

DIVORCE and REMARRIAGE?

Our prayer is that the following compilation will be anointed so that many of God's people can be set free from condemnation, fear and insecurity and in the ensuing liberty may walk in the Spirit and not again be caught in the '*works of the flesh*'. We would ask you not to fight us but study this subject with a teachable spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to make real to you what is life and what will glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us understand at the very beginning that we do not in any way condone divorce but we do aim to lift the condemnation that is upon so many believers that they might be free and enjoy what God has given them and/or called them to.

This is a subject that needs some clarifying for there are many traditions that have caused much grief and condemnation which does not come from the truth. The truth will release the fruit of the Spirit . . . one part of which is walking in integrity. Marriage is a '*covenant of companionship*' and God's Presence in each life will enable a marriage to succeed in every area that God designed it for . . . to become one in spirit, mind and body.

VOWS are usually taken in a wedding ceremony; they are very important and they carry a real power in their words. When a marriage breaks up (for whatever reason) the marriage VOWS are broken. The dictionary simply states that a **BROKEN VOW = CURSE**. The two parties are both cursed because of their previous vows being broken. There should therefore be a distinct request for forgiveness from God, a renouncing of the curse which each brought upon themselves, and a declaring of a blessing in place of the curse and that includes blessing the other 'half'. A curse that is not removed will affect any future relationship because it allows the enemy of our souls to attack with condemnation and all the usual bondages including fear and insecurity.

2 Cor 4:2 *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty* (Gk. = *shame*), *not walking in craftiness* (covering up the battles that are in the mind), *nor handling the word of God deceitfully* (don't twist scripture to suit your own ends); *but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God*.

The word '*renounce*' simply means 'to speak away' . . . words 'not-of-truth' will bind one up and so 'words-of-truth' will set one free. Sin in one or both of the partners is the simple **cause** of divorce.

DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN TO AVOID DIVORCE

Divorce is the breaking or nullifying the covenant or contract of marriage. GOD DOES NOT 'OPEN THE DOOR WIDE' as an easy solution to incompatibility or immaturity. God, however, does leave 'THE DOOR AJAR' for exceptional circumstances . . . and each divorce, I believe, 'grieves the heart of God'.

As we look at the scriptures, bear in mind that there are two groups of people that are being addressed in most instances.

First: those who are wanting to get a divorce and

Second: those who have had a divorce.

For those wanting to divorce, there is only one major reason for it to be granted and that is adultery. For those who have been divorced for that reason or any other, it is too late for these rules to be applied.

If you must take the path of divorce, then there is a . . .

PROPER PROCEDURE

IF YOU MUST resign from or break your contract, THEN there is a proper procedure to follow that is purposed to keep such ones from sinning. The principle of **1 Cor 10:13** could well fit here. .

There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

HISTORY

Approximately 2100 BC **a code of practice came out of Babylon**, where the **Talmud lifestyle** had sway, and it was devised by a man named Hammurabi which allowed a man or woman to divorce **WITH A VERBAL AGREEMENT ONLY** which was contrary to what God had said in Deuteronomy 24. This code lowered the standard and quality of marriage which has hung on and increased to the present day..

'A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT'

Notice, in the references to divorcement in the Old Testament and New, each time there is mentioned '*a bill of divorcement*'. This is very important for this makes the thing legal and proper.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Isaiah 50:1, Jeremiah 3:8, Matthew 5:31, Matthew 19:7, and Mark 10:4

GOD DIVORCED ISRAEL

Jeremiah 3:8 (God speaking) *And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.*

Divorce in itself is not sin . . . otherwise God would have sinned! **The CAUSE of divorce** is that one or both of the partners **sinned** by their words and actions which resulted in the breaking of their vows . Here, of course, Israel sinned having committed adultery (came into union with) with other gods. God did not sin and He broke this contract of marriage on these grounds.

This introduces '*spiritual adultery*' . . . when anyone comes into union with another god such as drink, drugs, lunacy etc.

WHAT MOSES SAID ABOUT DIVORCE

Deut 24:1 *When a man has taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he has found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.*

'uncleanness': Hb. *ERVAH*⁶¹⁷² = NAKEDNESS, INDECENT OR IMPROPER BEHAVIOUR, SHAMEFUL ACTIONS. This adds up to adultery as it is assumed to be in relation to another person.

(2) *And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.*

... as long as she (or he) has a certificate (bill) of 'legal' divorcement.

(3) *And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and gives it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;*

'hate' in the Hb. means just that! It has a source of bitterness and if not dealt with in the Lord, then it will produce unending problems in the future of the hurt parties (**James 3:16** principle). Hating is a direct opposite to loving! This is where the Lord leaves the 'door ajar'... for it would be 'hell' to have to remain under such circumstances of physical or verbal abuse.

(4) *Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.*

'The Promised Land' of the fullness of Christ is a pure walk and cannot be marred by anything unclean such as adultery.

'bill' : Hb. *CEPHER*⁵⁶¹² = LETTER, DOCUMENT, WRITING, BILL, CERTIFICATE, BOOK.

'divorcement' : Hb. *KARITHUTH*³⁷⁴⁸ = DIVORCE, DISMISSAL — from a root word *KARATH*³⁷²² = to cut down, to cut off, cut a covenant, eliminate. It is the word used for the **PROCEDURE** whereby a marriage contract is terminated.

Just in passing, God does not permit a couple to remarry after being divorced IF one has remarried in the intervening time (v.4 above). If they had both, after being divorced, kept themselves to themselves and then decided to remarry, then their 'divorcement' would really have been a 'separation'.

Other Hebrew words associated with this subject. . . showing separation of what was joined.

'TO SEND AWAY' or 'PUT AWAY' - Hb. *SHALACH*

'TO DRIVE AWAY' Hb. *GARASH*

God's law states that a 'bill of divorcement' (a *KARITHUTH*) **MUST** always accompany the act of separation or ending of a marriage contract (a *SHALACH* or a *GARASH*). Without a 'bill of divorcement', any act of 'putting away' does not constitute a lawful divorce and the parties are NOT free to marry again without it being considered by God as adultery etc..

Isaiah 50:1 *Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.*

'Israel' is spoken here by God as being the 'mother' that God divorced for her adultery as we have seen. A 'mother' infers that there are children and the 'children (the next generation) bear the effect of a divorce. Sometimes undisciplined children become a part of the 'divorce problem' too.

WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT DIVORCE

Matthew 5:31 *It has been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: (32) But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving (= with the exception) for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

Notice the 'shall' in these verses. It is speaking of someone who is contemplating a divorce. A bill of divorcement can only be issued when the cause has been adultery. Moses said the same but over the years and with input from Babylon, this standard was 'watered down' and a bills of divorcement were issued on other grounds.

'put away' Gk. *APOLUO*⁶³⁰ = send away, put away, dismisses, releases.

'adultery' Gk. *MORCHAO*³⁴²⁹ = to have unlawful sexual relations with another's wife/husband.

‘fornication’ Gk. *porneia*⁴²⁰² = illicit sex with another, lesbianism, homosexuality, bestiality.

Fornication is the act that makes for adultery.

‘DIVORCEMENT’ : Gk. *APOSTASION*⁶⁴⁷ = DIVORCE, A CASTING OFF PUBLICLY (which = legally),

DENY THE VALIDITY OF,

‘*apo*’ = AWAY FROM . . . ‘*stasis*’ = STANDING. . .

An overriding of a marriage covenant’s document (bill) . . . by another ‘bill’ . . . of divorcement.

The phrase **‘it has been said’** simply means that was what Moses had decreed. The ‘synagogue’ interpreted the Law which the Pharisees were strong on and were *loose on its usage*, like having **‘the door wide open’** when God only had it ‘ajar’. The influence of the Talmud from the Pharisees mostly overrode the Torah (Law) and that is why Jesus always was contrary to them. Don’t forget how that the culture of the Bible days were centred around the pre-eminence and predominance of men. The woman was a ‘second class’ citizen! Remember the woman taken in adultery — the ‘law’ stated that both parties be stoned to death. So in that account, where was the man? ‘Eve’ always seems to get the blame! This changed when ‘grace’ was brought in with the new covenant after Calvary.

JESUS THEN SAID . . . the door is ‘ajar’ for those who have fallen into adultery.

Matthew 19:7 *They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?*

(8) *He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.*

. . . because God said that the two become ‘one flesh’ . . . God joined them — in the original pattern of Adam and Eve.

WHOM GOD HAS JOINED!

There is a very distinct difference between a couple who have been led of the Spirit and know within themselves that God has brought them together ... and ... a couple physically attracted, emotionally driven and have had a ‘Church Wedding’ as a sort of a positive ‘hex’ having some vague type of belief that if they get married in a Church, then God is obligated to bless them! It is the done thing to do, is it not?

When God truly joins a man and a woman together, it is a precious situation... a holy union for God’s purpose in their joint lives and in their offspring. God puts two special folks together so that, because of this new arrangement, they each will be more ready to be processed by the Spirit towards maturity in Christ. There is only a small percentages of marriages which originate from fully seeking the Lord and His purposes. Let us add here that there are many marriages that have had the blessing of God added to them as these ones genuinely fully surrender to the Lord God.

Mark 10: 1-12 account of the conversation was similar to Matthew’s but with an important insert which we include here.

(6) *But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.*

(7) *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;*

(8) *And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.*

(9) *What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.*

Whom God has joined (Gk. = YOKED AS A PAIR OR TEAM) **MAN** must not split up. This opens up a question! **Did God put the two people together or did it just happen?** It is guaranteed that such a question will create bad memories!

In simplicity, was God considered at all in their initial coming together ?

Matthew 19:(9) *And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication,*

and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (10) His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. (11) But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.

(12) For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

Jesus declared the 'highest way' of walking. It was no good telling someone about the highest way when it was too late. Those seeking a divorce have the opportunity to receive His word and adjust accordingly. For the other scenario, it is the standard for any future step into marriage.

Jesus closed 'the wide open door' but left it 'ajar' all in one statement.

It is obviously the higher way not to get into any such bind as seeking divorce, but He noted that some would not be able to come through to that. Isn't it marvellous how the grace of God will cover for all situations ?

Jesus was upon earth to fulfil the Law of God and by so doing redeemed us from the requirements of that law which were very tough (to the point of being impossible) to keep in totality.

IS THERE NO HOPE FOR DIVORCED PEOPLE?

Our society has countless divorced couples with one or other of the partners having committed adultery! What is their situation right now? Are they cut off from God because of what they have done? Is there a provision for these folk in this unenviable situation? What about those who have got divorced for other serious reasons?

The 'old' culture was so tight that it was a rare thing to have such causes for divorce — such as alcoholism, drug abuse, brutality . . . these things just were not tolerated. The deterrent was very harsh penalties which today's society has abolished. Because of this, we must search the scriptures for **THE PRINCIPLE** of what is being said, otherwise we could be found guilty of causing many to live 'in hell' which is not the way of the God of Love, Who operates through grace!

First let us check to see if "divorce and remarriage" is **an unforgivable sin!**

Matthew 12:31 *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.*

FORGIVENESS AVAILABLE

Divorce, remarriage and adultery etc. are included under the '**ALL**' word which Jesus used. They are certainly *works of the flesh* as listed in **Galations 5:18** and on . . . but through grace *the fruit of the Spirit* is released to enable each to overcome the flesh.

James 5:15 *And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

(16) Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

One can be sick in body . . . sick in mind and sick in spirit . . . there is a provision for it all in the Cross (Atonement). Just because there is forgiveness available to those who have committed and who are committing adultery, it is no reason to aim to sin directly. However, it is usual that under such heated situations that end in divorce, there is no time to consider such details.

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA . . . they plainly committed adultery and Jesus was later called '*the Son of David*' ! Did the union of David and bathsheba **remain** adulterous ? Or was it sanctified by forgiveness ? David repented **AFTER** his marriage to Bathsheba!

2 Sam 12:13 *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

Psalm 51:2 *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

Such a repentance which God looks for, must never be taken lightly. There is never an excuse for sin! Sin is truly 'black' but . . .

Romans 5:20 *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound (be exposed). But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

Another example . . . **RAHAB THE HARLOT** married Salmon and entered the line of the Messiah! This is evidence that God forgives and restores.

If you wish to remain bound to the 'law', then you are, of course, free to do so; but remember, in that case, you will be expected to fulfil the **whole** law !!!

WHAT PAUL SAID ABOUT DIVORCE

1 Corinthians 7 UNMARRIED AND WIDOWS (or WIDOWERS) Remember a divorced person is in the same position as an unmarried person.

Paul addresses present situations by using the word 'let'. This word cannot be used for past situations.

(8) *I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.*

(9) *But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn* (Gk. = to be inflamed with lust).

(10) *And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:*

(11) *But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife* (= the highest way).

BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS

(12) *But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believes not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.*

(13) *And the woman which hath an husband that believes not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.*

(14) *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.*

One party believing in the Lord is OK for the children's sake.

(15) *But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.*

The 'law' here looked like it was only applied to the 'believers'! Let the 'unbeliever' go . . .! It appears that there is some harshness or vindictiveness creeping in on the scene here! Not so! Paul was simply following the theme that Jesus had spoken saying that there was a higher way but if some could not make it, then it is allowed. . . If you believe and walk uprightly, then the law cannot touch you.

(16) *For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?*

'TO PUT AWAY' : Gk. *APHIEMI* ⁸⁶³ = TO SEND AWAY, DEPART.

'UNMARRIED' : Gk. *AGAMOS* ²² = UNMARRIED, UNWEDDED, SINGLE.

'MARRIED' : Gk. *GAMEO* ¹⁰⁶⁰ = MARRY, BE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE.

'DEPART' : Gk. *chorizo* ⁵⁵⁶³ = SEPARATE, DIVIDE, DEPART, GO AWAY.

REMARriage AFTER DIVORCE

1 Cor 7:27 *Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.*

(28) *But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Neverthe-*

less such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

IF YOU REMARRY . . . YOU HAVE NOT SINNED !

‘**bound**’ = TIED TO . . . implying *married to*!

‘**loosed**’ = DESTROY, DISSOLVE, DESTROY. These two words are opposites.

These terms relate to the married state which the context confirms. Verse 28 shows where the ‘door is ajar’. Paul was warning them hoping that they would not go through what he went through . . . maybe???

Is marriage to formerly ‘adulterous or sinfully-divorced’ persons prohibited? Is marriage to a former murderer prohibited? Is marriage to former drug user prohibited? Is marriage to a former violent bank robber prohibited? Is it a worse crime to have gone through divorce?

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Divorce is the very, very last resort to a situation **especially** when both partners are Christians. In no way do we recommend divorce as an easy solution. Grace is available to ensure marriage between two believers need not fall apart. We do not promote divorce, but God has graciously left the door ‘ajar’ for exceptional circumstances which we have covered. The Bible was written for believers. The first of breakdown is the breaking of the marriage vows. This puts the marriage under a curse, as we have seen, as well as both parties. It is needful for this to be corrected before things deteriorate to the ‘point of no return’.

If you have been divorced and have been married again, it is needful for you also to **renounce the curse of . . . bitterness, adultery, lying, etc.** resulting from your broken marriage vows. If this is not done, then it can give ‘ground’ for the enemy to work from to bring you into bondages of condemnation, fear and insecurity in your new relationship. You do not need the stigma (curse effects) to be carried through to your present situation. Let the ‘new’ be truly new — let both purpose to walk in the spirit, set free to enjoy all that the Lord purposed.

. Jesus *became a curse for us* (Galations 3:13), that this part of the *body of sin* (**Romans 6:6**) might be destroyed. *In the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established.* (**II Corinthians 13:1**)

The same exhortation is given to those who are contemplating getting married and who have come through divorce.

Let your confidence be in the Lord Jesus Christ and the provision of His shed blood that takes away all sin . . . we confess it, requesting to be forgiven, **receive His forgiveness and walk in liberty**. When God forgives, He also forgets. Let us not ‘throw the book’ at people in a divorce situation for it only brings further grief to all involved. God is still in control and *all things certainly do work together for good* when He is at the helm. **There is no sin greater than the power of the blood of Jesus.** §