

Divorce & Remarriage Questions

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Look what Christ had to go through. Whenever we get to feeling sorry for ourselves and we get that picked on feeling—I've had that; you've probably all had that—'Why, Lord?' *I tell you what, Christ didn't deserve any of it! But He did it willingly.*

Hebrews 5:7: "Who, in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death... [Christ's life in the flesh was difficult] ...and was heard because *He feared God*. Although He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience from the things that He suffered" (vs 7-8).

So, when we have suffering, we need to learn; Christ learned. As a matter of fact, through becoming a human being God was perfected. Not that God was ever not perfect, but through what He did He was perfected even more.

Verse 9: "And having been perfected... [through all that He went through] ...He became *the* Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him."

I hope this will help us, encourage us, let us know that we are doing what God wants and that the things come the way that they come. The only thing we can say is, 'Your will be done, God.'

A question came up concerning divorce and remarriage. I'll cover some of the aspects of it. Not every detail of it, but some of the overall principles that are important. There are grounds for divorce. They're very narrow, but there are grounds for divorce.

Matthew 5:31: "It was also said *in ancient times*, 'Whoever shall divorce his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.' But I say to you..." (vs 31-32).

Of course, what they did was put them away for anything: burn the biscuits, whatever; just put them away. That's much of what we have today. A lot of them, they don't even get married, they just live together, which causes great confusion. They never learn to overcome; they never learn to work as a husband and wife. Every marriage is going to have it's ups and downs. That's just the nature of us as human beings.

We would all like to have a perfect marriage, where everything is just fine, no problems, no harsh words, no arguments, you agree on everything, loved each other. You've lived on this plane right here, about ten miles above everybody

else. That's what we would like, but 'life is like a bowl of cherries,' *they have pits!* Of course, when we have ups and downs in our marriages, this is to help us to learn to trust God more, to learn to love each other more. It's easy to say 'I love you' when everything is going smooth. It's hard to say, 'I love you' when it's tough, and especially when you feel you've been picked on, whether a man by his wife, or a wife by her husband.

Verse 32: "But I say to you, whoever shall divorce his wife [or husband], except for the cause of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever shall marry her who has been divorced is committing adultery."

There are grounds for divorce and here it is. *Fornication* in the Greek comes from 'porneia': *any kind of sexual immorality*. Today, you've got hundreds of different kinds of sexual immorality.

Why is that grounds for divorce? *All of that is part of understanding the marriage estate!* All of that is understanding why God made us male and female. If we understand that, and use that as the goal in our marriages, then we can overcome the difficulties.

- we can grow in love
- we can grow in grace and knowledge with God
- we can love each other
- we can accept each other

Part of the problem comes about many times this way: You are perfect but your mate is not! If your mate were perfect then everything would be just fine. But the only trouble is, both the husband and wife think the same thing, so they never really make any progress.

The whole purpose of marriage is this: 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...'" (vs 3-4).

I love it every time He says that to the Pharisees, because they prided themselves on knowing the Word of God, but they don't read it.

"...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**"?" (vs 4-5)

The whole purpose is to establish a family

unit, to bring children into the world. As husband and wife as doing so, you are participating in the creation of God. Here's what William Tyndale wrote in his book:

The Obedience of a Christian Man (about 1530s)—talking about children:

God which works all, in all things, for a secret judgment and purpose and for His Godly pleasure, provided and hour that your father and mother should come together to make you through them. He was present with you in your mother's womb and fashioned you and breathed life into you for the great love He has unto you. And provided milk in your mother's breast for you, against preparation for being born. Moved also your father and mother and all others to love you, to pity you, and to care for you.

David Daniel said, 'That's a tender beginning.'

When we understand that husband and wife are to come together as one flesh, ***it is to learn the character of God, to participate in the creation of other people!*** That's really quite a thing!

If you want something, which will humble you, and if anyone gets all excited about how 'great they are' just do this: Take a pen, make a little dot with your pen. You might not even be able to see it very well. That's what you were at one time!

God has a fantastic and terrific plan! Even in spite of the fact that most people don't want God in their lives, God still blesses them with children and things like this, because it's God's purpose to expand His Kingdom for those who will come into the Kingdom of God down through time.

All of this is worked out in marriage. But today we have all the perverted things! Living in Sodom and Gomorrah, we have men with men, women with women, and all of those things are perverse and against God. So much so that they're even coming out with a Bible where God is called 'father/mother.' It's already printed—it's *The Inclusive Bible*.

When we live in a society that is so perverse as it is today, and so much sexual immorality going on, ***that those are the grounds for divorce!*** Also, we have a situation like this: Not only is there sexual immorality, but you also have the problem of violence, ***and violence would also be a ground for divorce!*** It's very akin to sexual immorality. When there are no grounds for divorce, and there is a separation, ***then God does not expect that person to remarry, especially in the Church!***

The Apostle Paul made it clear, 1-Corinthians 7:10: "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. (But if she does separate, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband.) And *the* husband is not to divorce *his* wife" (vs 10-11).

This shows that God wants us to work out our marital problems. Sometimes they may get very strained. But you build character when you learn how to work out your problems, when you learn to love each other in spite of the difficulties. When you learn to accept each other and each other's weaknesses. You learn to overlook many things. In that way you can increase in loving each other, having a stable marriage and all of those things come with it, but you have to work at it.

It's not like Rex Harrison when he sang the song in *My Fair Lady*: 'why couldn't a woman be more like a man?' ***A woman can't! She wasn't made that way!*** A lot of women probably think: 'why can't a man be more like a woman?' ***God made us opposites!***

In the marriage estate we are to come together as one unit, to become one flesh. That's what God has provided. That's why He said, 'be reconciled.'

Verse 12—this talks about some other things concerning marriage: "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. And *if* a woman has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to dwell with her, let her not divorce him" (vs 12-13).

This is an important thing in understanding. In the past, too many people have wanted to get rid of their wives or husbands so they create problems just for the specific reason of getting rid of the husband or wife. I even know of a case where two ministers divorced their wives and literally swapped wives. ***There are no grounds for that!*** That's just plain living in adultery.

So, if you have an unbelieving husband or an unbelieving wife, ***love them! Encourage them!*** Maybe you can inspire them to want to find out about God, because your behavior toward your husband or wife is so much more improved because you're converted. Sometimes that's difficult to do, but if we take it as a challenge and if we look at it that way, and realize that God will bless us in it. That doesn't mean that it's going to come smooth and easy. It may be difficult. But nevertheless, I've seen that happen many, many times.

Never take the attitude that 'my wife is

unconverted' or 'my husband is unconverted'—*then you begin to treat them harshly*. Don't do that! If God hasn't called them, don't worry about it. Let God do so in His own time.

One thing for sure, **only God can convert a person**, so you can't convert your husband or your wife. But if you have the right example, maybe—because they see the change in your life—that your husband or your wife will respond to that.

Verse 14: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife... [God gives a special blessing] ...and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband; otherwise, your children would be unclean, but now they are Holy."

What happens when there's divorce and there are children involved? *Creates great problems!* This is why God wants us to make every effort. This is why God does not give divorce at the drop of a hat. I tell you one thing, through the years of being married, when you overcome—when you're able to overcome the problems and difficulties that you have as husband wife and learn to love each other more—there is a great satisfaction in your own life, as well as a great satisfaction for God. God is pleased when that happens.

Verse 15—another category: "But if the unbelieving *husband or wife* separates..."

This is not to have the believer *make* the husband or wife depart. This is not for the believer to depart because of the unbeliever. This is where the husband or wife would say: 'I can't stand this; I can't put up with this and I'm out of here.' Sometimes that will happen. When that happens, it says:

"...let him *or her* separate. The *believing* brother or sister is not bound in such *cases*... [that marriage is not bound in such cases] ...for God has called us to peace. 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?" (vs 15-16). *We don't know!*

There again, we have to *walk by faith*, let God intervene and help us, hold your tongue, don't get mad. Remember this: **Anger never produces peace, nor does it produce love!** This is why God has it that way.

What if a person is married and divorced before God calls them? *In such cases like that, that marriage would not be binding*, because you have not been called to the knowledge of the Truth until *after* the divorce occurred. Therefore, you would be free to marry within the Church.

God also works it out that you have to come

to a point, one way or the other, where there are so many problems out there with people in the world, with their marriages, with their children and things like this, that when God calls them, there comes a point that you have to say, 'Okay, you repent, all of that is in the past. That is, buried in the watery grave of baptism. Because of that, if you marry again, don't make the same mistakes. That's the best I can do in just an overview of divorce and remarriage.

Each particular person's circumstance may be different one from another. That's why in going over divorce or remarriage, each one has to be handled individually.

Verse 39: "A wife is bound by law for as long a time as her husband may live. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whomever she desires, (*but only in the Lord*)."

It's the same way with husband or wife. If your wife dies, the husband is free to marry. If the husband dies, the wife is free to marry. Marriage in the flesh is until death, with the exceptions that I've covered.

Questions:

- What is 'only in the Lord'? *That refers to marrying someone who is converted, I am sure!* I wouldn't think it would refer to anything else other than that.

Although, I would say this—since this is a judgment—I've seen a case where there's just no one in the Church to marry. What do you do in a case like that? What if you meet someone who is very amiable to what you believe and that person is willing to marry you and accept what you have and what you are? *In that case that is still 'in the Lord'* simply because even though they are not converted, they accept what you are doing and are willing to live with you.

That comes under the 'in the Lord' if you have an unbelieving wife or husband that is pleased to dwell with you. That is still 'in the Lord.' There are some cases—especially where we are scattered—who are you going to meet? Who are you going to marry? As Paul says, 'It's better to marry than burn.'

So, you have all of that! See how each thing becomes a separate judgment when you come down to it.

- 'Whosoever should put his wife' does that also apply to the woman who puts away her husband? *Yes, it would!*

Back then it was very hard for a woman to get a divorce, so that's why it's referring to the man.

- What about in the case of an alcoholic or someone that is on drugs and things like that?
Yes, that's real difficult situation indeed!

There could, with that, be grounds for divorce and possible remarriage, but it would have to be gone into on an individual basis in order to get all the circumstances involved. What if you marry someone who didn't tell you that they had been a druggie 'all my life'?

Well then, they've lied to you. Is God going to bind you to a lie? *No, He's not!* But, if in these situations when they come up, when those situations do arise, then you can't be *delaying* a separation from those situations.

I know a case of a woman who knew that her husband was a philanderer and slept with almost anything that walked by. She accepted it! I told her that since she accepted it, 'you're bound!' If you accept that kind of behavior and live with it and know it, and continue with it, then God will bind you to it.

As God told Hosea to go marry a harlot and have children of a harlot.

- What about abusive? *That depends on the definition of abusive!*

To some people abusive means one thing, another it means another thing. It's not possible to make a judgment just by saying they're abusive.

Physical abuse—as I said before, if there is violent, physical abuse, *then that's possible that there could be grounds for divorce!* But again, that's an individual case.

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

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 5:7-9
- 2) Matthew 5:31-32
- 3) Matthew 19:3-5
- 4) 1 Corinthians 7:10-16, 39

Also referenced: Books:

- *Obedience of a Christian Man* by William Tyndale
- *Inclusive Bible*

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