

Biblical Marriage - Divorce - Remarriage

1. *Biblical Marriage*

A. *Six conditions for a Biblical marriage*

1. Biblical marriage is to be a lifetime commitment “...*let not man separate*” Matthew 19:6
“*For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives*”. Romans 7:2
Vow says – “For better for worse...till death do us part”

2. Biblical marriage is the union between a man and a woman Mark 10:7

Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh”. Genesis 2:22-24

3. Biblical marriage takes place before witnesses.
“*On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there*”. John 2:1

4. Biblical marriage is consummated “*They shall become one flesh*” Genesis 2:24
Even intimacy outside of marriage is considered a “body” experience. I Corinthians 6:16

5. Biblical marriage is founded on the choice to love.

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, by not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’”. Ephesians 5:22-31

6. Believers are to only marry other believers.
“Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers.” 2 Corinthians 6:14

B. Biblical Marriage Challenges

1. God’s plan for biblical marriage requires leaving and cleaving.
- ◆ Leaving involves both the physical and emotional
 - ◆ Cleaving involves a connected relationship body, soul and spirit
 - ◆ Includes receiving primary emotional support from spouse
 - ◆ Creates a loving caring family unit

“...For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?” Matthew 19:4-6

2. Satan’s destructive plan for biblical marriages is to rob couples of God’s blessing by:
- ◆ Thwarting the will of God
 - ◆ Release a spirit of division
 - ◆ Having people break their vows made to God
 - ◆ Breaking up the family unit.

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy”. John 10:10

3. Ministers give God's blessing at the biblical marriage
- ◆ The minister uses his delegated spiritual authority to ask God to forgive sin by praying over past lives and sins as they begin life together as one flesh.

“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:19

“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” Hebrews 13:4

4. Is God’s understanding of a biblical marriage a covenant, a contract or a vow?
- ◆ A contract can be broken by mutual consent.
 - ◆ A covenant is something that is to be forever bound.
 - ◆ A vow before God is a serious commitment.
 - ◆ When a vow is broken it is a sin – but not unpardonable.

- ◆ Vows are not to be taken casually and when broken need to ask for forgiveness and repent. In certain cases restitution is required (usually in financial situations)

“...Unto to thee shall the vow be performed.” Psalm 65:1

“When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools”.
Ecclesiastes 5:4-5

5. Does God have only one person for you to marry?
 - ◆ How does our free choice effect us for God's will?
 - ◆ What if one of the two says no to God's will?
 - ◆ Does God have an alternate plan?

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
Romans 12:2

Some biblical marriages are supernaturally directed by God while others may involve a personal choice. (eg. Mary & Joseph)

6. Biblical marriage is defined as good.

“It is not good that the man should be alone.” Genesis 2:18
“...better to marry than to burn with passion.” I Corinthians 7:9

7. LGT Wedding Policy
 - ◆ A policy outlining the conditions enabling weddings to be performed in LGT is available through the church office.

Notes on biblical marriage

2. Divorce

A. In Biblical Times

Adulterers were stoned to death so divorce was not based on adultery.

“The man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.” Leviticus 20:10

The surviving spouse was free to remarry.

What were the reasons Moses permitted divorce?

- ◆ Theologians debate this issue with broad and narrow definitions
- ◆ Vary from burning a meal to incompatibility

While the reasons were as diverse as our faces – the root cause for divorce is defined in scripture

“Jesus said to them, ‘Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept’”. Mark 10:5

“They said to Him, ‘Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?’ He said to them, ‘Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so’”.
Matthew 19:7-8 (Mark 10:3)

“for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband...” John 4:18

Exception was for fornication or adultery

- ◆ the innocent party was permitted to remarry

“...whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality and marries another, commits adultery...” Matthew 19:9

God has strong feelings regarding divorce.

“For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence,” Says the Lord of Hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.” Malachi 2:16

Jesus expanded adultery to include lust.

“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matthew 5:28

B. Legal Paper Required

Moses allowed a bill of divorcement

“Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and to dismiss her.” Mark 10:4

“Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever **divorces** his wife, let him give her a certificate of **divorce.**’” Matthew 5:31

Today’s legal separation was not known in Biblical times, so the Bible does not specifically cover this topic. The issue of sin (adultery, fornication) seems to centre around the sexual act with a new partner or spouse.

Since many men had more than one wife (David, Solomon) by the custom of the day, divorce may well have been considered a desperate or vindictive act. Since the divorced wife could not return to her family, few were educated to be able to work and it was not uncommon for them to become prostitutes in order to survive.

Notes on Divorce

3. *Remarriage*

1. Under Old Testament Law

- ◆ Divorced people were permitted to remarry
- ◆ You couldn't remarry your former partner if she had married another and later wanted to return to you

“When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man’s wife, if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for this is an abomination before the Lord, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.” Deut. 24:1-3

2. God’s care of a young widow

Special exception for young widows to marry the brother of their deceased husband.

- ◆ Care for a widow was more important than one man/one woman principle, since typically the brother she would marry would already have a wife
- ◆ God has compassion for the widow
- ◆ Raise up seed (children) by her having a sexual union
- ◆ Older widows were cared for usually by their eldest son

“And Judah said to Onan, ‘Go in to your brother’s wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother’”. Genesis 38:8

“If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband’s brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her.”
Deut. 25:5

“...if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.” Matthew 22:24

3. Are innocent spouses where there has been sexual sin free to remarry?
In some cases wedding ceremonies for divorced people are performed in LGT.

“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” Matthew 19:9

4. Questions to Ponder

God uses remarried people in ministry.

- ◆ God continued to use King David after his moral failures but there were consequences

What about the guilty party where there has been adultery?

- ◆ God will forgive all sin if we ask Him with a repentant heart

Are all sex acts within the new marriage adultery or only the one that breaks the vow?

- ◆ The act that breaks the marriage vow would be adultery
- ◆ Sexual acts within a new marriage would not be adultery
- ◆ If sexual acts within a new marriage are ongoing acts of adultery, would it be possible for a divorced/remarried person to go to heaven?

“whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.” Luke 16:18

In bible times men had more than one wife (not God’s perfect will). How could this now be sin or was it a sin then?

“And he had seven hundred wives , princesses, and three hundred concubines...”
I Kings 11:3

Is it possible to live in a “state of adultery”?

- ◆ Adultery is an act not a state

Is it possible to have a marriage that is good but not perfect?

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
Romans 12:2

- ◆ If this suggests progressive steps then good is not perfect
- ◆ It is good for a man not to live alone
- ◆ Some of life’s circumstances can not be unscrambled

“...It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” Genesis 2:18

5. Biblical qualifications of some church leadership positions refer to marriage

Bishops

“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife...” 1 Timothy 3:2

- ◆ Do bachelors qualify?
- ◆ Would a divorced , remarried person have more than one wife?
- ◆ Is this referring to a person married to two or three women at the same time?

Elders

“If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.” Titus 1:6

Which category would these limitations fall under?

- ◆ Biblical absolute.....issues of heaven or hell (Romans 1)
- ◆ Church community standard.....issues of church standard (Acts 5:24, Acts 16:3)
- ◆ Personal conviction.....issues of personal faith
“...whatever is not from faith is sin.” Romans 14:23
“ Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.” 1 Corinthians 7:27

“Marriage is honourable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” Hebrews 13:4

Deacons

“Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well”. 1 Timothy 3:12

- ◆ Part of a proven life involves how others around us respond to our leadership example

Further Scriptures on Biblical Marriage and Divorce

1. Unconverted spouses

“Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: 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. But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?”

1 Corinthians 7:10-16

2. Gift of celibacy

“His disciples said to Him, ‘If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.’ But He said to them, ‘All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it’”. Matthew 19:10-12

3. Freely giving of our bodies

“Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment. For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that. But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion”. 1 Corinthians 7:1-9

4. Contentment in your present marital state

“Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy. I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress--that it is good for a man to remain as he is: Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you”.
1 Corinthians 7:25-35

5. Sexual sin brings God’s judgement

“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” Hebrews 13:4

6. Is sexual sin different than other sin?

“Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul.” Prov. 6:32