

# Rod's Comments on Divorce and Remarriage

**Opening Remarks.** Divorce and remarriage are still taboos or sacred cows with many churches. They often carry a stigma that's hard to shake loose. In generations past (e.g., early 1900s), divorcees would be ostracized from church and possibly from work. Today, the pendulum has swung to the other extreme where divorces and remarriages are just other life events like having a car accident. Unfortunately, no other life events cause such life-long havoc on the welfare of the family and of society at large.

**Definition of Adultery and its Consequence.** When the once-pure is made impure it is adulterated. God designed marriage for 1 man and 1 woman till death do they part. Any other scenario adulterates this design like adding dirt to a pure glass of water. Once adultery is condoned in a society, it is often a precursor to other sins such as homosexuality and bestiality. When sexual promiscuity is rampant on a national scale, the only remedy has been total or near total annihilation. God always had to wipe the slate clean.

Tony Evans says that “divorce and remarriage remains the often-unacknowledged elephant sitting squarely in the center of the sanctuary. We dance around it, carry on with our praise and worship services next to it, and frequently outright ignore it. This is dangerous to the body of Christ” (source: Divorce and Remarriage by Tony Evans. p 6).

**Our Dilemma.** Divorce, by itself, is not the downfall of the church. It is the remarriage of divorcees that is our Jezebel today. The Church ignores the truth of Scripture, which teaches that the remarriage of a divorcee creates an adulterous event. This makes the Church immoral and destroys our ability to be the salt of the earth and a preserver of society's morals. How can the Church tell the world that homosexuality is wrong when we condone and promote adultery every time we remarry a divorcee? Many churches today even choose to ignore or distort clear teachings in Scripture so they can fill pastor, elder, or deacon positions with men who meet most but not all qualifications (e.g., “...husband of one wife”, [1Timothy 3:12](#)). This amounts to nothing less than playing church when we pick and choose which principles to live by. Fortunately, with Jesus Christ, there is no eternal shame for our past sins and failures, including adultery ([Romans 9:33](#)). Unfortunately, in a fallen world, divorce wrecks lives, and remarriages bring another dimension of complexity with adultery & blended families. For example, children are commanded in scripture to obey mom and dad, but there are no direct principles for them to obey step mom or step dad in lieu of their biological parent(s). We must glean from other principles, such as “obey those who have rule over you” ([Hebrews 13:17](#)) to bring order to a situation that is not God's ideal. God's design for marriage has not changed since Adam and Eve. As men and women in a society move further away from God's word we see a widespread collapse of the family, often beginning with the dissolution of a marriage and its reconstitution in subsequent marriages or in just living together. In other words, an indissoluble marriage covenant in God's sight is disposable in man's sight. So how do we fix what is broke, and for the Church to be salty once again, and put ourselves in a position to receive God's intended blessings for us individually, corporately, and nationally? The passages below reflect the many teachings on divorce and remarriage, adultery, living together, and even polygamy found throughout the Bible. In brief, the Bible lays out ways to fix bad marriages, and for God, who never wants to throw people away, to be able to work in people's lives, though they are in “adulterated” situations. The final question is will we listen?

Item	Major Passages on Divorce, Remarriage, Multiple Wives, & Other Adulterous Issues	Rod's Comments
1.	Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.	Original concept – one man and one woman for life. They are old enough to leave their moms & dads; to survive on their own; and to consummate their marriage.
2.	Gen 12:15-19 Pharaoh took Sarai as his wife, but gave her back to Abram after he realized God was not happy with the unbiblical arrangement	Sarai had 2 husbands & she went back to her 1 <sup>st</sup> husband. This was before the Law
3.	Gen 19:36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. 2 Peter 2:7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:	Lot was considered “just” ( <a href="#">2Pet 2:7</a> ) though he allowed himself to get drunk and have incestuous relationship with his 2 daughters
4.	Gen 16:2 Sarah told Abraham “to go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai...” Gen 25:6 But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts...	Abraham's other wives (Hagar & Ketura) were called concubines (cf <a href="#">Gen 25:6</a> ) – yet Abraham & Sarah were considered people of great faith ( <a href="#">Heb 11</a> )
5.	Gen 30:15 And [Leah] said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes.	Having multiples wives did not mean having group sex (cf <a href="#">Esther 2:12</a> ). Polygamy was permitted by God but not sanctioned (if it did not involve stealing someone else's wife)
6.	Lev 20:10 And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.	Penalty for adultery (taking someone else's covenanted wife) was death for both parties
7.	Ex 21:4 If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. Ex 21:8 If she [female Hebrew slave] please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. Ex 21:10,11 If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.	Redeeming and releasing slaves with a wife or as a wife.  Also, how to treat/release a slave girl as a 2 <sup>nd</sup> wife.  Remarriage is not the issue.
8.	Ex 22:16 And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed (virgin), and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. Ex 22:17 If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.	Premarital sex between a man and a willing virgin does not warrant the death penalty.  Adultery/remarriage is not the issue.

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9.	<p>Lev 19:20 'Now if a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave acquired for another man, but who has in no way been redeemed nor given her freedom, there shall be punishment; they shall not, however, be put to death, because she was not free.</p> <p>Lev 19:21 'He shall bring his guilt offering to the LORD to the doorway of the tent of meeting, a ram for a guilt offering.</p> <p>Lev 19:22 'The priest shall also make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before the LORD for his sin which he has committed, and the sin which he has committed will be forgiven him.</p>	<p>Slaves and Captives are treated differently.</p> <p>Adultery/remarriage is not the issue.</p>
10.	<p>Deut 21:10-13 When you go out to battle against your enemies, and God delivers them into your hands and you take them away captive, and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and have a desire for her and would take her as a wife for yourself, then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails. She shall also remove the clothes of her captivity and shall remain in your house, and mourn her father and mother a full month; and after that you may go in to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife.</p> <p>Deut 21:14 It shall be, if you are not pleased with her, then you shall let her go wherever she wishes; but you shall certainly not sell her for money, you shall not mistreat her, because you have humbled her.</p>	
11.	<p>Deut 21:15 If a man have <b>two wives</b>, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated:</p> <p>Deut 21:16 Then it shall be, when he makes his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn:</p> <p>Deut 21:17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.</p>	<p>Much like slavery and divorce, God made accommodations for man's shortcomings</p> <p>Also note that no woman is ever recorded as having multiple husbands at the same time. (cf, the woman at the well, <a href="#">John 4:16-18</a>)</p>
12.	<p>Deut 22:13-19 If a man falsely charges his new bride with infidelity he cannot divorce her</p> <p>Deut 22:20-21 If charges of infidelity against a new bride are true – she is to be stoned</p> <p>Deut 22:28-29 If a man rapes a virgin, she shall become his wife – he cannot divorce her</p> <p>Deut 22:22-27 All other scenarios of a man lying with a woman warrant the death penalty for the man – and for the woman if she does not cry out</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divorce only seemed allowable for a wife who is accused of infidelity, but it cannot be proven.</li> <li>• All other scenarios warrant the death penalty</li> </ul>
13.	<p>Deut 24:1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, [ESV]</p> <p><b>Deut 24:2</b> and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, [ESV]</p> <p>Deut 24:3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;</p> <p>Deut 24:4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, <b>after that she is defiled</b>; 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.</p>	<p>v2 – Mercy allows for remarriage</p> <p>vv2, 4 – Remarriage might be acceptable, but it defiles the spouse (adulterous)</p> <p>v4 – This could be a Jewish-only issue, but has application for other people groups as well (cf <a href="#">Jer 3:1</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does it cause the land to sin? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts genealogy (who's your daddy?)</li> <li>• Promotes promiscuity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
14.	<p>2Sa 5:13 And David took <i>him</i> more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David.</p>	<p>David was a man after God's own heart (<a href="#">1Kings 11:4</a>) even with multiple wives &amp; concubines.</p>
15.	<p>2Sa 11:7,8 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.</p>	<p>God gave, or at least allowed, David to have multiple wives.</p>
16.	<p>1 King 11:3 (Solomon - the wisest man ever recorded) had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines...and his wives turned away his heart.</p>	<p>Solomon may have been wise, but he wasn't prudent</p>
17.	<p>2Sam 13:20 And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he is thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.</p>	<p>Tamar, raped by her step-brother, remained unmarried due to her violation</p>
18.	<p>1 Chron 8:8 And Shaharaim (tribe of Benjamin) begat children in the country of Moab, after he had sent them away (i.e., divorced); Hushim and Baara his wives.</p>	<p>Little known passage of a divorced man.</p>
19.	<p>Esther 2:8 So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.</p>	<p>God allowed Esther to become part of a heathen harem - though, being a Jewess she was only to be given to a Jew as a wife, according to the Mosaic Law.</p>
20.	<p>Esther 2:12 Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to the king...</p>	<p>Even in this heathen harem, group sex was seemingly not practiced</p>

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21.	<p>Ezr 10:3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.</p> <p>Ezr 10:9 Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the <b>ninth month, on the twentieth day</b> of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain.</p> <p>Ezr 10:10 And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have sinned, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.</p> <p>Ezr 10:11 Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and <b>separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.</b></p> <p>Ezr 10:17 And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the <b>first day of the first month.</b> (3.5 months)</p> <p>Ezr 10:19 And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives</p> <p>Ezr 10: 44 All these had taken strange wives: and <i>some</i> of them had wives by whom they had children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biblical divorce for the sinful Israelites. Dire measures were needed to fix a bad problem (corruption of the Jewish faith).</li> <li>• In this case, 2 wrongs made a right (marry foreign women &amp; then divorce them)</li> <li>• However, remarriage was not the issue, these marriages were not “God-joined</li> <li>• This was a Jewish issue and may not be applicable to non-Jews</li> <li>• <b>SEVERITY W/ COMPASSION WAS THE KEY</b> – It took 90 days to resolve 113 cases. Approx, 1 day apiece. It was methodical, caring, and effective. It was not a one-size fits all approach.</li> <li>• Options probably included:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Send spouse &amp; kids back to her father</li> <li>2. Stay, be converted, or excommunicated</li> <li>3. Leave Israel with your heathen family</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
22.	<p>Is 50:1 Thus says the LORD, "Where is the certificate of divorce by which I have sent your mother away? Or to whom of My creditors did I sell you? Behold, you were sold for your iniquities, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divorce is biblically justifiable for infidelity, abandonment, and abusive behavior</li> <li>• Notice that God is divorced</li> </ul>
23.	<p>Jer 3:1 They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.</p>	<p>(cp <a href="#">Deut 24:4</a>). God is in so much love with His betrothed, Israel, He is even willing to say “return to me – I don’t care what you have done”</p>
24.	<p>Jer 3:8 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.</p> <p>Jer 3:14 Turn, O backsliding children, says God; for I am <b>married</b> unto you: I will take you 1 of a city, and 2 of a family, &amp; I will bring you to Zion:</p>	<p>Notice that God divorced Israel in v8, but still declared the marriage valid in v14 (“I am [still] married unto you)</p> <p>“married” = 01166. <i>baal</i>; a prim. root; to marry, rule over</p>
25.	<p>Ezek 44:22 And they (the Levitical priests) shall not marry a widow or a divorced woman but shall take virgins from the offspring of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest.</p>	<p>Apparently, there will be divorces in the millennial kingdom</p>
26.	<p>Hos 1:2 And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms:</p>	<p>God was going to make Hosea and his family an aberration for a powerful lesson</p>
27.	<p>Hos 3:3 NASB - Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress            NLT - Then the LORD said to me, "Go and get your wife again. Bring her back to you and love her, even though she loves adultery.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Either Hosea was commanded to love a 2nd woman other than his wife, Gomer (Did God command Hosea to sin?)</li> <li>2) Or, Hosea was told to get his wife again (this is the most logical scenario)</li> </ol>
28.	<p><a href="#">Prov 2:17</a> <b>An adulteress forsakes her companion and forgets God's covenant</b>  <a href="#">Mal 2:14</a> <b>A wife is a companion to her husband by covenant</b></p>	<p><b>A valid marriage is a trilateral covenant</b></p>
29.	<p>Mal 2:15 Did he not make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit, &amp; wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore, take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.</p> <p>Mal 2:16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for <i>one</i> covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.</p>	<p>In other words: God hates divorce, plain and simple. People ought to seek other solutions (i.e., reconciliation, counseling, etc.)</p> <p>The solution for New Testament saints in <a href="#">1Corinthians 7:11</a> is to reconcile or remain single</p>
30.	<p>Mt 1:5 Salmon was the father of Boaz by <b>Rahab</b> (Canaanite), Boaz was the father of Obed by <b>Ruth</b> (Moabite), and Obed the father of Jesse.</p>	<p>It's OK for believers to marry interracially, assuming the spouse accepts God</p>
31.	<p>Mt 5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:</p> <p>Mt 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication &lt;porneia&gt;, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) He can't cause her to commit adultery if she's already been unfaithful (most women had to remarry to avoid being destitute or becoming a prostitute)</li> <li>2) No exception – if someone marries a divorcee they are committing adultery</li> </ol>
32.	<p>Mat 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.</p> <p>Mat 18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.</p> <p>Mat 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man</p>	<p>An unruly/abusive spouse may be possible justification for divorce or marital separation.</p> <p>E.g., a wife trying to reconcile with an abusive husband and the matter is eventually brought before the church.</p>

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33.	<p>Mt 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.</p> <p>Mt 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except <i>it be</i> for fornication &lt;porneia&gt;, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: [and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.]</p> <p>Mt 19:10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with <i>his</i> wife, it is not good to marry.</p> <p>Mt 19:11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.</p> <p>Mt 19:12 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.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b><u>Principle of Added Clarification</u></b> – if a parallel passage provides more details, the proper interpretation is based on that clarification.</li> <li>2) However, 19:9 in many earlier mss reflect the same wording as <a href="#">Matthew 5:32</a></li> <li>3) Also, if divorce and remarriage were OK, then the disciples didn't need to state what they did in vs10.</li> <li>4) Jesus basically says marriage is not made for everyone, and being single has its advantages, but it is not easy either</li> <li>5) Matthew's initial audience were Jews, so they would have considered several porneia relationships that God would not have joined together: a) Herod's unlawful marriage to his niece; b) the unlawful marriages of Ezra's day; and c) other unlawful marriages (e.g., homosexual)</li> </ol>
34.	<p>Mt 14: 3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.</p> <p>Mt 14:4 For John said unto him, <b>"It is not lawful for thee to have her."</b></p> <p>Mt 14:10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.</p>	<p>Notice that John the Baptist lost his head over this divorce and remarriage issue, and he challenged 2 unbelievers for their "unlawful" marriage</p>
35.	<p>Mr 6:17 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: <b>for he had married her.</b></p> <p>Mr 6:18 For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.</p> <p>Mt 14:3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.</p> <p>Mt 14:4 For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.</p> <p>Lk 3:19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,</p> <p>Lk 3:20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.</p>	<p>If Herod Antipas, Herodias and Philip (Herod II) were all unsaved, why does it matter who's married to whom? John the Baptist (JTB) lost his head for nothing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note: Herodias was a niece of both Herod Antipas and Herod II (Philip). She left her uncle Philip for Antipas (her other uncle)</li> <li>• Was JB trying to get Herodias to go back to her original husband – Philip?</li> <li>• See <a href="#">1Thes 4:3-6</a> (NLT) re. defrauding a brother "in this matter" by taking his wife (also cf <a href="#">Lev 18:16</a>; <a href="#">20:21</a>)</li> </ul>
36.	<p>Mr 10:9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.</p> <p>Mr 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.</p> <p>Mr 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.</p>	<p>Modern Law of Double Standards: According to the Mosaic Law only men can put away (divorce) their wives. The women could leave, but they could not divorce their husbands.</p>
37.	<p>Lu 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from <i>her</i> husband committeth adultery.</p>	<p>Plain and simple...every remarriage of a divorcee – no matter the circumstances – is adulterous.</p>
38.	<p>John 4:16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.</p> <p>John 4:17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:</p> <p>John 4:18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.</p>	<p>The woman with 5 husbands and a live-in boyfriend was used of God to win a town, but we are not told how she fixed her life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note 1: If the Bible did state how she corrected her lifestyle, then many may erroneously use that process to force-fit or fix all other "similar" situations</li> <li>• Note 2: Jesus acknowledged the woman's 5 marriages as valid</li> </ul>
39.	<p>John 8:3-11 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery ...And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.</p>	<p>Notice that Jesus did not condemn her and could not because the Law (<a href="#">Lev 20:10</a>) stipulates that both the man and woman must be present.</p>
40.	<p>Ro 7:1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?</p> <p>Ro 7:2 For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to <i>her</i> husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of <i>her</i> husband.</p> <p>Ro 7:3 So then if, while <i>her</i> husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.</p>	<p>A husband must die before a wife is free to marry cleanly; else she will be tagged as an adulteress. This is in line with <a href="#">Luke 16:18</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note: Following a divorce, God does honor some 2<sup>nd</sup> marriages (not Herod's &amp; Herodia), and so should we. But is it God's perfect will for that to happen? No. Plus, a couple is now limited in how they can serve in the church.</li> </ul>
41.	<p>1Co 6:16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is someone deemed married with their first pre-marital sex? No. It is fornication. There is no "leaving &amp; cleaving" to make it a lawful union for God to "join together."</li> <li>• Should pre-marital sex be an issue in the selection of Deacons and Elders? Possibly, so to ensure a "good report from without."</li> </ul>

## Rod's Comments on Divorce and Remarriage

Item	Major Passages on Divorce, Remarriage, Multiple Wives, & Other Adulterous Issues	Rod's Comments
42.	<p>1Co 7:1,2 ...it is good for a man not to touch a woman. But because of <u>immoralities</u>, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband</p> <p>1Co 7:8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I [<i>presumably single</i>].</p> <p>1Co 7:9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.</p> <p>1Co 7:10 And unto the married I command, <i>yet</i> not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from <i>her</i> husband:</p> <p>1Co 7:11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to <i>her</i> husband: and let not the husband put away <i>his</i> wife.</p> <p>1Co 7:12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.</p> <p>1Co 7:13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.</p> <p>1Co 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, &amp; the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.</p> <p>1Co 7:15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under <b>bondage</b> [<i>1402 - to enslave</i>] in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.</p> <p>1Co 7:16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save <i>thy</i> husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save <i>thy</i> wife?</p> <p>1Co 7:17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.</p>	<p>v1,2 – each person is to have their own spouse – assuming it's within Biblical norms</p> <p>v8 – unmarried does not refer to divorcees, otherwise there's no need to add widows since unmarried would include never-been-married singles, divorcees and widows.</p> <p>v9 then makes perfect since for never-been-married singles and widows to marry cleanly</p> <p>v15 – “not under bondage” [<i>1402 - douloo; to enslave</i>] does not mean free to remarry. The context is in regard to departing vs staying and not remarriage. The wife is not under bondage to try to keep her husband at home – she can let him go. And according to <a href="#">Rom 7:2</a> and <a href="#">1Cor 7:39</a>, she is still “bound” [<i>1210 - deo; to tie, bind</i>] to her husband for as long as he lives (saved or unsaved). She is either to be reconciled with her husband or remain single (<a href="#">v7:11</a>) should he leave or divorce her.</p>
43.	<p>1Co 7:27 Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife.</p> <p>1Co 7:28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.</p>	<p>Taken in context with other preceding passages, to be loosed from a wife must mean a widower situation. Else we have a contradiction in Scripture, and remarriage is justifiable for any reason. The context is that it is OK for a virgin or a widow or widower to marry without sinning. A widow/widower and virgin are equal in stature (cf <a href="#">v7:8</a>)</p>
44.	<p>1Co 7:36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin [<i>or virginity</i>], if she pass the flower of <i>her</i> age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.</p> <p>1Co 7:37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin [<i>or virginity</i>], doeth well.</p> <p>1Co 7:38 So then he that giveth <i>her</i> in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth <i>her</i> not in marriage doeth better.</p>	<p>Does this passage refer to someone's virgin daughter or to someone's virginity? Either application seems valid.</p>
45.	<p>1Co 7:39 The wife is <b>bound</b> [<i>1210 - deo; to tie, bind</i>] by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.</p> <p>1Co 7:40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.</p>	<p>This passage further clarifies that if the husband is still alive, and the wife remarries, she is an adulteress. There is no relief from this. We cannot justify a remarriage of a divorcee because their prior marriage was before they got saved, or their spouse ran away, or their spouse was unfaithful. If we could justify such cases, then John the Baptist lost his head for nothing as he biblically challenged an unsaved man for taking another unsaved man's unsaved wife.</p>
46.	<p>1 Tim 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;</p> <p>1 Tim 3:12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.</p> <p>Titus 1:6 If any [elder] be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.</p>	<p>Does this eliminate single men, divorced and remarried men, childless men, and polygamous marriages, or does this imply one wife at a time? In context with the aforementioned Scriptures, it definitely eliminates divorced and remarried men and polygamous marriages. As far as Deacons and Elders being childless or single men, the intent and principle is to adequately prove their ability to rule a church well. What better way to judge a man's worth to rule a church except by evaluating how he rules his home.</p>
47.	<p>1Th 4:3-6 God wants you to be holy, so you should keep clear of all sexual sin. Then each of you will control your body and live in holiness and honor— not in lustful passion as the pagans do, in their ignorance of God and his ways. <b>Never cheat a Christian brother in this matter by taking his wife</b>, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before. (NLT)</p>	<p>This correlates why John the Baptist lost his head for challenging Herod for having his brother's wife – Herodias (cf <a href="#">Matt 14:3,4</a>; <a href="#">Mk 6:17,18</a>; <a href="#">Lk 3:19</a>).</p> <p>Also, this shows the timeless moral laws of God pertaining to marriage</p>
48.	<p>Heb 11 By faith...Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, David, Samson, Rahab performed admirably</p>	<p>These men and women listed in the Hall of Faith had issues with monogamy &amp; sexual purity – yet they were considered men and women of great faith. Imagine how much trouble they could have avoided, how much more they could have been blessed, and how much more they could have accomplished for God if they maintained sexual purity.</p>

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## Other related issues:

1. Should 2<sup>nd</sup> marriages be dissolved so spouses can reunite with original spouses to be in God's perfect will? NO. God works with the current marriage covenant. REMEMBER – MARRIAGE IS A COVENANT THAT IS INDISSOLUBLE IN GOD'S SIGHT. (For Jews living in the Promised Land it was an abomination to go back to the original spouses – because it polluted the land somehow – [Deut 24:4](#); [Jeremiah 3:1](#). This command seems only applicable to Jews living in the Promised Land. Remember, God was concerned about Jewish lineage, and for a divorced wife to go back to previous husband could create a "who's your daddy" syndrome)
2. How do you fix polygamist marriages in countries where they are allowed? God worked with Abraham, Jacob, and David. The early church had more polygamist and divorced/remarried relationships than we probably do today. Polygamy among the Jews did not cease till the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD, and it was typical in the 1<sup>st</sup> century to see Greek/Romans divorced/remarried more than 20 times. Polygamy was less of a problem than Divorce/Remarriage because Polygamy never stole another man's covenanted wife (except for King David and Bathsheba). The early church implemented two practices until the Reformation era (1500's) when Luther, Calvin, and other Reformation leaders bought into the liberal ideas of ERASMUS who allowed for divorcees to remarry to show grace & mercy:
  - A) Elders and Deacons were to lead by example (husband of one wife). They were not to be divorced or married to a divorcee.
  - B) The early church did not marry additional wives to polygamist husbands and they did not remarry divorcees.

## BUT What about the Exception Clause in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9..."except for immorality/fornication" <porneia>?

1. Matthew's exception clause was initially addressed to a Jewish audience. Mark, Luke, and Paul addressed Gentile audiences
2. The Jews would have realized porneia-type relationships were unlawful and God would not have joined such couples together into a permanent covenantal marriage. The types of unlawful marriages which would resonate with these Jews, would include the following:
  - A) The "unlawful" marriage of King Herod to his brother's wife and niece, Herodias ([Matthew 14:1-12](#)). This marriage was in violation of [Lev 18:13-16 & 20:21](#). REMEMBER: John the Baptist lost his head by challenging 2 non-believers for their "unlawful" marriage
  - B) The marriage of Jews to idolatrous Canaanite women found in [Ezra 9 & 10](#), which was in violation of [Deut 7:3](#). Being married to an unbeliever was wrong or unlawful for these Jews. God would not have joined them together. For us Gentiles, [1Cor 7:12-16](#) says believers are not to divorce their unbelieving spouse (whom God joined together) unless the unbeliever wants a divorce.
  - C) Homosexual marriages seen today would also fall into this unlawful category of relationships or marriages that God would not "join together" in a permanent covenantal bond because it violates his timeless moral code for marriages found in [Leviticus 18](#).
3. **EXAMPLES**
  - A) Two Hindus (unbelievers) get married. God honors their marriage by joining them together in a permanent, covenantal union since they followed God's timeless qualifications for a marriage to "leave," "cleave," and "become one flesh". If they divorce and remarry, even after one becomes a believer, or abusive, or unfaithful, or abandons them, it would be adulterous in God's sight.
  - B) An uncle marries his niece (incestual marriage), or 2 or more homosexuals marry. Since these are unlawful or immoral (porneia-type) marriages or relationships, God would not have joined them together in marriage. Therefore, if they were to divorce and remarry, their remarriage would not be adulterous in God's sight since God did not join them together to begin with. There is no dissolution of a God-joined marriage covenant.
  - C) A believer marries an unbeliever, violating [2Cor 6:14](#), "Be not bound/unequally yoked <2086 heterozugeo> with unbelievers." This is a different type of binding/yoking than what is found in a legal, God-joined, marriage bond <1210 δεω δεο> ([1Cor 7:39](#)). This is a great principle believers should follow, including for marriages, but it does not prevent God from joining a believer and a non-believer in a permanent, covenantal marriage. If either the believer or unbeliever were to divorce and remarry it would be adulterous in God's sight.
  - D) A transgender male (formerly a female) marries a transgender female (formerly a male). One or both of them accepts Christ and wants to live for the Lord. What advice do you give? Ezra, a skilled scribe in God's word, shows that compassion and time are needed to resolve these complicated cases biblically and for God's glory ([Ezra 10](#)). The Church needs to be ready to handle such cases as homosexual marriages are growing in numbers, & God's grace is still reaching out to save the toughest sinners.

## How can the Church begin to fix the problem and restore its saltiness before a skeptical and ever-increasing immoral society?

1. Yes, we need to accept divorced and remarried heterosexual couples and not ostracize them as churches once did (the pendulum swings too far in either direction at times); after all Christ acknowledged the 5 marriages of the women at the well as valid marriages ("...you have had 5 husbands", [John 4:16-18](#)). Jesus only took issue with the woman's live-in boyfriend.
2. Yes, we need to acknowledge there are biblical reasons to divorce (abandonment, abuse, infidelity), but there is never a biblical reason for remarriage that makes it adultery-free unless death has claimed one spouse, or the previous marriage was "unlawful."
3. Yes, God works with remarried divorcees, as should we, but divorcees are settling for 2<sup>nd</sup> best by opting to bypass God's clear directive to remain single or to be reconciled ([1Corinthians 7:11](#)).
4. To say we need to show "grace" or "mercy" and allow remarriages of divorcees denigrates God's word. God wants obedience, not sacrifice. He wants holy people, not necessarily married people to accomplish His will and to grow His kingdom. Therefore, the church needs to stop marrying divorcees as a testimony to God's word, else showing such grace & mercy is nothing more than license to sin.
5. The church should also avoid putting someone in a position of Pastor, Elder, or Deacon if they are divorced or married to a divorcee, since both situations puts the man in an adulterous relationship and causes a loss of testimony as he no longer has a "good report from without" ([1Timothy 3:7](#)).
6. Only then will the world take notice once the church takes marriage seriously as God does, and upholds God's plan for marriage.

**Concluding remarks:** God's will is not circumvented because of man's shortcomings. God can easily use His people in mighty ways even if they violate His design for marriage (e.g., Abraham, Jacob, Samson, King David, Solomon, woman at the well, woman caught in adultery).

But, in the New Testament era we are charged ever so strongly and clearly to maintain marriage in its purest state for the purpose of promoting and safeguarding the church, our testimony, and for God's glory. Because the church at large has succumbed to divorce and remarriage, we have lost our saltiness to influence and preserve society against immorality. We, in essence, not only condone adultery, we promote it whenever we marry divorced individuals while their previous spouse is still living.

There may be reasons to justify divorce or marital separation (e.g., infidelity, abandonment, or abusiveness), but there seems to be no valid biblical justification for remarriage while a divorced spouse is still living – even to be merciful so a single mom is not left destitute or forced into prostitution. Clearly, remarriage of a divorcee from a previous valid (non-porneia) marriage for any reason while their previous spouse is still alive is adulterous. If a remarriage of a divorcee (with previous spouse still living) can be justified as being pure and unadulterated, then it is OK to have the husband as a pastor/elder or as a deacon. This ability to declare a remarriage unadulterated while a divorcee's previous spouse is living places the church above the Bible (similar to how Catholics declare a marriage null and void through their annulment practice). THEREFORE, whenever a church condones remarriage of divorcees it does not encourage and promote sexual purity but instead promotes and condones adultery. The church cannot positively impact society's ever-decreasing morals until we fix our problem of immorality within our own house.