

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 04 March 2018..... 1Cor 1-3United in Christ
- 2) 11 March..... 1Cor 4-6 Glorifying God
- 3) 18 March..... 1Cor 7..... **Keeping Commitments**
- 4) 25 March..... 1Cor 8-10 Influencing for Christ
- 5) 01 April..... 1Cor 15-16 Assurance of the Resurrection
- 6) 08 April..... 1Cor 11 Remembering the Sacrifice
- 7) 15 April..... 1Cor 12 & 14 Serving God's People

INTRODUCTION

- How should we approach Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage?
 - Recall a biblical marriage was meant for life – 1 man to 1 woman
 - Remarriage was for those who lost a spouse due to death
 - Divorce was not for convenience sake, but to stop cruelty to spouse
 - Divorcees were to remain single or to be reconciled to their spouse
 - Anything else “adulterates” the purity of God’s plan for a marriage
- What constitutes a valid marriage where God joins a couple together?
 - A) Two Hindus marry. Is it a valid God-joined marriage?... Yes | No
 - B) A believer marries an unbeliever..... Yes | No
 - C) A Mormon marries 2 or more wives Yes | No
 - D) An uncle marries his niece Yes | No
 - E) A same-sex couple marry..... Yes | No
 - F) A man marries an underage girl..... Yes | No

ANSWERS: A-Yes; B-Yes; C-Yes; D-No; E-No; F-No

- Are we at liberty or even able to break a God-legitimate joining-together for any reason or only for certain reasons or for no reason?
- Since we live in a fallen world, God accommodated man’s sinful nature by allowing merciful exceptions to some of His commandments – e.g., Divorce (when a wife was falsely accused of infidelity) **Mat 19:8**
 - ♦ Divorce was merciful even back in ancient times since it granted a falsely accused wife some legal and financial protection
- Paul was addressing how a wife should handle her pagan husband who was not happy with his wife’s recent conversion to Christianity
 - ♦ The church asked Paul if it was OK to divorce and remarry
 - ♦ Paul said divorce might be necessary since peace has precedence
 - ♦ BUT remarriage of a divorcee causes an adulterous situation
- Can we make other people sin in this area of adultery? YES
 - ♦ Jesus said men caused their ex-wives to commit adultery. **Mat 5:32**
 - To avoid being destitute a divorced wife often had to commit adultery by being a prostitute or remarrying to survive

Passage	Comments
1Cor 7:1-9	<p>Paul’s Reason for Marriage → Prevent Immorality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v1. It is good for a (single) man not to touch a woman - Pre-marital sex is a no-no • v2-4. Principle of Conjugal Rights – Sex is a good thing within marriage. Wife owns the husband’s body and the husband owns the wife’s body • v7-8. Principle of Singleness – It’s OK to be single - Being married has no spiritual advantages over singleness. Rather, singleness has some distinct advantages when the focus is service to the Lord • v9. Principle to Marry or to Burn with Passion. Does this passage justify remarriage following a divorce? Context fits the never-married-before singles
7:10-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv10-11. Principle of Remarriage is not Condoned. A spouse “should not” leave their marriage. If they do they should remain single or seek reconciliation • vv14. Unbelieving spouse is “sanctified” by the believing spouse & children are considered “holy” - IOW, the unbelieving spouse receives godly attention possibly due to watchful prayer (but this does not guarantee salvation), and children are not considered unclean (i.e., bastards, illegitimates)

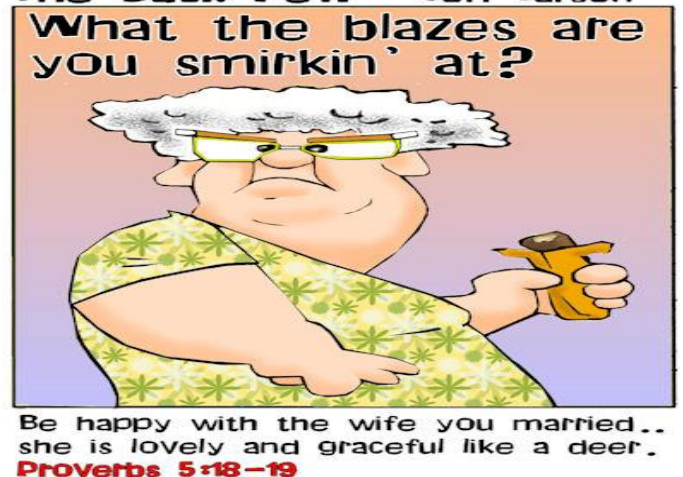
Passage	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v15. The Christian spouse is not under bondage (made a slave) if the unbelieving & cantankerous spouse wants a divorce. This does not mean the Christian is at liberty to remarry without becoming an adulterer. It means the spouse is not obligated to try keeping a tumultuous marriage together. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Again, we are called to Peace
7:17-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv20-21. Remain in the condition you were called in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Does this mean if single when saved you should remain single? Context means let God work through you in whatever lawful situation you might have been in when saved. • We do have the liberty to seek self-improvement
7:25-38	<p>Concerning Virgins (daughters or fiancés)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v28. But if you marry you have not sinned. Context is for those who have never been married before or widows. This passage does not condone remarriage of divorcees – else we have a contradiction (see v39)
7:39-40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wife is bound (tied to) as long as her husband lives. → Rom 7:1-3 – A spouse is bound to the marriage unless the other spouse has died. Remarriage to someone else while 1st spouse is alive is ADULTERY

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS

- What’s the worst that can happen when divorcees remarry?
 - ♦ Assuming divorcees still want to live for God, impacts are living with all the issues of a “blended” family, being flagged as an adulterer, and possibly being prevented from holding various church positions (i.e, Pastor, Elder, Deacon, S/S Teacher, etc.)
 - ♦ King David, a “man after God’s own heart,” had multiple wives, committed adultery with Bathsheba, killed her husband. THEREFORE, God can also use others who have a challenging past.
- **BUT Remember – John the Baptist lost his head over this issue when he challenged 2 unbelievers → so marriage must be important!**
- God is willing to work with a person’s current marital situation & so should we. God does not want to throw anyone away.
- Who should NOT initiate a divorce?..... Answer. The Christian spouse
- What can churches do to lower the high divorce/remarriage rate?
 - ♦ Provide marital counseling Yes / No
 - ♦ Challenge wayward members Yes / No / Maybe
 - ♦ Refuse to marry divorcees Yes / No / Maybe
 - ♦ Limit or bar adulterers from ministry..... Yes / No / Maybe

NEXT WEEK: 1Cor 8-10. Sundry teachings on judging others and ourselves, avoiding temptation and cultural considerations

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



More on Valid and Invalid Marriages:

- Should 2nd 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 TRI-LATERAL 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.
- Polygamy & Polyandry**. How do you fix polygamist marriages? God worked with Abraham, Jacob, and David. The early church had more polygamous and divorced/remarried relationships than we probably do today. Polygamy among the Jews did not cease till the 11th century AD, and it was typical in the 1st century to see Greeks/Romans divorce & remarry 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:**
 - Elders and Deacons were to lead by example (husband of one wife). They were not to be divorced or married to a divorcee.
 - The early church did not marry additional wives to polygamous 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>?

- Matthew's exception clause was initially addressed to a Jewish audience. Mark, Luke, and Paul addressed Gentile audiences
- 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:
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - Homosexual or same-sex marriages 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](#).
- EXAMPLES
 - Two Hindus (or 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.
 - An uncle marries his niece (incestual marriage), or a man marries an underage girl, or 2 or more same-sex people 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 the original couple together to begin with. There is no dissolution of a God-joined marriage covenant.
 - 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 deo> ([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?

- 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.
- 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."
- Yes, God works with remarried divorcees, as should we, but divorcees are settling for 2nd best by opting to bypass God's clear directive to remain single or to be reconciled ([1Corinthians 7:11](#)).
- 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 remarrying divorcees as a testimony to God's word, else showing such grace & mercy is nothing more than license to sin.
- 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](#)).
- 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 remarry 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 remarrying 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.

