

False Teaching Regarding Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

Introduction:

1. Marriage is honorable! Heb. 13:4.
2. Marriage is a divine arrangement, Gen. 2:18,21-24; Matt. 19:6.
3. Marriage is a covenant, Mal. 2:14.
4. Marriage is “for keeps,” Matt. 19:6; Rom. 7:2-3.
 - a. Romans 7:2-3 states the general rule.
 - b. Matt. 19:9 cites one exception to the general rule – “*except it be for fornication.*”
5. But biblical teaching regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage often constitutes a “*hard saying,*” John 6:60, resulting in many turning back and walking no more with Jesus, John 6:66.
 - a. Consequently, there are many human theories designed to get around the plain teaching of the Bible on this subject. In this study we plan to take note of some of those theories.

Discussion:

- I. **Observe: Many False ideas are advanced because people choose the wrong standard to follow, such as:**
 - A. Family situations.
 1. It can be hard to be completely objective when a close family member is involved in a questionable marriage.
 2. But God must come before family! Matt. 10:34-38.
 3. If your son or daughter were to pass away before being baptized, would that negate what the Bible teaches on baptism? Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
 - a. By the same token, family situations must not affect our “interpretation” of what the Bible says on this topic.
 - B. One’s own sense of injustice.
 1. How many, upon learning of a person’s plight because of being violated by a renegade mate, has said, “it’s not fair for that person to have to live a celibate life.”
 2. Fact: Life is often not fair!
 - a. It was not fair for my aunt to be murdered by two young men who asked to use her phone.
 - b. It was not fair for Stephen to be stoned to death for preaching the gospel! Acts 7:58-60.
 - c. It is not fair for children to have to suffer because of the sins committed by their parents, Ex. 20:5.
 - d. It was not fair for Jesus to be put to death on the cross because of my sins! Heb. 2:9.
 - C. What brethren believe and teach.
 1. Brethren in the Lord are not infallible standards to follow. Gal. 2:11-14.
 2. The majority is seldom right on any religious issue. Ex. 23:2; Matt.7:13-14.
- II. **God’s word is the Only Standard we can Afford to Follow.**
 - A. By it we will be judged, John 12:48.
 - B. It is perfect, Psalm 19:7.
 - C. It is profitable, 2 Tim. 3:16-17.
 - D. It will last forever, Matt. 24:35.
 - E. It must be obeyed, Matt. 7:21.
- III. **Some Erroneous Positions Regarding Divorce and Remarriage.**
 - A. Death the only acceptable reason for remarriage.
 1. Romans 7:2-3 states the general rule.
 2. Jesus gave one exception to the general rule, Matt. 5:32; 19:9.
 - B. God’s instructions on marriage apply only to Christians.
 1. “Worldly people are judged solely by the law of the world.” “Baptism is the dividing line between the world and the church (I Cor. 12:13). Up till then, Civil laws control. After baptism, Christ’s law takes over.” E.C. Fuqua, **the Vindicator**, Dec. 1951.
 - a. Matt. 14:4; Mark 6:17-18.
 2. “The alien is not under the covenant law of Christ until he brings himself under it by obedience to its terms” (Homer Hailer, **The Divorced and Remarried Who would come to God**, p. 52).
 - a. If the alien is not amenable to the law of God then he’s not a sinner! I John 3:4; Romans 4:15.
 - b. The people at Corinth were subject to the law of God prior to becoming Christians! I Cor. 6:9-11.
 - C. “The first act of adultery adulterates the adulterous relationship.”

1. Argument by Loyd Moyer in written discussion in **Gospel Guardian**.
 - a. The idea is that the first time a couple in an unscriptural second marriage cohabit, it is adultery, but that that act of co-habitation “at once releases one from the bond of the previous marriage and establishes a bond in the adulterous marriage so that it ceases to be adulterous.” A little adultery makes everything right!
2. Note Matt. 19:9: *“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.”*
 - a. *“Commits adultery” (moichatai)* is present tense, which in the Greek language refers not to time, but to action.” It is progressive action!
 - b. “The present tense of Matt. 19:9 shows that unlawful remarriage is adulterous and continues to be adulterous...to continue in the same relationship is to continue in sin,” Gene Frost, **Marriage is Honorable**, page 42,43.

D. One Loosed, both Loosed.

1. Those who hold this position agree that fornication is the only legitimate cause for divorce and remarriage. They rightly say the innocent party is loosed, but they then conclude that if the innocent party is loosed, then the guilty party must also be loosed and thus free to marry.
 - a. This means a person can profit from his own sins, contradicting Prov. 13:15.
 - b. It opens the door to gross immorality!

2. Matt. 5:32:

“Whosoever shall
put away his wife

One exception

“saving for the cause
of fornication.”

causeth her to commit adultery”

Whosoever shall

marry her that is divorced

No exception

given

commits adultery”

3. Matt. 19:9

“Whosoever shall put
away his wife

One Exception

“except it be for
Fornication

And shall marry
another committeth adultery”

Whoso marrieth her

which is put away

No exception

revealed

Doth Commit

adultery.

E. Mental Divorce.

1. The idea is that one who is put away for an unscriptural cause can remain married in his (or her) mind to the first mate until he/she remarries. Then he/she puts him/her away “in his mind” for adultery and is now free to remarry.
 - a. Question: What did Jesus mean when he used the expressions “put away” and “marry another?” The case of Herod and Herodias proves that marriage **is** marriage (real), whether God approves or not. Isn’t it better (and safer) to just take Jesus at His word?

F. Adulterous marriages are washed away in baptism.

1. The idea is that when alien sinners, without scriptural reason, marry, that marriage is adulterous. However, upon being baptized all sins are washed away, including the sins of an unscriptural divorce and an unscriptural marriage!
 - a. This overlooks one very important point. Repentance precedes baptism, Acts 2:38. Repentance involves a change of mind regarding sin, including **ceasing from past sins**. The act of sin must cease!

Conclusion:

1. “The time to prepare for marriage is before courtship.” “The problem of unhappy marriages and divorces is better solved before the wedding,” Frost, **Marriage is Honorable**, page 113.
2. Hebrews 13:4: *“Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”*

--Bobby Witherington, August 23, 2015