

## Divorce & Remarriage

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I got a nice letter that summed up some of the thoughts and questions you had, based on a comment that I made. Let's go to the source of the comment. It kind of brought a little consternation; I can understand why and it will be something that can help many people, more than just those of us here.

John 4:16—the account of the woman at the well: “Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband and come *back* here.’ The woman answered and said, ‘I do not have a husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have spoken well in saying, “I do not have a husband”; for you have had five husbands...” (vs 16-18).

Apparently she had gone through five of them and she was living alone at the present time.

“...and the one whom you now have is not your husband. This you have spoken truly” (v 18). *So, she was just living with someone!* Sounds kind of like today.

I made the comment that Christ even held this unconverted woman to a standard of marriage. Obviously, that brings up the question, which we'll cover in a little bit. First of all, we have to admit even though what is said here, we don't have all the facts. As a matter of fact, we don't have any of the facts.

In talking to her, please understand that the Samaritans worship in this mountain, and so forth—that's where the temple was in Mt. Gerizim. If you recall how that came about from *The Christian Passover* book, a whole group of priests would not put away their wives—in interracial marriage—during the days of Nehemiah and Ezra. They went up and had a temple built by Sanballat, the Governor of Samaria.

They took with them the Law of Moses. That's all they had, the first five books. They didn't want to take all the Prophets because the Prophets held in there—and also with the thing concerning David—that Jerusalem was the place God placed His name.

Obviously, they could not have that in Samaria, otherwise you defeat the very purpose for why you built the temple. They had the first five books of Moses and I'm sure whatever the circumstances were concerning her divorces and remarriages—or whether there *were* divorces and remarriages or just separations and multiple marriages—we're not told. Here, the one she is with now she's not married, but she's with him. This really presents a lot of complications. We don't know the facts concerning it, but the Old Testament

conditions were; I'll just summarize them:

1. you can put away your wife for a blemish
2. you can put away your wife for having pre-marital relations and not knowing about it
3. you cannot put away your husband or wife if the two of you committed pre-marital sex and were caught at it; then you're forced to marry and cannot separate

However, the circumstances fit here, gauging from her current behavior, my inclination for this would be to say that she probably got caught in pre-marital sex with the first man. Therefore, according to the Scriptures, *that marriage was binding under the Law of Moses!* Then all the subsequent ones were not marriages and they are not husbands—she was living in adultery.

Today we're living in what is called *Sodom and Egypt*. Let's see how Christ labeled that generation. In the letter of the Law, in a carnal world, there have to be some standards. God has to hold them to some standards otherwise there's no way that He can even judge the world. If they weren't held to some standards He could not condemn them of sin. Here's what He said of His generation:

Matthew 12:38: “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, ‘Master, we desire to see a sign from You.’ And He answered *and* said to them, ‘A **wicked** and **adulterous** generation seeks after a sign...’” (vs 38-39). **Why? Because they had divorce and remarriage, divorce and remarriage, divorce and remarriage!**

Let's see where Jesus clarified it; we begin to get a clarification here. Please understand this thoroughly: ***All divorce and remarriage cases and problems have to be answered individually!*** You can't go ahead and do it straight out and have the same thing apply to everyone. You have a set of things to go by, like we have here, that applies to everybody, but we don't know all the circumstances in everyone's life. That's why divorce and remarriage is really a problematic situation.

Matthew 5:31: “It was also said *in ancient times*, ‘Whoever shall divorce his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.’”

That doesn't necessarily mean that it was in the Old Testament. There was a *bill of divorcement* they could give under certain circumstances. He's talking about a general thing. You don't like your wife, get rid of her; if she burns the biscuits, get rid of her.

I had one unusual situation where that you had a marriage, but even after five years it was never consummated. *That is not a marriage!* A marriage is to become one flesh. To become one flesh becomes the important thing.

Verse 32: “**But I say to you...** [a New Testament standard] ...whoever shall divorce his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality...”—‘porneia’—*sexual immorality of any kind*. Today you have to include homo and hetero and bestiality, because those things are quite rampant.

“...causes her to commit adultery... [that is if she remarries] ...and whoever shall marry her who has been divorced is committing adultery” (v 32). This is a standard that the New Testament is held by.

Let’s see what Christ said concerning divorce and remarriage; Matthew 19:3: “Then the Pharisees came to Him and tempted Him, saying to Him, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?’ But He answered them, saying, ‘Have you not read that He Who made *them* from *the* beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh’?... [that’s the whole purpose of marriage, to be one flesh] ...So then, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate.’” (vs 3-6).

Meaning that *only God can give us the grounds* for a proper divorce. What God has bound, God can loose. One of the ways that He looses is through the sexual immorality once you have been married.

Verse 7: “They said to Him, ‘Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?’ He said to them, ‘Because of your hardheartedness, Moses allowed you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever shall divorce his wife, except *it be* for sexual immorality [‘pornea’], and shall marry another, is committing adultery; and the one who marries her who has been divorced is committing adultery’” (vs 7-9).

I had a very strange D & R case to contend with. This strange situation was: The husband would go out and commit adultery and his wife knew it. She would always accept him back. This went on for years and years. She was told that she could put away her husband. She said, ‘No, I accepted him every time and he came back. Therefore, I feel I’m bound to him because I understood the circumstances and I accepted him back in the hopes that he would change.’

**IF** on the very first instance of being caught

in adultery and they finally confess it—the husband or wife—and they totally repent and the repentance is accepted with the promise and assurance that it will never happen again. What if it does happen again? *If it happens again then the husband or wife has the right to put away the husband or wife based upon the cause of fornication*. But, if you keep accepting them back then it falls into this category:

1-Corinthians 6:15: “Don’t you know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot?...”

This is talking *spiritually* concerning false doctrines from the harlot: Babylon the Great. Drinking in of the religious doctrines of the world, teaching that to the Body of Christ.

“...MAY IT NEVER BE! WHAT! Don’t you know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body? For He says, ‘The two shall be one flesh.’” (vs 15-16).

In this case, if a man marries a harlot or if a woman marries a whoremonger, and accepts that status of living, there is no divorce. They’ve accepted it. They lay themselves open for venereal disease, emotional trauma and upset. Just look at the situation concerning the well-known minister we know of from the Worldwide Church of God and Church of God International continued in that modus operandi and his wife took him back every time. We have that kind of situation that can exist.

Even if there is sexual infidelity or sexual immorality, if the offended party accepts it over and over again *they are bound!* They have a miserable marriage, their emotions are all upset all the time, but they are bound.

We come to two other cases which are important, 1-Corinthians 7:1: “Now concerning the things that you wrote to me, *saying*, ‘It is good for a man not to touch a woman,’ *I say this*.”

This is how they avoid fornication. This is really a Gnostic doctrine when you understand it. If it were Nicolas—one of the deacons who was ordained—it was said of Nicolas that he had a beautiful wife, and in order to show that he was above sin, it is said that he said, ‘Any man can take my wife and have her and it will not affect me.’ ***So he would be above sin!*** This is what they’re trying to do here, to be above sin.

Christ said ‘If you look upon her...’ Now, what are you going to do? That was their way of avoiding fornication. Paul gives the answer,

Verse 2: “Rather, to avoid sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband

render *his* conjugal dues to *his* wife, and in the same way also the wife to *her* husband” (vs 2-3).

If there are never sexual relations in a marriage—which is hard for me to comprehend, but I know of at least one case that way—the marriage was never consummated; it was never a marriage. That circumstance can either be annulled or divorce would take care of it.

Verse 4: The wife does not have power... [‘exousia’—*authority*] ...over her own body, but the husband; and in the same way also, the husband does not have power over his own body, but the wife. Do not deprive one another of *conjugal dues*, except it be by consent for a time...” (vs 4-5).

Do not withhold your obligation in marriage, because if you withhold your sexual obligation in marriage, then that is called *fraud*, you are *defrauding*.

“...so that you may devote yourselves to fasting and prayer; and *then* come together again as one, so that Satan will not tempt you through your lack of self-control.... [your lack of continuing sexual obligations] ...Now I say this by permission, and not by command.” (vs 5-6).

1-Corinthians 14:36: Paul says, “WHAT? Did the Word of God originate with you? Or did it come only to you *and no one else?*”

They were so spiritual that they were having all kinds of revelations, sins and things like this, saying it’s from God.

Verse 37: “If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual...”—*which is very profound and interesting in light of the: Primitive Christianity in Crisis* where Alan Knight talks about the spirituality of man. The spirituality of man apart from the Holy Spirit is:

1. the spirit of man in him, which can be used and developed to a good degree
2. demonism

Most cases, when you have your own individual spirituality, sooner or later you’re going to get involved in demon spirituality.

“...let him acknowledge that the things I write to you are commandments of the Lord” (v 37). *This permission now becomes the commandment in the Lord!*

1-Corinthians 7:7: “For I wish *that* all men might be even as myself. But each one has his own gift from God; one *is* this way, and another *is* that way.”

He’s saying in effect that God’s calling gave him the countenance so that he would not need sexual activity.

Just stop and think: How would you like to be married to the Apostle Paul? Travel with him wherever he goes? *or* Sit at home year after year wondering if he’s alive or if he’s dead? Wondering what he’s doing? What he’s preaching? Maybe get a letter once or twice a year at the most.

Then one day he shows up at the door and he’s all beaten up, scared and bruised, because he’s been stoned and whipped and beaten. His clothes are all rags because he was shipwrecked, etc. Can you imagine that? Imagine just the mental torment that a wife would go through not knowing any of these things. She wouldn’t be able to keep up with him and the schedule that he kept. The reason that he said this was because if there were those like that, then they would be able to do the preaching and evangelizing and things like this.

Verse 8: “Now I say to the unmarried and to the widows *that* it is good for them if they can remain even as I *am*.”

We’re going to see that that is for the temporary stress of the times. When Paul was writing 1-Cor. it looked like Christ was going to return very soon. They had plagues, famine, drought, wars, all of these things. You don’t want to get married if you’re going to run off to war, or die of starvation, or have no means of support.

Verse 9: “But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; because it is better to marry than to burn *with sexual desire*.... [each one has to make a judgment on that him or herself] ...And to those who are married I *give this* charge, *yet* not I, but the Lord: **Do not let the wife be separated from her husband**” (vs 9-10).

We’re dealing with people *in the Church!* Dealing with people in the Church is entirely different than dealing with those in the world—*entirely different!*

There was one case where a woman put away her husband—in this case both married in the Church, both attended Ambassador College, which they did pound in your head at that time concerning divorce and remarriage and in marrying making sure that everything was right and so forth. They were married, had four children, married from 8-10 years. Finally, she divorced him. In this particular case he wasn’t too good of a provider. At that time in the Worldwide Church of God they came down with the change in divorce and remarriage understanding. What she did—very typical to what a man did to me—she sought out a minister who would loose her and she knew all the explanations on how to explain it.

In the marriage ceremony it is this: You marry: for a wife, until death do you part, for better

or worse, in want or in wealth—richer or poorer! So, living in circumstances which are close to poverty is not a cause for divorce.

- Was there adultery? *No!*
- Was there sexual immorality of any kind? *No!*

He was just not a good provider. Years later he is a good provider, and he did want to come back twice but she refused. Well, if they want to be reconciled you cannot refuse.

Verse 11: “(But if she does separate, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband.)....”

God is interested in reconciliation. Sometimes reconciliation is very hard, because both have to admit wrong. We’re talking about those who are in the Church. This is based upon forgiveness. If you don’t forgive you’re not forgiven. This is part of reconciliation for those in the Church.

“...And *the* husband is not to divorce *his* wife. Now to the rest, I, not the Lord, say *this*: If any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she consents to dwell with him, let him not divorce her” (vs 11-12).

We had a plague of this in Worldwide. They’d come along and say they’re not converted; here’s an unbeliever—if they be pleased to dwell. In the one case that we discussed earlier—being married for 30-40 years—in this particular case the husband was in the Church of God, had been attending for years. She was a Baptist and would needle him every once in a while concerning what he believed and so forth. But, as I told him, ‘*she* pleased to dwell with you. If she is pleased to dwell with you, you cannot put her away.’ Maybe you do have arguments. Arguments alone are not any grounds for divorce. It just means that you’re going to have arguments and difficulties. What you need to do is pray that you’re going to have your own life and your own mind turned around—for your husband or wife, which every way it comes.

In counseling people this way, what really works is the love of God. If you really love God and set out to love each other, then the difficulties and problems will narrow and you won’t have as many arguments and fights as you had in the past. Arguments and fights of themselves do not loose a marriage. In the end, you’ve just got a miserable marriage. If you have a miserable marriage and you’re not willing to work at, God says, ‘Stay in your misery then.’ If you do separate, then come back together.

For the unbelieving, we had that the believer was putting away the unbeliever, rather than the unbelieving leaving. It was just the opposite. How many of those were done which were not correct?

Verse 13: “And *if* a woman has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to dwell with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband; otherwise, your children would be unclean, but now they are Holy.... [under God’s protection] ...But **if the unbelieving husband or wife separates**, let him *or her* separate...” (vs 13-15).

Not the believing putting away the unbelieving. How many came to the ministers and said, ‘Oh, my husband or wife is a non-believer.’ *Well, put him/her away.* They violated the Scriptures! What if they give advice like that? *It’s wrong advice!* Are you living in sin? *Yes, you’re living in sin!* This is *in* the Church we’re talking about with unconverted mates.

Verse 15: “But **if the unbelieving husband or wife separates**, let him *or her* separate...”

If the unbeliever takes the initiation and says, ‘I’ve had enough of this religion of yours, I am gone, I don’t believe it, I won’t have anything to do with it, I will not counsel it, goodbye, I’m out the door.’

“...The *believing* brother or sister **is not bound** in such *cases*; for God has called us to peace.” (v 15).

This gives us an understanding about marriages before coming into the Church or as you come into the Church. If you are coming into the Church and your husband or wife does not believe, and they leave, **then you’re not bound!**

What if you were divorced and remarried before you ever came into the Church? Well then, that is buried in the watery grave of baptism as a sin that can be forgiven. Now everything starts new in the Church. That’s why *in the Church* it is so important that things be handled properly. Many who have divorced before they came into the Church and remarried in the Church, then that falls into that category. That first marriage was under the blood of Christ because you repented and now you’re in the Church. When you are in the Church and you have knowledge and you understand then it becomes a different proposition altogether!

Verse 16: “But 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?”

I’ve seen that happen, too. Of course, that was lacking a lot in Worldwide. All this fighting and carnality going back and forth instead of really loving your husband or wife and helping them to see, through the fruit of the Spirit, the goodness of

God's way. Lot's of times it would be that you *drive* them away.

What if you understood the Scriptures here and you determined in your own mind, the Bible says that the unbeliever leave and I'm not bound. So, you determine in your own heart and mind to be mean, nasty and evil, to make things deliberately 'hell on earth' until they go out the door. And you say, 'Hooray! I'm loosed!' ***I would not want you to meet God in that condition!*** You are using the *letter of the Law!*

- Is that love?
- Is that reconciliation?
- Is that peace?
- ***NO!***
- Where is Christ in that? *Nowhere!*
- Where is Satan in that? *Right in the middle of it!*

Another case came up, and this happened when they first had the change of D & R. A man came to me and it was concerning a man and wife whom I baptized up in Boise, Idaho, way back years ago—1965-66. They had a little rocky marriage and they talked about divorce before being baptized, but they came into the Church. They studied the material, the Bible, they repented, understood God's Word. Then nine years later he comes to me and says, 'Did you know that I was planning on divorcing my wife when we were baptized? *No, I didn't! But it doesn't make any difference! Why? Because you were baptized, you knew the Truth and you forgave each other and accepted each other, so your marriage is bound!* What did he do? ***He shopped around until he found a minister to loose him!***

The minister made the wrong decision. The wife stayed single, stayed in the Church, reared the children, exemplary, wonderful. He went out and became a whoremonger, totally destroyed the family and everything in his selfishness! That is a penalty upon someone who is determined to do their own way.

Would you say that, after the fact, she would be loosed to marry again? *You would have to look at it and say based upon the fruit of his life, in all probability, yes!* You see the determination in it. That just adds sin to sin. People who shop for a minister within the Church to give them what they want, and the minister gives them what they want, *are causing the people to sin!* Who is responsible? ***Both!***

1. the minister because he gave them bad advice; wrong advice
2. the individual because they wanted to serve their sins

Either way you can't palm it off and say, 'Well, the minister said so.' Even if the minister said so, if he does not base it truly upon the Word of God, what do you have? *Two sins!* His and the one involved in getting that kind of decision to leave the husband or wife.

This really becomes a dicey situation, because we are to make decisions of binding and loosing—the ministers are. It's very clear there in Matt. 16. What do we bind or loose? *Things and circumstances in people's lives based upon the Word of God!* Not just bind or loose to make it convenient, or to give an out so that, in leaving, the individual that you can salve your conscience by saying the minister 'told me.'

That makes it doubly difficult. That's why at baptism divorce and remarriage is a forgivable sin, like any other sin—adultery, murder, stealing, whatever it may be. But once you're *in* the Church, now you have this standard here by which to live. You can't go out and do like the world does. That's the whole thing. You show me one couple that never had a fight or an argument.

Boy, I tell you, I want to shake their hand, give them a hug and say, congratulations. I include myself in it. You're always going to have some sort of disagreement one way or the other and you get real carnal and real miserable, but always remember this concerning a fight or family argument: ***The Bible says, do not let the sun go down on your wrath!*** There needs to be forgiveness and acceptance. Don't go around and carry a grudge! Don't go around thinking you're going to reform the other person! *You cannot do that!* But what you can do is—through love and example—help that person to reform him or herself.

How can you expect your wife to not be mad at you when you lose your temper all the time? How can you expect your husband to not be mad at you when you're bitchy, *bitchy, bitchy* all the time? It doesn't work! You'll be in a constant state of agitation and looking for any fault that will come along to 'settle the score' by continuing to fight so that 'I can win' so that 'she won't win' or she can win so that he won't win. You can't have a win/lose situation! Love is based upon getting together and solving the problems.

Verse 25: "Now concerning virgins, I do not have a command from *the* Lord; but I give *my* judgment, as one who has received mercy from *the* Lord to be faithful. Therefore, I think this *judgment* is good because of the present distress: that *it* is good for a man to remain as he is" (vs 25-26).

That's only for the current distress. What if we had civil war here in America? What if we had where it would be much like we saw in Kosovo? No

place to live, war, killing, shooting, being chased out of your home, living in refugee camps and everything. It would be stupid to say, 'Let's get married. Let's have a honeymoon here.' That's a distress, and this is the kind of thing that was going on.

When the distress was over and the circumstances changed, v 27: "Have you been bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed...."

Showing that a bound marriage can be loosed *according to the laws of God*, based upon the words of Jesus. What looses a marriage? *Death, adultery, fornication, homosexuality!* That looses a marriage!

"...Have you been loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.... [because of the distress] ...However, if you have married, you have not sinned..." (vs 27-28).

It's perfectly all right to seek a wife, you haven't sinned. In the distress, you have a terrible, terrible troubled time. But if you marry, you're still married. We have a lot of war-brides, married just before their husbands went over—they got married and their husbands were going overseas. They had their honeymoon, the wife got pregnant, he got killed. Now here's the wife with a child. She's loosed; he died! Is she free to remarry? *Yes!*

Verse 28: "...and if a virgin has married, she has not sinned...."

Let me just mention this: I saw this big building up on not quite the top of a hill. It looked like a Catholic Church, but it wasn't a Catholic Church, and I drove up to find out what it is. I go up there and it was a nunnery—the Catholic's whorehouse! That's what it is! I think we're going to help solve the problem of short hair, because I'm going to bring this out. When the nun-candidates take their vows, they are betrothed to Christ. They shave their heads. What does it say about shaved heads—or shorn? *It is a shame!*

After they've gone through everything that they have, they've qualified to be a nun, the rest of their lives they have cropped hair. Therefore, I say to all women with short hair: Think about it. Have you joined the ranks of the nuns and not knowing it, in relationship to your hair length? That's going to put it, not on a picking basis—I pick on you because you have short hair. On my trip it was almost universal. Shorthaired women running around, stomping around, I couldn't believe it. I started running a count. Eighty percent of the women that I saw had short hair, as short as a man. I'm not talking just cropped, I'm talking about short and sheared up the back—80%!

Today, most of the hairdressers are

homosexuals, and they want to degrade women. One of the ways that they do that is to mess up their hair. But there's one safety valve, *it grows!* It shows in 1-Cor. 11 that long hair is given as a covering to show that she is under the authority of her husband. I've also seen how that simple thing has an awful lot to do with the change of attitude with women. On top of that, I saw numerous middle-aged hippies. Men with long hair pulled together with a rubber band. Can you believe it?

Verse 28: "...Yet those *who marry* shall have distress in the flesh, but I *wish* to spare you.... [it's going to be difficult physically] ...Now this I say, brethren: the time *is* drawing close. For the *time that* remains, *let* those who have wives be as if they did not have wives... [staying spiritually close to God] ...and those who weep, as if they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as if they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as if they did not possess; and those who use this world, as if they did not use *it* as their own; for this world in its present form is passing away. Now I desire you to be without anxiety. The man who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord.... [unless his mind is in constant turmoil because of lustful sex sins in his mind] ...But he who is married has concerns about the things of this world—how he may please *his wife*" (vs 28-33).

(go to the next track)

Audience questions:

- If the Law applies to people equally outside the Church and inside the Church, how then does 1-Corinthians 7 fit in?

*1-Cor. 7 does not apply to those out in the world!* If a person has been in the world and divorced and remarried, that is a sin *that is forgivable at baptism!* Therefore, if they are single they are free to marry.

If they are married and the mate is an unbeliever, as long as the unbeliever pleases to dwell with the mate—husband or wife—after baptism then there should be no divorce. It's the unbeliever who should leave, *not the believer instigating to put away the unbeliever!* There have been too many cases like that. I think if we just look at the fruit of what happened with those things, it's, in many cases, not good.

- The WCG told many people to separate and then in 1974 they were told that they were refuting it based upon just what I said. Are all these people living in adultery and sin?

*No!* If the minister tells someone they are to free to remarry when they are not, who is responsible? *Both are!* The minister has to make sure that he gets all

the pertinent facts and makes sure that he seeks for the Truth. The worst thing that ever happens in divorce and remarriage situations is that you get drawn into an emotional, sympathetic point of view, and you don't look at the facts.

Yes, there is emotion—whether it be loneliness on one side or upset emotions on the other side because you're fighting and arguing all the time—clear away all of the emotions. I know that when I counsel with people on divorce and remarriage, I tell them that before we start. I know this is hard. I know that it's difficult. I know that it's emotional. But please, let's not have any emotional-driven conclusions here.

- Base it upon Scripture!
- Base it upon facts!

*Then the emotions can be added into it, but not until then!*

Of course, this assumes that the person is being told they are free and did not set out to deceive the minister. *Yes*, if the person comes to deceive the minister and 'knows the ropes'! How can you tell from a minister's point of view that they 'know the ropes'? They come up and say, 'Well, so and so did this and it's fraud, and this is fraud and that is fraud.' How do you *know* it's fraud? Or knowing just the right words to say. What they are doing, they are digging their grave even deeper—spiritually speaking—because they are trying to deceive a minister of God, if he be a minister of God.

In other words, they did or did not try to 'stack the deck' in trying to get the decision to be in their favor. That's why you can never, never make a D & R decision based upon talking to only one mate—either the wife or the husband—you must talk to both.

I've had cases where the stories between them are so far removed you would never think that it's telling about the same marriage. So, somebody's got to be not telling the truth. I've seen that when people do a write-up for me; I've asked them to write it up. I could tell they've been educated in the Church and what to say, because they say the right, key, trigger words. But unless they present the facts, all the right, key, trigger words don't mean anything except you're trying to get your way by twisting, turning and deceiving.

If a member—man or woman—does that to be loosed from a marriage, do you think that they are free to marry before God? *No!* They're just ***living a lie and living in sin!*** The worst thing to do is to come and try and con the minister into giving a decision.

- If a person remarries based on information from the minister, are they living in

continuous adultery?

*They may or may not be!* If it's fraudulent information that you gave, ***YES!*** You know it! ***You're living in sin and you know it!***

I also found that too many ministers were so afraid of making any decision concerning D & R that they would not make a decision. They would write it up and send it to headquarters. When that happens, there are many miles removed. They only read what is there, and you can't tell if it's fraudulent or not. You can't tell if the information has been twisted or turned. No one at Pasadena should have ever made a decision concerning D & R for someone out in the field. They never talk to anybody. If the ministers are so squeamish that they refuse to handle it that shows three things:

1. they were cowards
2. they didn't know the Word of God
3. they didn't know how to handle the situation

*when a member turned out to be more clever than the minister and was able to wrap the minister around his or her finger to get their way.*

In either case, the product of that is not good. God is not going to be deceived. God is not going to sanction or put His blessing upon and lies that people have coming to a minister to lie. Ezek. 14—those who come to inquire of Ezekiel, the 'elders have idols in their heart.'

Any lie that you have, that you hold up and palm off as truth to someone else is ***an idol in your heart!*** God will not be inquired! In other words, God is not going to hear that. So, both are responsible.

- A. the person who is in the divorce and remarriage situation
- B. the minister who sits there and listens to it and does not give the right kind of judgment that he needs to give

- WCG and WCG ministers told so-and-so that she was free to marry. Then based on that decision the minister married her in the Church—who is responsible?

*Both are!*

- Divorce and remarriage seems to be a very important subject. *Yes!* It will influence the lives of adults and children for the rest of our natural lives. *Yes!*

I happen to come from a divorce situation with my mother and father.

- In God's mercy and love, just what does He want?

**Before being baptized, then that is part of your sinful life, which is forgiven!** After being baptized, you're to learn the Word of God so you don't continue that kind of carnal behavior and destroy any marriage within the Church. You have to change! And change with God's Spirit!

- Remember the time plagued with improper childrearing practices?

*Oh yeah!* Not only improper but getting downright demonic. It's rendered some people unsuited for marriage. *Yes, and the result of that*, when they grow up they're dingbats and unsuited for marriage, even under the most ideal situations. To the novice, which all of us are in our first marriage, the trait that makes a prospective mate unsuited for marriage is hard, if not impossible, to detect.

Therefore, everyone who is being counseled for marriage have to be told you really need to get to know each other in many different circumstances. You're to understand that if you're coming to God and you are in the Church and baptized, **this is your one and your only marriage**—period! You need to understand that! *Until death do you part!* Even Christ, while He was married to Israel—under the Old Covenant—put her away; gave her a bill of divorcement, but **He never remarried** any other nation. He was faithful until the time that He came in the flesh **so that He could die to terminate that marriage covenant!**

Even in the Church we do not provide people with enough guidance in selecting a mate. *That is difficult! Very difficult*, because you end up match-making! If you end up match-making then you can create as many mistakes as the other way around. Remember the song from *Fiddler on the Roof*: 'Matchmaker, matchmaker, find me a find, make me a match...'

Marriage is the second most important decision we make in our lives—the most important is to answer God's calling. *Yes! That's true!* It is treated like an instinct that all humans have. *There are certain things that God has given to human beings, which make them click*—what is called 'fall in love.' They found that that is based upon the pheromones that our bodies give off.

- Why is it that you're drawn to a certain person—man or woman?
- Why is it that you're repelled by other people—man or woman?

*But, you don't want to have it just that way only. You've got to get the facts in the marriage!*

It seems that we fail for success in selecting mates and then everyone is shocked when the marriages fail. *That is true!* There must be a better way. *There is!*

Ephesians 5—*here is the way!* Now then, let me state this categorically: From vs 1-21 is one whole set of circumstances talking about conduct within the Church.

- conduct that we should have
- conduct that we should not have
- conduct that we should not allow

*Then Paul sums it up:*

Ephesians 5:20: "Giving thanks at all times for all things to God and the Father in *the* name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit yourselves to one another in *the* fear of God" (vs 20-21). *That is in the congregational setting!*

One woman said that this means that the husband must submit to the wife. That doesn't mean that, because would be a contradiction:

Verse 22 "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord."

Now then, when most women hear the word *submit*, they think of a husband who brutishly beats up on his wife. **Please understand that's not what the Church—even in Worldwide—ever advocated**, with the exception of one minister who is an evangelist who bragged that he 'spanked his wife.'

- How do you submit to the Lord?
- Do you argue with Him?
- Do you fight with Him?
- Do you scheme against Him?

**NO!** You're to "...submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord"—*in everything in the marriage estate!*

Verse 23: "For the husband is *the* head of the wife... [unless you can change the sex, you can't change this fact] ...the husband is *the* head of the wife **even as** Christ is *the* Head of the Church..." *This tells us:*

- how the husband is to love his wife
- how he's to be concerned for her
- how he's to watch out for her
- how he's to protect her
- how he's to comfort her
- how he's to watch over her

Loving your wife is as difficult to the husband as it is for the wife to submit to the husband. But you do make yourself more unlovable if you do not submit. If you do it in the right way, you wives, you can have virtually anything your heart desires—*especially if you know how!* That is true.

Sometimes a man must make a decision and in making the decision it is his responsibility to do it. If he makes a wrong decision, what happens? *He*

*suffers, and the wife and family suffer!* Therefore, it is very important that the husband love his wife and family as Christ loves the Church. That's a tremendous responsibility!

- this, coupled with proper sexual relations, is how a marriage is held together
- this is how the proper relations with each other can be maintained

It's always a building and a growing situation that we are in. What if you have a cantankerous husband or a cantankerous wife? What do you do?

- you pray about it
- you fast about it
- you do all you can to love your husband or wife
- do the things that are helpful and pleasing
- don't be criticizing and picking and looking for little things to come after

What does that do? *That just agitates!*

If your husband has a mistake that he makes all the time, just realize that's one of his mistakes. If you have a mistake that you do all the time as a wife, husbands, just realize that's a mistake. *All mistakes are recoverable with the exception of death, and that is recoverable through the resurrection.* Everything else can be taken care of or even built into a better condition than previously, but you have got to take that attitude to do it, otherwise it's going to be a constant *battle of the sexes*.

Let's understand something else important: I think that too many people watch too much television—both women and men—and men take too much of the 'Henry George' syndrome that the TV portrays of the *stupid husband*, and too many women take the 'Rosie' syndrome—know it all and

- always correcting their husbands
- always putting them down
- always having something to say

Whenever the husband does something you always but in and say, 'I wouldn't do it that way.' What the husbands need to do is just look back at the wives and say, 'I know that, but I'm doing it this way, thank you.'

Verse 24: "For even as the Church is subject to Christ, in the same way also *let* wives be *subject* to their own husbands in everything."

That's important! But if your husband is loving you, he is not going to take advantage of you to put you down.

If you're submitting to your husband in everything, you are not looking for a cause to come back and pick and nag and criticize and, as it is taught today, the only way a woman can get her way

is to be her 'bitchy' own self. That's what's said right on television. That's the way a lot of women are.

You have to ask yourself—wives and husbands: How am I? Of course, some women will say, 'Yeah, Fred, you're a man and you don't know.' My answer is: *I am married, and I do know!* The advice that I am giving you is what I have also had to learn, too.

Verse 25: "Husbands, love your own wives... [even when she is the big 'B' self] ...in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; so that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the Word*" (vs 25-26).

That doesn't mean that you set your wife down and you just browbeat her with the Bible and say, 'Okay, I'm washing you with the water by the Word.' That means *you take the principles out of the Bible, and by the Spirit of God you help her, encourage her, uplift her, help her!* If you can help her not to be so big 'B' then you're going to have much more peace yourself, because you are loving her and she will be inspired to love you.

I challenge you this: If you have trouble in your marriage, see if you can draw close enough to God on your own, asking for God to give you the love that you can inspire your mate to love you back, and stop your fighting! It works! But you both have to be willing!

Verse 27: "That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame. In the same way, husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies...."

In this case, when a man loves his wife, he loves himself. This means that men are also not to make decision just to show the wife. In other words, 'I'm going to do this just because you're the big 'B' and I don't want you to be, you're snippy and you won't submit so I'm going to do this.' *No! No! No!* That is a misuse of authority, just as much as it is a misuse of a wife's conduct going around being the big 'B': snipping, picking, harping, griping and all of this.

Verse 29: "For no man has ever hated his own flesh... [and all you wives know that, when your husbands get sick they're little babies!] ...but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord *does* the Church. For we are members of His body—of His flesh and of His bones... [we are together as husbands and wives in the Church, to the very sacrifice of Christ] ...—of His flesh... [through the crucifixion] ...and of His bones" (vs 29-30). *It took me a long time to understand what that meant!*

That goes clear back to Adam. Eve was made from one of his bones. *A rib!* Meaning that your relationship with each other is to develop a closeness that it is as if one flesh—your ribs—are joined together.

Verse 31: “For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh”—which is a lifetime process of:

- growth
- understanding
- going through trials and difficulties
- the good times
- the exhilarating times
- the successes
- the defeats

I can say that in my lifetime in the Church of God, we’ve had enough people being after us and so forth that it has been very difficult on my wife and the family. ***But God has delivered us out of them all!*** So, you have to look at that side, too. A lot of the things, I was put into the position that I either had to stand for the Truth or compromise and go the way of men and politics. Therefore, I was against the hierarchy and they were against me. ***God delivered me out of all of them!***

I’m thankful that I have such a wonderful, loving wife, that she stuck with me through it all the way through it—thick and thin! It’s been difficult! It’s been difficult for a lot of people, and it’s difficult in the world. Most families today are what they call *dysfunctional!* That means that everybody is, in one degree or another, out of control in some way. The only way you get back in to being functional is to let the Spirit of God and work.

Go back and study the Proverbs; that will give you an awful lot in how to conduct your life. Talks about

- *anger*, why it’s not good
- *deceit*, what ends up with that
- how a *kind word* turns away wrath
- a *word spoken in time of need*

There’s a time when your wives are down and you need to just go up and give them a hug and kiss and tell them you understand—make sure you do, though, just don’t do it just to say so. You have to understand. Always remember this: Women are going to go on feelings, and women—when correction comes—take it personally! Whereas, men look at it: there’s a problem, let’s solve the problem. Women look at it: I’m wrong, instead of ‘I have done something wrong.’ There is a vast difference!

If you have done something wrong, it can be

changed. If some correction comes—either man or woman; husband or wife—don’t take it personally. Have you ever called yourself a ‘dumb doe-doe’? *Yes, I have!* In many occasions I do something or say something and turn around and say, ‘dumb, dumb, dumb, when are you ever going to learn, Fred.’ If there’s a problem that comes up, take it as a problem. Work out the problem. Don’t take it as an assault against your person, because it’s not. *Very important!*

- Is there Scriptural support for making ministers making a decision regarding such matters as D & R? *Yes!*

Let’s also make it very clear: ***God is not going to be bound to sin!*** That’s why it’s very important for any minister who’s going to make a decision, make sure he gets all the facts and make sure he gets the truth and past the emotion. Get into the truth of the situation.

If you have a woman who is always boo-hooing and everything is just a big trauma all the time, well, she’s got an emotional problem. What she needs to do is get a hold of the emotional problem and start looking at the facts, instead of just being drug around like there’s a big ring in her nose and a big ‘E’—emotions—dragging her all over the place.

Matthew 16:18—this applies to all the ministers, though Jesus said it to Peter: “And I say also to you, that you are Peter [petros]; but upon this Rock... [petra—which is Christ Himself] ...I will build My church...”

The Catholics have turned this around so that whatever the pope says, as long as he sits in his kiddy-car chair—called ‘ex cathedra—whatever decision he makes is infallible. ***NO!*** A man, at his very best intentions, let alone not pretentious, if he makes a bad decision, it is his decision and he cannot claim the authority of God. Is Christ the Minister of sin? **GOD FORBID!**

“...and *the* gates of the grave shall not prevail against it. And I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven...” (vs 18-19).

That is how the conduct needs to be for everyone. This is not the keys to the grave. ***Christ alone has the keys to the grave!*** He has the key of David. This is not the key of David. These are the keys of understanding so that people can be taught the right way to enter into the Kingdom of God. That’s what it’s talking about here.”

“...and whatever you may bind on the earth will have already been bound in heaven... [according to the commandments and laws of God] ...and whatever you may loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven” (v 19).

This is not a blanket, *carte blanche* for doing whatever you want. The ‘whatever’ is obviously restricted by the Word of God. No one can do anything contrary to the Word of God and bind anyone to it. It isn’t going to be done. Yes, it’s quite a situation here.

➤ What else would we bind or loose?

*Divorce and remarriage is probably the main one that we would.* Paul brought that up in 1-Cor. 7. Another thing Paul said was ‘if you understand about idols, idols are nothing’; and if you want to eat in the temple restaurant, to get the food to eat—obviously had to be clean food—you have permission to do that. If you have conscious to idols, don’t go in there. That was a binding and loosing in that particular case.

Another binding and loosing would be should we travel on the Sabbath? There are some people who feel that we shouldn’t travel on the Sabbath, we shouldn’t eat out on the Sabbath, we should just stay in our homes and just study our Bible and hole up here and that’s it. Well, if that’s the way you keep the Sabbath, then for you that’s fine.

But like today, I drove nearly 260 miles, and by time I go home it will be pretty close to 285-90 miles in one day. I did eat out on the way up. I stopped by and got something to eat. God wants ‘mercy and not sacrifice.’ In those cases, it’s far better for me to go, and, of course, someone will say, ‘you’re a minister and you’re just like a priest and you can profane the Sabbath and you can get away with it and that’s okay for you, but it’s not okay for me.’ In some cases there may be a grain of truth to that.

But, if you do keep the Sabbath at home, you have no need to go out and eat. We can make that decision. If you are traveling, then it’s okay to go out and eat. No problem with that.

Should you watch television on the Sabbath? Well, I suppose it would be okay to catch the news and, if you’ve studied, prayed and kept the Sabbath, it would be all right to watch something like on Discovery Channel about God’s creation.

Other than that, there certainly wouldn’t be anything that you would watch on television. You can’t watch sports. That’s for your own pleasure and entertainment. You can’t watch some of these silly movies. Maybe, if the *Ten Commandments* were on, you could watch that. That movie would be all right. Or if there is a true, historical documentation of something that fits in with the Bible, like archeology of the Bible and so forth. That would be all right to watch. We can make that decision.

But what we do is, we say, ‘You have to make that decision in your life.’ So, in a sense, we’re just giving parameters on what you can decide for yourself what you need to do.

➤ Concerning interracial marriages in the Church:

I would say, the lesson of the world is that it always leads to trouble—outside in the world and in the Church. You cannot strictly forbid interracial marriage, but it should be *strongly discouraged*. Even the black brethren I know believe that the races should be separate. Since they said that, and I do agree with that, then I think that’s what God shows that it would be best not to.

What if you’re in your 50s and 60s and you’re already past childbearing age and something like this and you have an interracial marriage where it’s not the extreme of black and white, would that be permissible? *Probably!* Would there be any sin in that? *Probably not!* The difficulty comes especially when you have children that come into the world, because now you’re bringing children of a mixed racial background into the world, and they never asked you to be their parents, it just happened. So, that creates a great difficulty!

That’s the best way I can say it. Look at all these GIs who married Japanese women and Korean women. Now they’re all getting old and middle-aged and the wives are thinking about being buried back in the homeland. Yes, it was fun and exciting and all this sort of thing to marry a soldier from America and come and live here in America, share all the blessings and all of that. But then, sooner or later, your own racial things are going to come up, because that’s the way God made you. It’s going to create some difficulties.

Does that mean if you are of the same race that you won’t have difficulties? *No!* You have certain people, like the Irish, which have terrible tempers. They’re always fighting! Same way with certain ones down in Australia. They call it ‘buck up!’ That is when they go out and have a fist-a-cuff!

Just because you’re of the same nationality does not mean you’re compatible. ***In selecting a mate make sure you’re compatible!***

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 4:16-18
- 2) Matthew 12:38-39
- 3) Matthew 5:31-32
- 4) Matthew 19:3-9
- 5) 1 Corinthians 6:15-16

- 6) 1 Corinthians 7:1-6
- 7) 1 Corinthians 14:36-37
- 8) 1 Corinthians 7:7-16, 25-33
- 9) Ephesians 5:20-31
- 10) Matthew 16:18-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 11
- Ezekiel 14
- Ephesians 5:1-19

Also referenced: Books:

- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight

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