

Addendum 1 (Concerning Singleness, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible)

The subject of human sexuality, matrimonial activity, union between believers and non-believers, divorce, the death of a spouse, and remarriage provides territory for many emotions, reactions, and rationalizations. However, emotional and subjective reasoning must give way to conclusive objective truth. This, we have in the Bible.

The Bible provides plenty of insight about singleness, fornication, marriage, adultery, divorce, and remarriage. Nevertheless, discussion and arguments abound. Moreover, across diverse cultures, various traditions are embraced, and over the years some definitions have changed. Presently, there is an effort to redefine how we view the family. However, the Scriptures remain true and consistent.

In an effort to help answer questions, I will document Biblical truth. I trust that through thoughtful contemplation and therefore comprehension the many questions can be addressed.

Little commentary will be given—as most biblical passages are comprehensive and easily understood. However, when needed, a comment will be made!

Definitions

As the result of cultural changes and vocabulary redefinition, I must define words and their uses within these pages. Herein, when possible, we will apply only Biblical definitions. Modern word uses will be defined by traditional values. Redefinitions will be rejected.

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: “Betrothal” and “espousal” are sometimes used interchangeably and are often translated from the same word in the original languages. However, at times it appears that espousal has been used following betrothal. In this case espousal describes the period wherein the betrothed is aware of their coming covenantal marriage ceremony and are in the preparatory period.

Engagement: The modern equivalent of espousal as described above, wherein the future husband and wife are aware of their coming covenantal marriage ceremony and are in the preparatory period.

Wedding: The civil or religious ceremony joining a man and woman together into a holy covenantal marriage.

Marriage: The God-ordained foundational covenant union of one man and one woman as husband and wife.

Matrimony: “Mother-Maker.”

Holy Matrimony: The God-ordained covenant union of one man and one woman whereby consummation and procreation is sanctioned.

Consummation: The physical sexual union of one man and one woman prior to or following a covenant wedding ceremony.

Fornication: Sexual activity committed by an unmarried person. However, “fornication” (Gk. porneia) is used within a broad spectrum of activities describing illicit sexual activity ranging from rape, prostitution, sodomy, homosexuality, bestiality, etc. Activities falling under the definition of 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. Adultery may be viewed as a single act, i.e. “The marriage covenant was adulterated.” “He or she committed adultery.”

Note: I would suggest that one does not “live in a state of adultery.” Adultery is an action not a state of existence. Therefore, one may be classified an adulterer or adulteress. However, this association is based upon an action not a condition. For example, a person may be classified a murderer although the act of murder is past.

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

Family: The God-ordained institutional union of one man and one woman through marriage. The family is foundational to human existence and societal development. Moreover, family may include children, grandchildren, brothers and sisters, parents, grandparents, et al., composed via bloodline or adoption. A family may include the bloodline or adopted children, grandchildren, etc., of deceased parents.

Polygamy: A marital union involving more than one man and one woman.

Note: Old Testament polygamy was not considered sexually immoral since it constituted a recognized marital state, although it is generally shown to be inexpedient, was not the ordained norm, etc.

Polyamory: Sexual activities between multiple persons.

Pedophilia: Sexuality attraction and activity between an adult and minor.

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

Annotations

Scriptures marked “NT” are from the New Testament Scriptures. Those marked “OT” are taken from the Old Testament as common to the canonized modern day Bible—with which most believers are familiar. However, passages taken from the Gospels—as they, for the most part, document pre-cross history and teaching—must be viewed as part of the Old Covenant. They too will be marked as “OT.”

1. Marriage

Marriage is the God-ordained foundational covenant union of one man and one woman as husband and wife—into holy matrimony.

The primary 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 purposes of companionship and 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, self-gratification, etc., 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.

Masturbation is generally self-focused and trains the mind and body to see human 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.

Birth control is not directly condemned in the Scriptures. However, the methods of birth control must be carefully regulated. Abortion and abortifacients are strictly condemned—while contraceptives are unaddressed. (One exception is noted in Genesis 38:9. However, the primary issue in this case was disobedience to the law wherein Onan was required to provide an heir to his deceased brother.)

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

2. Marriage: A Symbolic Relationship between Christ and the Church

(NT)

Ephesians 5:25–33, *“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. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”*

Old Testament passages such as those found in Jeremiah 3, Ezekiel 16, Hosea 1–3, etc., picture the relationship of God with the nation and people of Israel.

The Church is Betrothed/Espoused to Christ

(NT)

2 Corinthians 11:2, *“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 All Believers as His Bride

(NT)

Ephesians 5:25–27, *“...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.”*

(NT)

Ephesians 2:1–10, *“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.”*

We are presently espoused to Christ and He will never “put us away.”

Knowing that the death of a spouse is the only properly sanctioned end to a marriage covenant, and knowing that Christ died once—never to die again—we shall forever be married to Christ. Herein please note the following progression.

(OT)

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

(NT)

Romans 6:3–11, *“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.”*

He made us, who were dead in trespasses and sin, alive together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses. 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!

As you will see within 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: 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, *“Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.”*

(NT)

1 Corinthians 7:39 *“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.”*

The context above is a discussion on singleness and marriage. Paul adds the statement concerning the Law and marriage to make the point that remarriage after the death of a spouse is not sin.

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, *“So 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. 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.

Is Adultery Grounds for Divorce?

There are no New Testament passages that describe adultery as a reason for divorce. The only directly stated provision for divorce in the New Testament is fornication and/or 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 remarry without causing another adulterous occurrence.

5. Fornication

Concerning the problem of fornication Jesus said, *“I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality [porneia/fornication, not morchio/adultery] causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery”* (Matthew 5:32). Moreover, Jesus said, *“Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so”* (Matthew 19:8). Therefore, we need help with the insights provided.

The Hardness of Heart

One might suggest that the hardness of heart was related to a failure in keeping the Law. If the Children of Israel were refusing to exercise the death penalty, and nevertheless wanted to end a marriage, Moses allowed them to divorce by writing a certificate of divorce. If they had obeyed the Law, divorce would not have been necessary, nor would the problem of future adultery exist.

An alternative view may indicate that the Children of Israel were hard of heart toward one another and were therefore unwilling to love and abide in their marriage relationships—even in the absence of fornication or adultery. Herein I might suggest that fornication, adultery, or any other concerns may have been grounds for forgiveness and love—not divorce. We should also note that the “concession” was not a permission or commandment—it was simply an allowance.

Fornication: Porneia—Not Adultery: Morchio

Jesus seems to indicate that a bill of divorcement was permitted as a concession—but only for porneia: fornication. This must be explained.

In the Jewish world, a pattern of betrothal, espousal, wedding, and consummation occurred. This was the case with Mary and Joseph. Joseph was espoused to Mary when he discovered she was pregnant—with Jesus. For this reason, Joseph intended to *“put her away secretly”* (Mathew 1:19). Effectively, the *“putting away”* would have been caused by what Joseph perceived to be Mary’s infidelity (porneia)—a justifiable cause for “divorce.” Moreover, at that time, a certificate of divorce was required in order to end an engagement/betrothal—even though the couple had not yet officially married.

One must also recognize that Jesus said, *“whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery”* (Matthew 5:32). Therefore, we note that divorce under the provisions of fornication does not “cause” adultery. Moreover, adultery would not nor could be the cause of the divorce using this criterion.

A man divorcing his wife exposes her to harm. The alternative unselfish act would be that the husband maintain his role and protect his (then future) wife—thus removing the possibility of the woman facing future humiliation and negative consequential action.

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.”* 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.

During the Old Covenant dispensation, a Jewish person was permitted to forgive an offending party for acts of fornication. Moreover, a Church Age Christian may forgive acts of fornication or adultery! We are the recipients of grace and are called to exercise grace toward others.

This selfless choice is an act of redemption—as modeled by Christ. He has accepted us by His grace knowing that we were unclean prior to our espousal/betrothal to Him. Moreover, much could be said about spiritual adultery and how many (if not all) Christians are guilty of such before the Lord.

Called to Forgive

(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 (like the others in this sub-section) were addressed to Jews under the Old Covenant (and needs Church Age explanation), the message about forgiveness is critically important. 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).

6. Departure of an Unbelieving Spouse

Paul added to what the Old Covenant Law had communicated by writing, *"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"* (vss. 12b–15). This is the only Church Age allowance for divorce. Therefore, if a believer is married to an unbeliever, a divorce was not to be initiated by the believing spouse, but, if the unbelieving spouse "departs" (ends the marriage covenant), the remaining spouse is *"at liberty"* (vs. 39), *"not under bondage in such cases"* (vs. 15)—which I might suggest means at liberty to remarry—*"but only in the Lord"* (vs. 39). However, Paul would advise remaining single (see vs. 40).

The Matthew 18 Principle

The question of a person's faith is brought into view by the case mentioned herein. Many profess faith, but are "unbelievers." On the other hand, many genuinely born again believers are or have been disobedient. God alone knows those who are His. Therefore, we must be cautious when making a decision about the genuineness of another's faith or eternal destiny.

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

Many churches have not condemned divorce, and have likewise failed to make it a matter of church discipline. However, according to the Matthew 18:15–17, those who refuse to obey the Word, as administered by Church leadership, are to be handled as if unbelievers. This does not suggest that

the one(s) under church discipline are damned to hell, or have “lost their salvation,” but, as Jesus put it, “let him [or her] be to you like a heathen and a tax collector” (Matthew 18:17b). Therefore, the one “departing” may be classified an unbeliever.

7. Divorce

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

The ending of a marriage covenant is always the result of selfishness, a lack of repentance, lack of forgiveness, and/or lack of restoration by at least one person in the marriage union.

8. 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.’”*

9. Is Divorce Unpardonable Sin?

No. There is no sin in the life of a believer that is left unpardonable—and I would add—nor is there any sin in the life of a believer that is left unpardoned. Christ has forgiven us all trespasses!

(NT)

Colossians 2:13, *“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”*

Within the Scriptures we learn that divorce has and will occur. For example, Paul wrote, *“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”* (1 Corinthians 7:10b–11a). The expression *“even if she does depart”* shows that Paul was aware of the potential and that *“remain unmarried”* defines *“depart”* as *“divorce.”*

10. The Biblical Ending of a Marriage: Death

(NT)

Romans 7:1–4, *“Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.”*

Note: Contextually this passage illustrates the believer’s liberation from the law and should be understood in that context.

(NT)

1 Corinthians 7:39, *“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.”*

Note: In the Old Covenant, adultery, homosexuality, 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 remarry.

11. Concessionary Divorce

There are times in which a choice to divorce is made by believers even amidst the possibility of restoration. When this occurs we must carefully consider the circumstances and navigate the best possible outcome for the parties involved.

a. Old Covenant vs. Church Age Considerations

As stated above, “In the Old Covenant, heterosexual adultery, homosexuality, 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 remarry.” However, now in the Church Age the death penalty for these sins is no longer enforced. Therefore, believers are challenged to forgive and restore a fallen spouse—even as they have been forgiven and provided restoration in and to the Lord. God is able to provide grace to the marriage partners and enable restoration. However, we recognize that the wounded, abused, and/or endangered may nevertheless seek divorce. For those in such situations a case by case evaluation becomes necessary. When circumstances are deemed egregious, we choose to exercise grace.

b. What the Concession is Not

This concession should not be considered Biblical grounds for divorce—for that is not supported by the text of Scripture. Moreover, this concession should not be considered permission—for that would be overstepping Biblical authority. However, as the result of human weakness, some individuals simply feel unable to move toward restoration and do seek divorce. In these cases, we default to the fact that divorce is not the unpardonable sin and trust in the Lord for His abundant mercy. Inasmuch as the sins mentioned above are violations of the marriage covenant, and inasmuch as the one violating the covenant has indeed committed adultery, we are hard pressed to suggest that adultery is Biblical grounds for divorce—as has been commonly taught.

12. Separation

Much damage has been done to many individuals by not recognizing the difference between separation and divorce. Therefore, it seems appropriate to mention separation.

Suggested reasons for 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.

If the state in which one resides does not allow for legal separation—and legal separation is required for the protection of children, protections from illegal activity, etc., a concessionary divorce (see Item 12 above) may be necessary. If this should occur, one should seek solid Biblical pastoral and legal counsel prior. Moreover, the separating party should be prepared to remarry upon repentance of said spouse or remain unmarried (see 1 Corinthians 7:10–11 below).

(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, *“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.”*

13. Remarriage: Biblical Allowance for a Second Marriage

a. The Unbeliever Has Departed

(NT)

1 Corinthians 7:12–15, *“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.”* (See Item 6 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.”*

(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 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.”*

(NT)

1 Corinthians 7:39, *“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.”*

14. Remarriage: Concessionary Secondary Marriage

a. Ignorance

There have been occasions wherein a man or woman has suffered divorce prior to coming to faith in Jesus. There are also times in which Christians have been provided bad counsel, been misled or misinformed about divorce and/or remarriage. For those in such cases we must give the opportunities for new beginnings in the Lord. To these we provide grace and refrain from holding contempt.

(NT)

2 Corinthians 5:17, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*

b. Repentance

There are times in which a knowledgeable Christian simply acts in rebellion and has thereafter come to repentance. For those in such cases we must give the opportunities for new beginnings in the Lord. To these we provide grace and refrain from holding contempt.

(NT)

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

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”* which 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)

1 John 2:1–2, *“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.”*

c. Irreconcilability

If a divorce has occurred and the former spouse has remarried, we consider the marriage thereafter irreconcilable. For those in such cases we must give the opportunities for new beginnings in the Lord. To these we provide grace and refrain from holding contempt.

15. If Divorced

It is our desire that all persons for whom Christ died understand and know the grace and peace available to them in Jesus.

(NT)

Romans 3:21–26, *“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, *“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.”*

a. Labeling

There are many believers among us who have caused divorce. If this occurs, he or she must recognize his or her shortcoming(s), confess said shortcoming(s) before the Lord—in sincerity—and enjoy the benefits of the complete forgiveness of sin(s). If or when Church discipline is required, the

same rule applies. There must be room for restoration! Labeling a repentant believer as perpetually “unclean” is unbiblical and unkind.

Those who may be victims of divorce must be treated kindly, in love, sheltered from criticism, and protected within the Body of Christ: The Church. They too should not be “labeled.”

16. 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 alone, in Christ alone, we are completely forgiven of all sin and made the righteousness of God—in Him.

(NT)

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

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 has perfected forever those who are being 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 declares, “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 work and energy, warring with the devil, attempting to overcome fleshly habits, and resisting the lure of the world. However, human effort always results in limited or no success and always ends in discouragement.

Some 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.

Our human effort to “please the Lord” by “trying harder” is opposed to God’s 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 and rest in God’s great love. We are complete in Him. He will shape us; he will lead us. Our only response is God-enabled 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 enjoy 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.

17. As Righteous Judge, Will God Judge the World?

Inasmuch as the believer’s sins are forever forgiven, God will nevertheless judge sinful man. 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.”*

- a. Salvation is freely offered to all through the grace of God, by faith alone 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.”*

- b. 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.

As God incarnate, Jesus Christ came to earth, suffered the penalty for our sins, making it possible for you and me to escape the wrath to come and receive life and forgiveness of sin.

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

Trust Jesus the Christ for the forgiveness only He can offer. His life will overcome your inner most being. It is then, by God's grace, you can "go and sin no more."

18. To Whom Will We Be Married in Heaven?

(OT)

Matthew 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.