

Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

Introduction:

1. Few subjects are more controversial, or as controversial, than is the subject of “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.”
2. There was a time in our society when it was not so controversial – not because the **nature** of the subject has changed, but because most marriages remained intact, with both husbands and wives honoring the vows stated by each other, for better or worse, “until death do us part.”
 - a. But that situation has dramatically changed – so much so that in virtually every family there are family members who have married, divorced, and remarried; in many instances there are those who have been married and divorced two or more times.
 - b. “The people of God are being blown by the winds of society, and many are drifting,” Bob Waldron. **Is It Lawful**, page 137.
3. But no society is any stronger than the homes that make up that society; and no congregation is any stronger than the general family life of the members of that congregation.
4. This is a topic, which is:
 - a. Controversial.
 - b. Troubling.
 - c. It can be divisive.
 - d. Much needed – especially as it relates to our young people who are unmarried, and who need to know certain basic principles before they contemplate getting married.

Discussion:

I. Marriage.

- A. Definition: “the state of being married; relation between husband and wife; married life; wedlock, matrimony, **Webster’s New Twentieth century Dictionary**.
- B. A Union of one male and one female.
 1. Gen. 2:18, 21-24.
 2. Matt. 19:3-5. Note verse 5: “*They twain shall be one flesh.*”
- C. It is not a homosexual union.
 1. Genesis 18:20; 19:24; Jude 7; Romans 1:26-27.
- D. It is a “*Covenant*,” Malachi 2:14.
 1. A covenant is an agreement, a binding contract between two or more parties. Cf. Jer. 31:31-32.
 2. A covenant calls for a vow, a promise, or an oath by the two parties to fulfill the terms of the contract.
- E. Marriage involves three very important items, Matthew 19:5.
 1. Leaving. This involves decisive action by both parties.
 2. Cleaving. “*Cleave*” from *kollao*, means “to glue or weld together.” Cf. Romans 7:1-2; Matt. 19:6.
 3. Becoming “*one flesh*,” Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5.
 - a. This includes cohabitation, which is honorable in this relationship, Heb. 13:4.
 - b. But it certainly includes more than just a sexual union: “*one flesh*” is “a fitting expression of the intimacy, boundless sharing, and total merging that marriage demands of a male and a female,” L.A. Stauffer].
- F. A Scriptural marriage involves three parties.
 1. The Husband
 2. The Wife
 3. God, Who joins them together, Matt. 19:6.
- G. Includes compliance with civil law, Rom. 13:1-2; Acts 5:29.

II. Divorce, or “*put away*.”

- A. Definition:
 1. From *Apoluo*, means “to loose from, sever by loosening, undo..set free...used of divorce, as to dismiss from the house, to repudiate,” **Thayer’s Greek English Lexicon** of the New Testament.
 - a. Matthew 1:19; 5:31; 19:3,7-9; Mark 10:2,4,11; Luke 16:18.
- B. Matthew 5:32.
 1. “*But I say unto you.*” Jesus was contrasting what God permitted in Deut. 24:1-4.
 - a. A man who “*put away his wife*” was to give her a “*certificate of divorce*,” Deut. 24:1-4.

2. Read verse without the exceptive clause: *“but I say unto whosoever shall put away his wife causeth her to commit adultery”*
 3. The exceptive clause: *“saving for the cause of fornication...”*
 - a. The force of the exceptive clause: whoever puts away his wife *“for the cause of fornication”* does not share in the blame if she, through remarriage, enters into an adulterous relationship. Cf. Rom. 7:3
 4. *“Causeth her to commit adultery.”* This assumes remarriage on her part.
 5. *“And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”*
- C. Matthew 19:9.
1. *“And I say unto you...”*
 - a. Jesus was answering the question of the Pharisees who were trying to entrap Him.
 - b. Rabbinical teaching regarding the *“cause”* for divorce was contradictory.
 - (1) Those in the school of Shammai taught *“a man may not divorce his wife unless he has found unchastity in her...”*
 - (2) Those in the school of Hillel taught *“he may divorce her even if she spoiled a dish for him...”*
 2. Jesus’ answer: *“Have you not read..”*
 - a. He was taking them back to God’s original law for marriage, Gen. 2:24.
 3. The verse analyzed:
 - a. *“Whosoever,”* as broad as *“whosoever will,”* Rev. 22:17.
 - b. *“shall put away his wife,”* the one to whom he was to *“cleave,”* v. 5.
 - c. *“Except it be for fornication”* (Her fornication).
 - (1) *“Except”* has the force of *“if and only if”* (cf. Matt. 18:3; Luke 13:3; Matt. 19:9).
 - d. *“And marry another”* (becoming *“one flesh”* sexually with another).
 - e. *“Committeth adultery”* (involved in an immoral sexual relationship).
 - f. *“And he that”* (whether previously married or not)
 - g. *“marrieth her which is put away”*
 - h. *“Committeth adultery.”*
- D. Note the impression this had on the disciples! Matt. 19:10-12.
- E. The Sinfulness of divorce.
1. It is a putting asunder of what God has joined together, Matt. 19:6.
 2. It is something God hates, Mal. 2:14-16.
 3. It often leads to adulterous re-marriages, Matt.19:9; 5:32.
 4. There is only one scriptural cause.

III. Remarriage.

- A. Two groups of people who may scripturally re-marry.
 1. Those whose mates are deceased, Rom. 7:2-3.
 2. Those who put their mates away *“for the cause of fornication,”* Matt. 19:9.
 - a. Permission granted to the *“innocent party,”* the party sinned against by his/her fornicating spouse.
- B. What should we do about Christ’s law on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage?
 1. Should we tighten it? I Tim. 4:1-3.
 2. Should we make it more lax? Rom. 6:1.
 3. Should we allow preachers and elders to set it aside? Gal. 1:8-9.
- C. We should:
 1. Study it, Acts 17:11.
 2. Obey it, Jas. 2:12.
 3. Teach it, Matt. 28:20.

Conclusion.

1. What Jesus taught on this subject constitutes a *“hard saying,”* John 6:60. In Jesus’ day some heard what they interpreted to be a hard saying, and turned away and *“walked no more with him,”* John 6:66. But we should have the attitude of Peter, John 6:67-68.

--Bobby Witherington, August 23, 2015