

# MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE (V)

## *Erroneous Teachings Concerning Divorce and Remarriage (Part 2)*

### Introduction

- 1) This study will continue our examination of various theories and teachings that continue to cause debate and division in the body of Christ concerning divorce and remarriage
- 2) May we be determined to seek only what Christ has taught and authorized in His word (2 Jn. 9)

### I) Put-away fornicator can remarry

- A) The exception (“except for sexual immorality”) providing the one and only lawful cause for divorce is given within the first independent clause describing the one who is putting away and remarrying (Matt. 5:32; 19:9)
  - 1) The exception has the force of saying “whoever divorces his wife for sexual immorality, and marries another, *does not* commit adultery”
- B) The exception is not given within the second independent clause describing the one who is put away
  - 1) Neither the put-away party in an unlawful divorce nor the guilty put-away fornicator have the scriptural right to remarry; whoever marries such a one commits adultery
- C) But isn’t the marriage bond dissolved by God in a scriptural divorce?
  - 1) Yes, for the innocent party, but the guilty party is still bound to the law of God which gives no right of remarriage

### II) Believer may remarry if deserted by an unbelieving mate

- A) This so-called “Pauline Privilege” is based on a misinterpretation of the phrase “not under bondage” as referring to the marriage bond (1 Corinthians 7:15)
  - 1) Context of 1 Corinthians 7 is Paul answering concerns/questions of brethren about marriage and divorce that had arisen due to a “present distress” (vv. 1, 26)
  - 2) **Vv. 10-11** – what Jesus had taught; **vv. 12-16** – Paul’s application of Jesus’ teaching to mixed marriages (Christians married to non-Christians)
- B) Paul teaches that a Christian is not to divorce his/her unbelieving mate (vv. 12-14)
  - 1) If an unbelieving mate departs (*chorizo* – depart, put asunder; vv. 10-11; Matt. 19:6; unlawful divorce), the believer is not under “*bondage*” (*douloo* – to enslave, reduce to bondage; Greek perfect tense = not now nor ever under bondage; see vv. 17-23 not become slaves of men)
    - a) This is not speaking of the marriage “*bond*” (*deo* – to tie, bind; v. 27)
- C) The believer is “not under bondage,” that is, not enslaved to the unbeliever to be forced to deny the faith in order to please the unbelieving mate and preserve the marriage
  - 1) We are servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:18), not slaves of men or of sin
  - 2) A believer divorced by an unbelieving mate must remain unmarried or be reconciled (v. 11)

\*While there are some who argue for a scriptural right to divorce for causes other than fornication as long as there is no remarriage (must remain unmarried 1 Cor. 7:11), Paul commanded that a departure/divorce **not be done** (1 Cor. 7:10, 11, 12, 13).

### III) Second putting-away (“mental divorce”)

- A) This theory states that, after an unlawful divorce, one may wait until their mate remarries and commits adultery, and then scripturally divorce him/her
  - 1) Some describe it as “The Waiting Game” (waiting until divorced mate unlawfully marries)

- B) Ignores fact of the first unlawful divorce and its consequences – neither mate can remarry!
  - 1) No scripture gives a right to divorce a second time mentally at some later time
  - 2) How long may one wait – one month? one year? ten years? longer?
  - 3) An unlawful divorce is still a divorce with consequences – cannot be ignored

#### IV) Use of pornography and online sexual activity constitutes fornication and is therefore a scriptural cause for divorce

- A) Definition of porneia (translated mostly “fornication” “sexual immorality”)
  - 1) “illicit sexual intercourse in general” (Thayer); “illicit sexual intercourse” (Vine); “of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse” (BDAG); “any kind of illegitimate sexual intercourse” (NIDNTT); “fornication, prostitution” (Liddell); “came to be applied to unlawful sexual intercourse generally” (Moulton & Milligan); “fornication, licentiousness” (Kittle); “quite general word for unlawful and immoral sexual intercourse and relationships” (Barclay)
    - a) Use of “intercourse” would indicate physical sexual contact between individuals
  - 2) New Testament use of word refers to literal sexual relations (Jn. 8:41; 1 Cor. 5:1; 1 Cor. 6:12-20)
  - 3) Fornication (porneia) according to lexicon definitions and scriptural use involves some form of literal physical sexual activity and contact that involves intercourse
- B) Fornication/sexual immorality distinguished from other lustful descriptions such as sensuality, impurity, passion (Gal. 5:19; 2 Cor. 12:21; Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:3-5)
  - 1) Sensuality (lust) leads to sexual immorality (Rom. 13:13 – cause and effect, like drunkenness leads to revelry and envy leads to strife)
- C) Use of pornography and online sexual activity clearly fall under lust, sensuality, uncleanness, and impurity, but such things are distinguished in scripture from fornication (porneia) itself as an overt act involving sexual intercourse
  - 1) A man who sexually lusts after a woman commits “adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:28)
    - a) Jesus makes the distinction “in his heart,” therefore it is not adultery in the literal sense of an overt act (cf. Jn. 8:4); lust in the heart would constitute “evil thoughts” (Matt. 15:19)
    - b) Same as one who hates can commit murder “in his heart,” but not murder in the literal sense as an over act (cf. 1 Jn. 3:15); we would not convict such a one of murder in a court of law, but admonish him to repent of evil thoughts
  - 2) Use of pornography and online sexual activity is sinful sexual desire (lust, passion, sensuality, impurity), but is not literal fornication as an overt act nor a scriptural cause for divorce

#### Conclusion

May we seek “the will of the Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). This subject, like others, can get very personal, difficult, and emotional, but we must stand firm upon what the scriptures teach in seeking to please God and having the unity of the Spirit. “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).