

Concerning Marriage in the Bible

In the following pages we document the Biblical purposes and plan of God, as taught from the Scriptures relating to singleness, marriage, divorce, and re-marriage. For the most part, little commentary is given as most biblical passages are straightforward. However, when needed, a comment is made!

For the purposes of this discussion we need to define a few word uses and two annotations:

Word uses:

Betrothal: a pre-arranged marriage agreement between a man and woman with or without their knowledge and/or consent.

Espousal: a pre-arranged marriage agreement between a man and woman.

Note: The above “Betrothal” and “Espousal” are used interchangeably and are often translated from the same word in the original languages.

Engagement: a set period of time between the espousal and the wedding ceremony.

Wedding: the civil or religious ceremony joining the man and woman together into holy matrimony.

Consummation: the physical union of the man and woman.

Fornication: generally speaking, fornication is viewed as any sexual activity committed by an unmarried person prior to a marriage covenant. However, “fornication” (GK. Porneia) is used within a broad spectrum of activities describing illicit sexual activity ranging from bestiality to rape and prostitution. Fornication is not adultery unless voluntarily engaged in by a married person.

Adultery: voluntary and participatory sexual activity, “fornication” (GK. Porneia), either mentally or physically, where one or both of those involved is married to another person; thus violating the marriage covenant.

Rape/Molestation: sexual activity, “fornication” (GK. Porneia), where one party is involuntary.

Marriage: the God-ordained covenant union of one man and one woman into holy matrimony.

Polygamy: a marital union of one man with more than one woman. This definition is necessary to show that in the Old Testament polygamy was not considered sexually immoral, since it constituted a recognized marital state; though it is generally shown to be inexpedient.

Divorce: the ending of a marriage covenant while both parties are still living.

Annotations:

Scriptures marked “NT” are from the New Testament. Those marked “OT” are taken from the Old Covenant. Also please note that those in the New Testament but communicated during the Old Covenant dispensation are marked “OT.”

1. Marriage

Marriage is the God ordained covenant union of one man and one woman into holy matrimony.

The purpose of marriage is the God-ordained plan for procreation and family development. God uniquely made man from the dust of the earth and woman from the man. In the plan of God we learn that it is not good for man to be alone. Therefore God made the woman to be the compatible companion for him. The two persons—male and female—being joined together as one before God, provide the complimentary unity of the man and woman; enhancing human fulfillment, and the necessary procreative biological design needed for family development.

Marriage and its associated human sexuality is God's designed method for procreation. The term "matrimony" derived its meaning and origin in the Latin, and is in effect, "the making of a mother." Therefore, marriage is God's design for the unity and fulfillment of a man's relationship with one woman for the purpose of procreative family development.

Human sexuality is designed for procreation. It is not intended simply as a pleasurable exercise for human satisfaction. Sexual pleasure is designed by God to encourage sexual activity for God's purposes in procreation. Although this is not the only benefit, it is its fundamental purpose.

Sexual activity is limited to the marriage union. It is not a recreational activity and is not intended to be engaged in with anyone other than the spouse of the married person. Sex for pleasure has been the downfall of mankind and civilizations from the earliest history.

It is commonly believed that sex is designed for fun and intended solely for that purpose. Therefore, sexual activity has been perverted into many forms unintended by our Creator. Homosexuality, bestiality, and self gratification, et al. are the result of this mindset. This is proven true by the simple fact that procreation cannot occur while engaging in the activities named above.

Masturbation and birth control within the marriage covenant are not directly condemned in Scripture. For this reason the topic is not directly addressed within these pages. However, it is my belief that masturbatory habits are self-focused and train the mind to see sexuality (as stated above) in a context unintended by our Creator. Furthermore, sexual activity between a husband and wife should be spouse centered—not self-centered or self-gratifying in focus. This fact does not discount the mutually gratifying aspects of sexual activity as intended by God.

Please note: It is not my intention to suggest that sexual activity should be limited to procreation. Intimacy within a Biblically ordained marriage is healthy and encouraged.

2. Marriage: Symbolic of the Relationship Christ has with His Church

NT

Ephesians 5:25-33, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

Old Testament passages (Jeremiah 3, Ezekiel 16, Hosea 1-3, et al.) likewise picture the relationship of God with the nation and people of Israel.

Note:

For the purposes of this discussion I choose to add some insight into our relationship with Christ. He is the bridegroom of the Church.

According to Paul the Apostle, we are betrothed/espoused to Christ.

NT

2 Corinthians 11:2 NKJV, “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

Christ has affirmed our espousal and has accepted us as His bride.

NT

Ephesians 5:25–27 NKJV, “...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, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

He did this even though He foreknew our fleshly “fornicating” past.

NT

Ephesians 2:1–10 NKJV, “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Therefore, we are presently married to Christ and He cannot “put us away.” We also know that the only way for one person to be free from another person once a marriage union has begun, is if one or the other person in the relationship should die. This simply also cannot occur! Therefore we are forever married to Christ.

OT

John 10:28 NKJV Jesus said, “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”

This means that those He has given eternal life cannot die and no one can take us from His hand!

NT

Romans 6:3–11 NKJV, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Therefore, we know that though we were dead in trespasses and sin, He made us alive together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses; and that Jesus Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more, and death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. He can never die again! Therefore we are forever married to Christ! Praise the Lord!

As you will see later in these pages, the Jewish model of betrothal/espousal, wedding, and consummation, shows that espousal was the beginning of a formal wedding process. A divorce was needed to stop the process—even though the wedding and consummation had not yet occurred.

3. Marriage is intended to be Lifelong and Permanent

OT

Matthew 19:3-6, “The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?’ And He answered and said to them, ‘Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning “made them male and female,” ‘and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh?” ‘So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.’ ”

It is not necessary to discuss the condemnation of same sex marriage in the Bible. It is clearly communicated here in the above passage. “He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female.’ ”

NT

1 Corinthians 7:10, “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband.”

NT

1 Corinthians 7:39, “The wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”

In the passage above Paul says, “The wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives.” The context is a discussion on singleness and marriage. Paul adds the statement concerning the law and marriage to make the point that re-marriage after the death of a spouse is not sin. Paul is the premier

New Testament teacher of the believer's freedom. He taught that the law has been abolished in Christ. He said that Jesus has "...abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances...through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity," (Ephesians 2:15–16 NKJV). In Colossians he wrote that God has "...wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross," (Colossians 2:14 NKJV). Therefore it seems that Paul was giving the generally known principle of marriage and divorce as communicated in the law. We can see that Paul is not saying that the law is still in force, but is saying that it is known by those who know and understand the law that those whose spouse has died are free to re-marry.

4. Adultery

OT

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

OT

Mark 10:11-12, "And He said to them, whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

From a strictly Biblical perspective, adultery is voluntary sexual activity, either mentally or physically, where at least one of those involved is married and the other participant is not that person's spouse.

Divorce itself is not considered adultery in the Bible. However, remarriage according to Scripture causes the adultery. This is the result of sexual activity with a person other than the one to whom the formerly married person was earlier married.

In the truest definition of the word, divorce is not adultery. However, technically a marriage that ends in divorce is "adulterated."

5. Is Adultery Grounds for Divorce?

No! There are no New Testament passages that suggest adultery is a reason for divorce. The only allowance for divorce in the New Testament is fornication and the unrepentant departure of an unbelieving spouse.

Under Old Covenant law adultery was punishable by death, therefore divorce was unnecessary. Furthermore, the living party was then free to re-marry without causing another adulterous occurrence.

6. Divorce

Divorce is the ending of a marriage covenant when both partners are still living.

Divorce is always the result of selfishness, a lack of repentance, and/or un-forgiveness on the part of at least one of the persons in the marriage union.

7. God Hates Divorce

OT

Malachi 2:16, “ ‘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.’ ”

8. Biblical Allowance for Divorce

A. Fornication

OT

Matthew 5:32, “I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality [fornication] causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery,” (PP Matthew 19:9 NKJV).

This passage requires some insight as it relates to a Jewish model and worldview under the Old Covenant, as opposed to our Western methods and view in the Church Age.

In the Jewish world, a pattern of betrothal, espousal, wedding, and consummation occurred. This was the case with Mary and Joseph.

In the Scriptures we understand that Joseph was espoused to Mary when he discovered she was pregnant with Jesus. For this reason Joseph intended to “put her away privately.” Effectively, the “putting away” reference herein would have been caused by her infidelity (fornication) and thus a justifiable cause for the “divorce.” However, as we all understand, Mary was not unfaithful but was impregnated by the Holy Spirit.

Likewise, the act of fornication stated in the Matthew 5 and 19 passages would refer to an infidelity that had occurred prior to the wedding and consummation of husband and wife. Otherwise the “fornication” would not be “fornication” but would be adultery. Adultery could only occur after the wedding and consummation.

In the Jewish model of betrothal, espousal, wedding, and consummation, espousal was the beginning of a formal wedding process. A divorce was needed to stop the process – even though the wedding and consummation had not yet occurred. In the case of Joseph and Mary the divorce would have occurred during the espousal period. However, in this case, as we know very well, the Lord instructed Joseph to keep her as wife for she was pregnant by miraculous conception and was still a virgin.

Jesus allowance for a “divorce” in Matthew 5 and 19 was only concessionary – not mandatory. Furthermore, He told the Pharisee’s that the hardness of their hearts allowed for the concessionary divorcement among the Jewish people—not a declaration of the will or plan of God.

Additionally, we learn from the passage above that any divorce, other than for the cause of fornication, would place the responsibility for divorce and its resulting consequences on the man. From this we see that God holds the man divorcing his wife “for any reason” other than fornication, responsible for any resulting future adultery. Therefore the weightiness of the harmful resulting consequences suffered by the woman is on the shoulders of the man who divorced her.

Therefore we see that a man divorcing his wife, even because of fornication, exposes the woman to harm. Therefore we can see that divorce (even as the result of fornication) is self-protective. The alternative unselfish act would be that the husband maintain his role and protect the wife even if guilty

of fornication. This removes the possibility of the woman facing future humiliation and negative consequential action.

This selfless act of redemption is modeled by Christ. He has accepted us by His grace knowing that we were unclean and “fornicating” prior to our espousal/betrothal to Him.

Therefore, the passage does not give blessing for divorce, but suggests that in the case of fornication a divorce *may* occur.

It should be mentioned that there are occasions where the responsibility for divorce and the potential consequences of adultery rest on the woman. In Mark 10:12 we read, “And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.” (NKJV) This is unmentioned in Matthew as there was no provision allowing a woman to divorce her husband in Jewish law. Mark records the notation because his book was written and circulated among the Gentile populations where women were permitted to divorce their husbands. Divorce is not mentioned in John’s Gospel.

Finally, these passages, as with other Gospel passages, were Jewish in nature, part of Old Covenant teaching and dispensation, and must be viewed as such.

B. If an Unbelieving Spouse Departs

NT

1 Corinthians 7:12-15, “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him... But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.”

The passage above tells us that if a believer’s unbelieving spouse “departs,” the believer is free, i.e. “not under bondage in such cases.” This is the only Church Age allowance for divorce.

The question of a person’s faith is brought into view in this case. Many profess faith in Christ yet are nonetheless “unbelievers.” On the other hand, many genuinely born again believers are or have been disobedient. Only God knows those who are His and therefore we cannot make the decision concerning the genuineness of another’s person’s faith and or eternal salvation.

When a professing believer departs from their spouse, against the will and or participation of that spouse, we are left with the question of whether the person departing is one of a professing or genuine faith. To this we suggest that if an error in judgment might occur, we would error on the side of grace by allowing freedom to the one abandoned. However, we suggest waiting on the Lord for the possible restoration of the marriage until at least such a time as the former spouse dies or re-marries.

This concession is based on two items:

- 1) A failure to fully know the genuineness of a person’s faith.
- 2) A lack of repentance on the part of the offender.

Because many churches have not condemned divorce, and have likewise failed to make it a matter of church discipline, and/or because many churches do not practice church discipline, we are left with a “failure of determination” about those who are genuine believers and those who are not!

According to the Matthew 18:15-17 regarding church discipline protocol, those who refuse to obey the Word, as administrated by Church leadership, are to be treated as unbelievers. This does not suggest that the one(s) under church discipline are damned to hell, or have “lost their salvation,” but as Jesus puts it, “...let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” Matthew 18:17b (NKJV) Therefore, the one “departing” is classified as an unbeliever.

“No longer under bondage” means that the one abandoned is no longer “bound” to the marriage covenant. Therefore, a believing person who is divorced against their will, and/or abandoned by their spouse should be allowed freedom to re-marry, even in the case of the former spouse’s continued life. The abandoned spouse is “no longer under bondage” but should be at peace.

C. Forgiveness and Restoration in the Old Covenant and in the Church Age

One might ask: “During the Old Covenant, could a Jewish person or a Christian now in the Church Age forgive a spouse who has committed acts of fornication or adultery and therefore marry or remain married?” The answer is simple; yes! Particularly among Christians today! We are the recipients of grace and are likewise called to exercise grace toward others.

OT

Matthew 18:24-35, "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

Although this passage is addressed to Jews under the Old Covenant, and as such needs Church Age explanation, the message of forgiveness, and God’s desire that we forgive, is communicated beautifully. Believers are called to forgive. Married persons who have been wronged are called to forgive and remain married. Choose to forgive and seek restoration. Furthermore, as we have already seen, God made clear that a man’s relationship to his bride should be handled as Christ handles His Church.

Christ does not and will never forsake His bride. He said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you,” (Hebrews 13:5 NKJV).

9. Is Divorce the Unpardonable Sin?

No. However, this does not make divorce acceptable and is not a license to divorce. No sin in the life of a believer is unpardonable – and I would add, nor is it unpardoned. Christ has forgiven us all trespasses.

10. What if I have already been divorced?

It is our desire that all persons for whom Christ died understand and know the peace that comes as the result of forgiveness.

NT

Romans 3:21–26 (NKJV), “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

NT

Hebrews 1:3 (NKJV), “Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

11. The Biblical Ending of a Marriage

Death

NT

Romans 7:1-4, “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, 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. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

This passage was used to illustrate our liberation from the law and is to be understood in that context. (See Item 3, Note)

NT

1 Corinthians 7:39, “The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”

This passage was used to show that remarriage is acceptable after the death of a spouse. (See Item 3, Note)

In the Old Covenant, heterosexual adultery, homosexual adultery, homosexuality, bestial adultery, and bestiality were all sins punishable by death. Therefore, those who committed these acts were put

to death. As a result, those who were once married to a person who committed any of these sins would be free to be married to a person of the opposite sex.

12. The Ending of a Marriage among Christians who's Spouse has not Died

The ending of a Christian's marriage is always the result of either a lack of repentance, or a lack of forgiveness, and is sin.

However, as stated above, "In the Old Covenant, heterosexual adultery, homosexual adultery, homosexuality, bestial adultery, and bestiality were all sins punishable by death. Therefore, those who committed these acts were put to death." As a result, those who were once married to a person who committed any of these sins were freed from the marriage covenant.

In the Church Age the protocol for restoration or discipline should be followed.
(See Item 8, B. Above)

13. Concerning One Believer Divorcing the Other Without the Desire and/or Agreement of the Other

(See Item 8, B. Above)

14. Separation

Advice on Concessionary Separation

a. Illegal Activity

Illegal activity may result in the possibility of arrest, spousal arrest, and the possibility of endangering children.

b. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may result in loss of life or life functionality.

c. Emotional Abuse

Defining emotional abuse is difficult and requires thorough pastoral evaluation and counsel. This concession is extremely rare. Believers are called to love in and through even the most difficult circumstances. Emotional abuse is not the feeling of being unloved, lacking romance, being no fun, etc. Emotional abuse is treatment that seriously damages or has damaged a person's ability to function.

If separation occurs under these conditions, a believer is called to stand in faith, remain faithful to their spouse and marriage vows, and wait on the Lord for restoration.

NT

1 Corinthians 7:10-11, "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, 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."

NT

1 Peter 3:1-7 (NKJV)

“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel – rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”

15. Re-Marriage: Biblical Allowance for a Second Marriage

a. Unbeliever has departed (or put away his or her spouse)

NT

1 Corinthians 7:12-15, “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.... But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.”

(See Item 8, B Above)

b. Death of the Spouse

NT

1 Timothy 5:14, “Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”

However, they can only remarry another person of the Christian faith.

NT

2 Corinthians 6:14-15, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?”

Ideally, a Christian whose marriage ends under these conditions should remain unmarried. However, if they remarry they have not sinned.

NT

1 Corinthians 7:7-9, “For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.”

16. Re-Marriage: Biblical Toleration of a Second Marriage

a. Ignorance

Pre-Christian, or a baby Christian without counsel.

b. Repentance

The Christian who was in rebellion and has repented.

c. Irreconcilability

The former spouse has re-married.

There is grace and forgiveness of sins.

NT

1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Those who recognize their sinful condition and need for a Savior are given the opportunity to receive forgiveness of sins.

The word "confess" in the above passage is "homologeō" which means "to acknowledge" and is in the "present subjunctive active tense." This references a continuous present action and speaks as a condition. "Forgive" and "cleanse" are both in the "aorist subjunctive active tense." This references a simple undefined action as opposed to continuous or repeated. Thus, those who acknowledge their sinful condition are promised two distinct actions; forgiveness of sins and cleansing from all unrighteousness. As we live acknowledging our sinful needy condition, we live forgiven. Jesus illustrated this in the story on the Pharisee and the Publican.

OT

Luke 18:10-14, "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men; extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.' 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

NT

"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation (one who makes repairs) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world," (1 John 2:1-2).

NT

2 Corinthians 6:21, "For He (God) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

NT

2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

18. The Gospel of Grace

The Bible calls the offer of salvation "the Gospel." It is the "good news" about all God has provided us in Christ Jesus. Our sinfulness is replaced by His righteousness; our lives in exchange for His.

NT

Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

NT

Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

By faith in Christ, alone! We are completely forgiven of all sins and made the righteousness of God in Christ. How righteous? The righteousness of God, by faith alone, in Christ alone!

NT

Colossians 2:10, "And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."

Complete in Him

When Jesus suffered in our place for our sin He forever remedied the problem of sin for those who put their faith in Him.

NT

Hebrews 10:14, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified [set apart unto Him]."

NT

Hebrews 10:17, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

Our dead and sin-laden lives are exchanged for the life of Christ by the indwelling of the Spirit of God. God transforms our very nature and changes us from within. This is the miracle of the new birth. We are, as the Bible puts it, "born again;" "born from above."

Some teach that responding to this "good news" involves making every effort to live a life pleasing to the Lord; "working" and "trying" to please God, make good choices, and refuse the impulses of the flesh. Their focus is in their energy, warring with the devil, fleshly habits and against the lure of the world—always battling with little to no success; always with discouragement. However, they believe that this effort is pleasing to the Lord and He therefore "makes up the difference" for their weakness by an act of His grace. They call this "salvation;" "peace with God." However, it is far from freedom, provides no peace, and is certainly not the true Gospel.

As born again Christians we are instructed to surrender our lives to God. As those born by the Spirit of God, we are made the righteousness of God in Christ. We don't spend our lives "working" and "trying" to please the Lord. We surrender ourselves to His leadership and rest in His holiness. As stated earlier, our human effort to "please the Lord" by "trying harder" is opposed to His grace and power working in us. The Christian is called to enter into the "Sabbath Rest" of a relationship with Jesus. We are called to cease all striving to please the Lord and rest in His great love. We are complete in Him. He will shape us, he will lead us. Our only response is surrender.

NT

Hebrews 4:10, "For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His."

As we mature in Christ we will be changed. We will grow into His likeness and are promised to arrive into His presence; “complete in Him.”

In Christ, we are pleasing to God. We are called to a life of freedom and rest. You are the righteousness of God in Christ. You are complete in Him. Therefore, rest in Him relax in His grace, and let Him change your life.

He that is Born of God

NT

Romans 6:1-2, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”

NT

1 John 3:1-10, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. Whoever commits [goes on willfully practicing] sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He [Jesus] was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not [go on willfully practicing] sin. Whoever sins [in this way*] has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins [in this way*] is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not [go on willfully practicing] sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot [go on willfully practicing] sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.”

**The particular “sin” referred to herein is denial of Jesus as Christ! This does not and cannot refer to “sinning” in the general sense without suggesting that all Christians who “sin” are “of the devil.” We as born again believers are “children of God!” Even still we fall short or at times choose to disobey/sin. This fact does not suggest that the believer has lost or forfeited his or her position in Christ as “children of God.”*

Will God Still Judge the World?

He will. However, there is no future condemnatory judgment for the believer. Jesus has forgiven us all sin; past, present, and future.

OT

John 3:16-21, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But

he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

OT

John 3:36, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Salvation is freely offered to all through the grace of God, by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Sinful man may be made clean and presented complete and holy in the presence of the Lord.

NT

1 Thessalonians 5:9, “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Fellowship with God may be restored and the curse of sin and death totally removed.

Jesus Christ provides, by grace through faith alone, all man lost. We are blessed to receive eternal life in exchange for the death we deserve.

He has provided Himself an offering for sin.

Jesus Christ is God. He came to earth as man and suffered the penalty for sin, making it possible for you and I to escape the wrath to come and receive life and forgiveness of sin.

Therefore, if you have sinned by fornication, adultery, divorce, or re-marriage there is forgiveness. If you have engaged in homosexuality, bestiality, pedophilia, molestation, and rape there is forgiveness of sins.

Trust Christ for the forgiveness only he can offer and allow His life to flow from your inner most being. It is then, by God’s grace, you can “go and sin no more.”

19. The Eternal: Are We Married in Heaven?

No!

OT

Matt. 22:23-30, “The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying, “Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.” Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.”

We are married to Christ... Praise the name of the Lord for His wonderful saving grace.

Paul D. Van Noy, Pastor
Candlelight Christian Fellowship
Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

Bible Verses on Husband and Wife Relations

1 Corinthians 7:1–40 (NKJV)

Principles of Marriage

Sex

“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...”

Divorce

“...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?”

Live as You are Called

“But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches. Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ’s slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called.”

To the Unmarried and Widows

“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. But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away. But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord.

Husbands and Wives

But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please his wife. There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.

But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry. Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well. So then he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better. A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment—and I think I also have the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 11:2–12 (NKJV)

Authority and Togetherness

(Disregard the traditions here on head coverings for our “marriage” purposes)

“Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.”

Ephesians 5:22–33 (NKJV)

Wives

“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 Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.”

Husbands

“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, 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.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

Husbands

“Nevertheless let each one of you [husbands] in particular so love his own wife as himself...

Wives

“...and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

Colossians 3:18–19 (NKJV)

Wives

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

Husbands

“Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.”

Titus 2:1–5 (NKJV)

Husbands

“But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience...”

Wives

“...the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things - that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

1 Peter 3:1–7 (NKJV)

Wives

“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward - arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel - rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.”

Husbands

“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”