

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE (III)

Bible Teaching Concerning Divorce and Remarriage

Introduction

- 1) **Divorces and remarriages** are serious and widespread issues in our society and world
 - a) Typical marriage has about 50% chance of ending in divorce; some divorced more than once
 - b) Over half of older (35-65+) divorced individuals remarry; less for younger (under 35)
 - c) Affects many other people – children, extended families, neighbors
 - d) Historical course of society: *embarrassment-tolerable-acceptable-normal* → wrong direction!
- 2) Denominations of men and some brethren avoid this subject or adapt to modern thinking
- 3) We need to return to a study of God’s word for the truth about divorce and remarriage
 - a) Absolute divine Bible truth can be learned and understood on this subject – God has spoken!
 - b) Differences among brethren does *not* mean that Bible truth is unknowable or unclear (Eph. 5:17)
 - c) Differences and divisions are not solved by seeking unity-in-doctrinal diversity (2 Jn. 9)
 - d) Unscriptural teachings and practices not allowed as conscientious liberties (Rom. 14:3; 16:7)
 - e) Must endeavor to remove emotion and personal bias from our minds and seek God’s will

I) Permanence of Marriage (“for life”)

- A) Jesus taught that a divinely joined marriage of an eligible man and woman is *not* to be “separated” by man (Matt. 19:3-6)
 - 1) Should be taught, emphasized, and obeyed to the glory of God and for a happy home
 - 2) A “marriage” of a male-male, female-female, multiple mates, or human-nonhuman is not joined by God (according to His will), and therefore not a lawful marriage
- B) A “marriage bond” exists between a man and woman joined together by God (1 Cor. 7:27)
 - 1) Gk. *deo* – to tie, bind; a lawful bond of marriage exists for life (Rom. 7:2)
 - 2) One can act against the marriage bond by unlawfully “putting asunder” the marriage (by human divorce laws), but sinful actions do not change the will and judgment of God
 - a) Marrying someone else is committing adultery (Rom. 7:3 sexual infidelity)
 - i) Note that one can be “married” and still be the husband/wife of another person
 - b) Must remain unmarried or reconcile to husband/wife (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
 - i) Note that one can be “unmarried” and still said to have a “husband” or “wife”
 - 3) Even when a marriage is put asunder unlawfully, the divine marriage law that bound the couple still exists that condemns the sinful divorce and forbids the forming of any other bond of marriage

II) Divorce – “From the Beginning it was not So”

- A) Law of Moses (Deut. 24:1-4; *keritut* – a cutting [off a marriage by a writing])
 - 1) Wife sent away due to “uncleanness” (indecency)
 - 2) Permitted because of “hardness of hearts,” but not “from the beginning” (Matt. 19:7-8)
 - a) Divorce is a result of disobedience and was never part of God’s original plan
- B) God “hates” divorce (Mal. 2:16); it covers one with violence – separation of what God joined!
- C) Disputes about divorce continued into NT times (Matt. 19:3; schools of Shammai and Hillel)

III) New Testament Teaching

A) Divine Command Forbidding Divorce and Remarriage

- 1) *Luke 16:18; Mark 10:11-12* (*apoluo* – depart, divorce, putting away)
- 2) *1 Corinthians 7:10-11* (*chorizo* – depart, put asunder; *aphiemi* – to bid go away or depart)

- 3) These scriptures give the basic rule – **no** divorce permitted by God, and any subsequent remarriage results in **adultery** (violation of marriage vow of faithfulness)
 - a) One can be unlawfully divorced (1 Cor. 7:10-11) and unlawfully married (Rom. 7:2-3a)
 - i) If unlawfully divorced, **one must remain unmarried or reconcile** (1 Cor. 7:11)
 - ii) If unlawfully married, **repentance demands separation** (Acts 26:20; Mk. 6:17-18; cf. Ezra 9-10)
- B) **“Except for Fornication”** (“except” = *if and only if; the only lawful cause for divorce*)
 - 1) **One exception** – putting away for the “cause” (reason) of fornication (sexual immorality)
 - a) *Porneia* – fornication, any illicit sexual intercourse
 - b) *Matthew 5:32* – innocent party *not* held responsible for guilty mate’s post-divorce adultery
 - c) *Matthew 19:9* – innocent party **not** commit adultery if remarry after putting away guilty mate
 - d) Must determine from Scripture whether a marriage or divorce is “lawful” or “unlawful”
- C) **Who may scripturally marry?**
 - 1) A person who has never been married (Matt. 19:4-6)
 - 2) One whose mate has died (Rom. 7:2-3)
 - 3) Innocent person who has put away a mate for the cause of fornication (Matt. 19:9)

Conclusion

Brethren should unite on the law of Christ about marriage, divorce and remarriage:

Marriage is for one woman and one man for life, the one and only exception being that an innocent mate may put away a spouse guilty of fornication and have the right to marry another.

Not all will accept this, but we must humble ourselves before the authority of God, accept the truth, and obey it to please God (Matt. 19:10-12).