; Divorce forbidden from the beginning.
  - 2. Vss. 8-9 Marriage union not to be broken.

3. Vss. 10-12 Divorce and remarriage is adultery.

- B. Luke 16:18 Whosoever marries a divorcee commits adultery.
- C. Matthew 5:31-32 For the cause of fornication.

### V. Condition for Remarriage

- A. Romans 7:1-3 Death releases marriage bond. Remarriage is adultery except for widows/widowers.
- B. I Corinthians 7:10-11 If separated, remain unmarried.
- C. I Corinthians 7:39 Death frees; marry in the Lord.

### VI. Judgment Against Adultery

- A. Hebrews 13:4 God will judge.
- B. Galatians 5:19-21 Works of the flesh.
- C. I Corinthians 6:9 Will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- D. Revelation 21:8 Will have part in the lake of fire.
- E. John 8:3-11 Go and sin no more.

### Conclusion:

*Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. —Hebrews 13:4*

# Divorce & Remarriage

**In the beginning of time, God created man. He saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so He created a woman to be his help meet (Genesis 2:18). Thus began the institution of marriage. It was created and ordained of God. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24).**

The marriage union is the closest of all human relationships and is second only to the relationship with God Himself. Marriage was instituted by the Creator; His plan was for marriage to be a lifelong, committed union between a man and a woman. Physical intimacy is a gift that belongs exclusively within the covenant of marriage. The devil has fought the sanctity of marriage and has worked to destroy the family unit. The world has polluted, compromised, and redefined marriage. This in no way changes the reality of God’s truth on the subject.

## **MARRIAGE—ONE MAN, ONE WOMAN**

Godly marriage is between a man and a woman. Homosexual marriage is a perversion of marriage and is an abomination to God. The Word of God forbids homosexuality (Leviticus 20:13, Romans 1:26-32) and states that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9).

## **MOSES’ LAW**

Under the Law of Moses, if a newly married wife was discovered by her husband not to be a virgin, she was to be stoned. If she was falsely accused by her husband, he had to accept her as his wife and he could “not put her away all

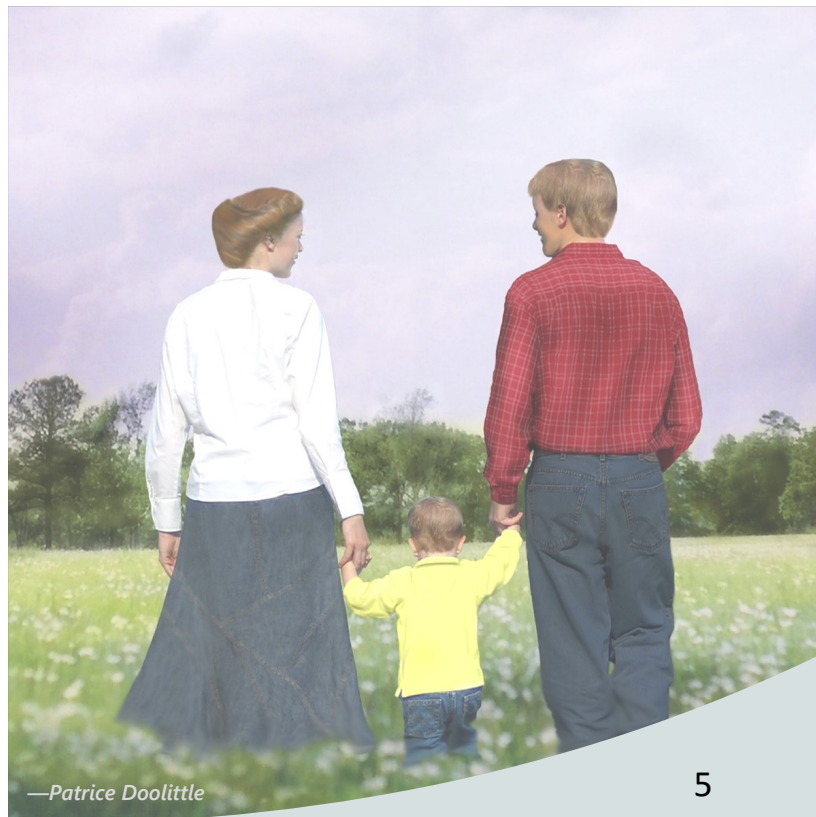
his days” (Deuteronomy 22:19). If two unmarried people committed consensual fornication, the man was obligated to marry the woman and likewise could never put her away (Deuteronomy 22:29).

The Mosaic Law expressly stated: “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14). If a married man or woman was caught committing a sexual sin with another, the penalty was death by stoning (or strangulation), for God did not want evil within Israel (Deuteronomy 22:22-29). The innocent companion was then free to remarry because the spouse was dead.

## **DIVORCE PERMITTED UNDER MOSES**

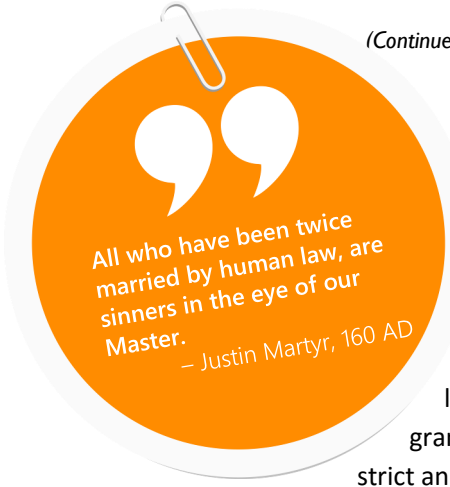
“At a later time, and when, owing to Gentile example, the marriage tie became a looser bond of union, public feeling in regard to adultery changed, and the penalty of death was seldom or never inflicted” (*Smith’s Bible Dictionary, Adultery*). Hence, divorce and remarriage became prevalent. Moses gave allowance for divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1-2 which reads: “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.”

*(Continued on page 6)*



—Patrice Doolittle

(Continued from page 5)



All who have been twice married by human law, are sinners in the eye of our Master.  
— Justin Martyr, 160 AD

### CONTROVERSY OVER JEWISH LAW

God’s law clearly stated that people found in adultery were to be put to death, but later Moses made provision for a bill of divorcement when there was uncleanness. There was much controversy among the Jewish scholars during the time of Christ with regard to the grounds and legality of divorcement under this precept. The debate centered on the interpretation of the word “uncleanness” which would allow for a divorce. Suffice it to say, many of the Jews were very loose in their interpretation of this law of divorcement. Some of the rabbis would grant a divorce when the husband or wife had committed adultery. Others were less strict and gave a husband a divorce if his wife “found no favor” in his eyes. A man could get a divorce if his wife burned the food or kept an untidy house.

### THE LAW OF CHRIST

The Pharisees came to Christ attempting to draw him into the debate. “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?” (Mark 10:2). They were asking about the Mosaic Law, but what Christ began to teach restored the institution of marriage to its intended place in creation. The teaching of Christ raised the standard of marriage and it is the doctrine by which to live today.

Jesus asked them what Moses commanded and they responded: “Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away” (10:3-4). Jesus told them that it was because of the “hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept” (10:5). “But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female....and they twain shall be one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (10:6-10). From the beginning of time, it was forbidden to divorce; but it was through the hardness and sinfulness of men’s hearts that Moses allowed it. Jesus taught here that the marriage union was not to be broken by man. No civil or religious law was to any longer supersede the union of marriage before God. He denied them the right that they sought for under the law.

“A man could get a divorce if his wife burned the food or kept an untidy house.”

[Jewish practice]

### ADULTEROUS UNIONS

Christ’s disciples must have been struggling with this as do many today. They questioned Jesus again about the same matter, so Jesus spoke with even greater clarity. “Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery” (Mark 10:10-12). This scripture could not be clearer. Jesus unambiguously stated that if a man put away his wife and married another woman, that he was committing adultery. This is because the new woman would not truly be his wife and the “marriage” would be an adulterous union.

Jesus further taught in Luke 16:18: “Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband

“Marriage is for life and in the eyes of God it remains thus, regardless of the affairs and unions of man.”

committeth adultery.” Not only is the man committing adultery by remarrying, but his wife, although innocent of any wrong doing, commits adultery if she remarries. Jesus clarified the fact that whoever married a divorced person was also committing adultery. The Lord does not want remarriage on the part of either spouse so that there is opportunity for reconciliation and reunion. Marriage is for life and in the eyes of God it remains thus, regardless of the affairs and unions of man. Jesus restored the lifelong covenant of marriage—a covenant He sanctioned from the beginning.

#### SAVE FOR THE CAUSE OF FORNICATION

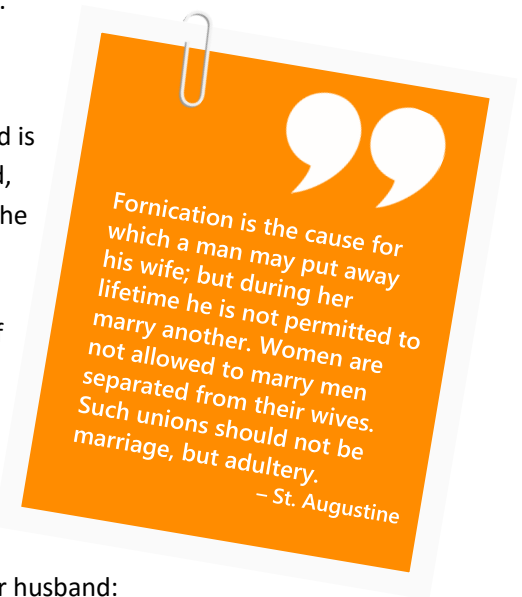
“It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (Matthew 5:31-32). According to Jewish history, the writ of divorcement stated that the divorcee was free to remarry. This was the reason Jesus said that a man “causeth her to commit adultery.” If she was innocent of any wrong doing, the husband would be complicit in her transgression if she remarried. If a husband put his wife away because of a sexual sin (for the cause of fornication) he would not be held liable before God because she was already an adulteress. While Jesus did not condemn a “putting away” because of sexual sin, He left no room for remarriage.

#### ONLY DEATH SEVERS THE MARRIAGE UNION

The apostle Paul expounds upon the issue of remarriage. It is only the death of a spouse which frees someone to remarry. “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” (Romans 7:2-3). This further emphasizes the fact that if someone remarries while they have a living companion, they are in adultery.

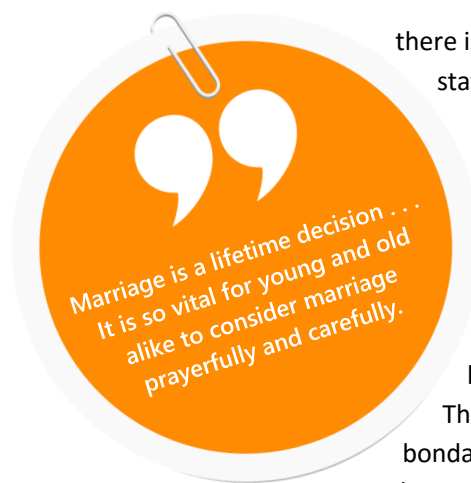
#### IF DIVORCED, REMAIN UNMARRIED

There are very sad and unfortunate situations in which husbands and wives may find themselves single because their married companion has forsaken them to live a life of sin and adultery. “Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife” (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). If situations are severe enough in which spouses find themselves separated, they are to remain unmarried while



(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)



there is a living companion. God has special grace and will divinely help one to live in a state of singleness and holiness through the power of Jesus Christ.

#### **UNSAVED COMPANIONS**

Paul continues to give instruction about dwelling with an unsaved companion. He advises that if a believing wife is living with an unbelieving companion—if he be pleased to dwell in the marriage—not to forsake the marriage. Clearly, if a man is in adultery, that would be an indication that he is not “pleased to dwell” with his wife. If the unbelieving depart, “A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace” (1 Corinthians 7:12-15).

The believer is still under obligation to the union before God but is not “under bondage” or at fault for the behavior or results of the unbeliever’s actions. (See Matthew 5:31-32). This passage in no way frees the innocent party to remarry. Paul concludes the chapter by restating again: “The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 7:39).

#### **DO NOT MARRY AN UNBELIEVER**

It is important to note that whether it is a first or second (lawful) marriage, saved people are to marry other saved people. “Marry in the Lord.” Many have lost their salvation through marrying someone outside of the faith. Child of God, beware, and do not let your affections go out to someone who is not saved.

#### **HOPE FOR THE ADULTERER**

“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4). Adultery is a work of the flesh and “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21).

Jesus died for those in adultery, and there is mercy and forgiveness (John 8:3-11). The Lord loves the adulterer but requires one to forsake adulterous unions. Although there are consequences because of sin, the Holy Spirit can bring the repentant soul into a place of clearness before God.

The New Testament scripture clearly teaches that marriage is an unbreakable bond. Divorce and remarriage is not an option in God’s plan for marriage. Marriage is a lifetime decision; for this reason, it is so vital for young and old alike to consider marriage prayerfully and carefully—for there is only one opportunity. Marriage is honorable and is a blessing when the plan of God is followed.

—mws



# Polygamy Forbidden

It was the practice of many men in the Old Testament to marry more than one wife (polygamy), but the original design of God was for there to be one woman for one man. Christ restored the original plan of marriage in the New Testament.

“Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh” (Matthew 19:4-6).

“Twain” does not mean three or four. It explicitly means two. God created one woman, Eve, for Adam. He did not create a “Martha” to complete the marriage bond. While polygamy is practiced still today in many countries, this is contrary to the plan of God. With just a few words, Christ condemned the practice and restored the beautiful union under grace that was intended from the creation of the world.

Paul, in giving instruction to Timothy, stated, “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife...” (1 Timothy 3:2). Paul was not requiring that a man be married, but he was rather condemning polygamy. A man was not qualified to minister who had more than one wife, for he was to be an example of God’s plan for marriage. ❖

## What about the Children?

When a man or woman has divorced his/her companion and married another, he/she is in a state of adultery. This is also true of people who are in polygamous marriages. It is the devil’s design to entrap people in these situations to hold them back from ever being saved. When people get saved, they are to forsake their sin and live in holiness. These mixed-up marriages cause much confusion and heartache. There are some situations which seem impossible to undo, but there is a Saviour who can give wisdom and untangle these problems. The Holy Spirit will guide into all truth and will never lead contrary to the Word.

Often children are born into adulterous/polygamous marriages. These children are innocent before God and are not guilty of any wrong doing. When a man gives his heart to God and measures to the truth of God’s Word, he will be desirous of his marriage being in accordance with God’s plan. While sin is to be forsaken, this never means for a man not to provide for his children—even if born in an unscriptural union.

Paul said that, “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 Timothy 5:8). A father has a responsibility to see that his children, from whatever marriage, are not only cared for temporally but emotionally etc. They are paying the price of his sin, and it behooves the man to show himself godly in their care and nurture.

What a sad commentary for a man to come home and kick his ‘second wife’ and children destitute into the street, professing that he is now a man of God. He still has responsibilities as a father to his children. Similarly, while dwelling together must cease with the unlawful companion, he has responsibility to see that she is provided for in a godly fashion. It is wise for people in such a condition to seek counsel from men and women of God. ❖



*“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 Timothy 5:8).*



**Question:** Would you please explain Matthew 19:9 which some use to support remarriage in the case of infidelity?

**Answer:** It would be difficult to write on the subject of divorce and remarriage without addressing the passage in Matthew 19:9 which reads: “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.”

The basic law for interpreting scripture is known as “Unanimity of Faith.” This means that there is an agreement and accord between various scriptures and that they do not contradict each other. Scriptures which are difficult to understand will always coincide with more easily understood texts. Hence, doctrine should never be founded on one verse alone but in accord and balance with the rest of the scripture. The Word of God does not conflict with itself.

The scripture is clear that marriage is for life. While there may be separation due to unfaithfulness to the marriage vows, marriage for any reason while a former spouse is still living constitutes adultery before God. The texts in Matthew 5:32, Luke 16:18, Mark 10:11-12, and 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, 39 are all clear on this subject. Hence, Matthew 19:9 must be interpreted in the light of that foundation.

The following passage is from the writings of Bro. Ostis Wilson on the subject:

My understanding of this text is that it contains two parts. The Pharisees had asked Jesus if it were lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause (verse 3). This was the full extent of their question. They never asked anything about marrying another spouse after this one was put away. That was no question with them since that was common practice among them, and divorce and remarriage was allowable under the law. They even had more than one wife and lived with them at the same time (polygamy).

In the first part of this verse, Jesus answered their question after discussing at some length God’s original purpose and arrangement for marriage by saying that the only cause for which a man could put away his wife was for fornication. This relates to Matthew 5:32 where the same thing is stated and confirms the fact that a person has the right to put away a spouse for this cause; because it is backed up by two witnesses and, according to God’s Word, every word is established by two witnesses (Matthew 18:16 and John 8:17). Wife “putting away” is all that is under consideration up to this point. Then after He had answered their question, He went ahead and introduced His own New Testament doctrine—that if one marries another after that one is put away, he commits adultery. This, no doubt, shocked the Pharisees and it is certain it shocked

“The basic law for interpreting scripture is known as ‘Unanimity of Faith.’ The Word of God does not conflict with itself.”



Jesus' disciples by their response to that statement: "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry" (Matthew 19:10). It is evident these chosen men understood from what He said that marriage was a binding thing, and if it were that binding and that difficult to get out of, it would just be better to not enter into it.

Therefore, I conclude that according to Matthew 19:9, a man is permitted to put away his wife for the cause of fornication and for no other cause; and that to marry another while that woman is still living is forbidden and to do so is adultery. In Matthew 5:32 Jesus comes out very strongly on this point and says if a man puts away his wife for any cause except fornication, he causes her to commit adultery. In other words, he is a contributor to her delinquency for putting her away from himself when she is a loyal and chaste wife. God would hold him responsible right along with her for having done this thing and exposed her to this condition.

The word "fornication" in the Greek, *porneia*, means harlotry or whoredom. Its meaning is broader in scope than the general use of the word today which refers to sexual relations between two unmarried people. *Porneia* means any sexual sin while adultery refers to a married person committing sexual sins with someone other than his or her own spouse.

Matthew 5:32 and also Matthew 19:9 indicate that there could be cause to separate when sexual sin is involved, but there is no permission given to remarry. Jesus said that "whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." He made no distinction between the woman who was put away for adultery and the innocent woman who was put away. If remarriage was permitted, He would have made that distinction. All of the New Testament scriptures support the fact that marriage is for life, regardless of transgressions of either spouse.

The commentator, Matthew Henry, wrote the following concerning this subject:

The binding nature of marriage does not depend on the will or the acts of the persons but on its primal character and institution. By the repeal of the Mosaic relaxation and the restoration of marriage to its original principle, Christ not only enforces the high dignity of this ordinance, but obviates many opportunities of wickedness, such, for instance, as collusion between husband and wife with a view to obtain freedom for marriage with others.

The *Emphatic Diaglott* translation of the New Testament, which draws from *The Vatican Manuscript*, reads thus: "But I say to you, Whoever dismisses his wife, except on account of whoredom, causes her to commit adultery; and he who marries the divorced woman, commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9).

The accounts on this subject in Mark and Luke are very clear without any ambiguity. It is noteworthy that the book of Matthew was written primarily to the Jewish people who understood their own practices of divorce and remarriage. Jesus addressed the Jews in a way they understood. The gospel of Mark, written more for the Romans, and the gospel of Luke, written more for a gentile audience, contain very clear language when relating the teachings of Christ on the subject of divorce and remarriage. Matthew 19:9 harmonizes with the rest of the scripture—putting away one's wife and marrying another for any cause is contrary to the teaching of Christ. ❖

"The binding nature of marriage does not depend on the will or acts of the persons, but on its primal character and institution."

—Matthew Henry



### DID YOU KNOW?

In the Old Testament, there was a lengthy, legal espousal period for a Jewish couple before they were married. This betrothal was much more binding than the western concept of engagement. If it was discovered that there had been fornication, the espousal could be legally broken with a writ of divorcement. Betrothal was, in Jewish law, as valid as a marriage.

The espoused couple, although they did not live together and the marriage was not yet consummated, was referred to as 'husband' and 'wife' as illustrated by Joseph and Mary in Matthew 1:18-19.



A Word  
In Season

## Tend the Flame

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*The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out. —Leviticus 6:13*

The flame on the altar upon which the sacrifices were made was to never go out. The flame did not burn untended, but it had to be cared for and fed. The wood had to be replenished continually so that the flame would not be extinguished.

Marriage is the same way. God does not want the flame of love to flicker out. For the sacred union of marriage to be preserved, it must be tended. Many marriages have grown cold because couples

have not taken the time to feed the relationship with love and sacrifice.

It is easy for people to become consumed with work and with the cares of life. As ministers, it is also easy to become overcharged with the work of God. It is vital that ministers tend the flame of their marriage. The enemy has traps laid and many a minister has lost his way because of failure to tend the flame.

A strong marriage where the flame is being tended will increase a minister's effectiveness in the gospel work. A minister cannot afford NOT to take time to cultivate the home flame. It will prove a blessing not only to the spouse and family but to the work of God.

Set aside time to spend an evening together. Go on a walk, go out to dinner, play a game... Lay aside the business talk, the church talk, and focus on just being together.

**TEND THE FLAME!** ❖



HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD

—mws

# From the Heart...



SUPPLEMENT TO THE GOSPEL TRUTH, ISSUE 14

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

“If you are in a broken home, know that you are valuable and worthy of love.”

## Unfaithfulness and divorce is a catastrophic force

in the world. Words are inadequate to express the depth of pain that spouses and children experience in life when a father, mother, husband, or wife forsake them. These spouses and children are often left with lifetime struggles because of a sense of betrayal and wrestle with issues of self-worth, rejection, trust, and love. They often take upon themselves the guilt and shame that belong to the offending spouse.

Consider the agony and inner turmoil that a spouse experiences when having to finally make a decision to leave an unfaithful/abusive spouse. Many pillows are wet with tears at night from lonely husbands, wives, and children who long for the stability of a loving family. The future looks dark and hopeless to many spouses and children who are left on their own. The world is full of single dads and moms struggling to hold it all together for the sake of their children—barely surviving financially.

If you are in a broken home, know that you are valuable and worthy of love. There is a friend in Jesus who will walk with you through the storms and uncertainty of life.

Divorce and remarriage not only breaks the union of marriage but has great potential to split extended families, congregations, and other relationships. When people begin to take sides, it is time to stand in truth—love everyone involved without justifying the sin of friends and family.

There are many mixed-up marriages and unions. When someone gets saved and begins to understand God's will for marriage, it can bring inner conflict and confusion, especially when children are involved. What then is God's plan and will? No minister can give someone the grace to leave an adulterous union of many years which may have been entered into while ignorant and unsaved. It takes divine enablement and wisdom to work through these difficult cases.


I remember sitting across from a couple who was in such a situation. The man's wife had left him for a life of sin. He remarried and had more children with a second wife. They then got saved. In tears they asked, "What do we do?" I told them of God's plan of marriage, encouraged them both to draw close to God and assured them the Spirit of the Lord would lead. I told them they were welcome to come to church services and we wanted them there, although I clarified that they could not hold a position of leadership in the congregation. Another man pressured me month after month to endorse his marriage because of some 'exception' of circumstance. I told him that my approval was not what was necessary. He needed to be sure he was clear with God. I am not going to stand as any man's judge, but we will be judged by God and His Word.

I know many wonderful people whose lives have been complicated by unscriptural unions in sinful youth. My heart cries for them. I do not have all of the answers; but I know a God of love, I know His Word, and I know that God will be faithful to every person.

It is important for people in these heartbreaking situations who are seeking for God's will, not to be offended at the ministry for teaching the purity of God's Word on this subject. The Church of God will continue to preach truth. If you are in an adulterous marriage, please know that we will also continue to love you and pray with you that you will find God's grace and strength to walk in light.



Michael W. Smith

"I know a  
God of love,  
I know His word,  
  
and I know God  
will be faithful to  
every person."