

**LESSONS THIS QUARTER**

1) 01 March 2026.....	Matthew 14 .....	Courage
2) 08 March .....	Matthew 15 .....	Real Devotion
3) 15 March.....	Matthew 16 .....	Following Jesus
4) 22 March.....	Matthew 17 .....	Glory
5) 29 March.....	Matthew 18 .....	Forgiveness
6) 05 April.....	Matthew 28 .....	Our Task
7) 12 April.....	Matthew 19.....	Eternal Life
8) 19 April.....	Matthew 20 .....	Grace
9) 26 April.....	Matthew 21 .....	Authority
10) 03 May.....	Matthew 22-23 .....	Honor
11) 10 May.....	Matthew 24 .....	Alert
12) 17 May.....	Matthew 25 .....	Active Faith
13) 24 May.....	Matthew 26 .....	Our Atonement
14) 31 May.....	Matthew 27 .....	Our Savior

**INTRODUCTION → DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE (D&R)**

- **Tony Evans says this:** *“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.”* (Src: Divorce & Remarriage, p6)
- Unfortunately, Lifeway Explore the Bible (ETB) curriculum largely ignores Matthew 19:3-12 dealing with this hot sensitive topic.
- Few can handle the truth about it. **WHY?** This is such a critical doctrine for the Church today, I have to give it ample room.
- We cannot have an impact on an ever-increasing immoral society when the world can rightfully accuse the church of hypocrisy for condoning and promoting adultery whenever we remarry divorcees
- **Principle to Know.** The transcending moral laws of God (e.g., murder, adultery, idolatry, thievery) are applicable to Jews and non-Jews, believers and non-believers throughout all generations
- **Modern Day Dilemma – Divorce & Remarriage is out of control**
  - ♦ Everyone is impacted by divorce. Even God is divorced, **Jer 3:8**, and Joseph thought about divorcing Mary, the mother of Jesus
  - ♦ Many of us are alive today because of a divorce & a remarriage
  - ♦ Adultery is a reproach that is not blotted out ..... **Prov 6:32-22**
  - ♦ Israel panicked when the number of their abnormal marriages reached 1% (113 families out of 10,000) ..... **Ezra 10**
  - ♦ Most churches today have about 30% blended families
  - ♦ Should we panic and do something different to fix things for the next generation or do we continue maintaining status quo?

**THE EARLY CHURCH ON DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE**

- History shows us that polygamy and divorced & remarried folks were very prevalent throughout Jewish society and the Roman Empire during the earliest centuries of the New Testament Church
- In all probability, the early church had within its midst more polygamous relationships and divorced and remarried couples than churches do today – and they were vital to church life
- The early church did not seek to break up families in such relationships, but acknowledged such relationships as valid and workable, as Jesus would have done so
- The only controls the early church implemented were the following:
  1. Elders and Deacons had to be husbands of one wife only. No polygamous or divorced/remarried Elders & Deacons allowed. Leaders were to lead by example in this area.
  2. Most early churches prohibited marrying additional wives to polygamous husbands and remarrying divorcees

**Starting Assumptions:**

1. There are no contradictions in Scripture
2. God's plan for marriage is to be monogamous, intimate, heterosexual, & a permanent indissoluble covenantal union while both parties are physically alive on the earth
3. What God has joined together, man is not to separate
4. Anything outside of God's ideal plan for marriage is adulterous

Passage	Comments
Matthew 19:1-2	<p><b>Jesus Heals EVERYONE in Large Crowds Again</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the 9<sup>th</sup> crowd incident in Matthew where Jesus heals EVERYONE of EVERYTHING</li> <li>• How large was “large crowds”? Easily in the thousands</li> <li>• Does Jesus still heal EVERYONE today? See <a href="#">Matt 4</a></li> </ul>
19:3-9	<p><b>Divorce, Remarriage, Adultery – Which Way's Right?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus emphatically says NO to their Easy Divorce by taking them back to the beginning... <a href="#">Genesis 1:27; 2:24</a></li> <li>• v9. Any remarriage after a valid marriage is adulterous</li> <li>• So, what's an invalid, unlawful, &lt;porneia&gt; relationship?</li> </ul>
What is Porneia?	<p>Porneia (Greek) is where we derive the English word “pornography.” The Formal Word-for-Word translations properly render it as “immorality,” “unchastity” (NASB); or “fornication” (KJV), which conveys a host of sexual sins, to include homosexuality, bestiality, prostitution, incest, fornication before marriage, and adultery after marriage. Most Dynamic translations restrict the definition to “marital unfaithfulness” (NIV and RSV);</p>
<b>Divorce and Remarriage from a Gentile Perspective</b>	
Mark 10:11-12	<p>Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman he <b>commits adultery</b> against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she <b>commits adultery</b></p>
Luke 16:18	<p>Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another <b>commits adultery</b>, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband <b>commits adultery</b>.</p>
Romans 7:2-3	<p>For the married woman is bound by LAW to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an <b>adulteress</b>; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.</p>
1Cor 7:11	<p>If the woman leaves (divorces) her husband, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband, and that the husband should not divorce his wife.</p>
1Cor 7:39	<p>A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.</p>
Hermeneutic Principle of Added Clarification – If a parallel passage provides more details, the proper interpretation is based on that clarification	
<b>Divorce and Remarriage from a Jewish Perspective</b>	
Matthew 5:32	<p>Everyone who divorces his wife, <b>except for the reason of unchastity &lt;porneia&gt;</b>, makes her <b>commit adultery</b>; and whoever marries a divorced woman <b>commits adultery</b>.</p>
Matthew 19:9	<p>Whoever divorces his wife, <b>except for immorality &lt;porneia&gt;</b>, and marries another woman <b>commits adultery</b></p>



**So, what is this Exception Clause, "Except it be for Immorality"?**

1. Notice when Mark, Luke, and Paul address Gentiles about divorce and remarriage, there is no exception clause. Without exception, when a divorcee marries while their previous spouse is still physically alive, they are called an adulterer/adulteress
2. But when Matthew addresses his Jewish audience, we have an exception clause. So, what gives?
  - From a Jewish perspective, several unlawful <porneia> or invalid types of marriages would have come to mind:
    - A. Herod married his niece, Herodias, in violation of [Lev 18](#)
    - B. Herod married his brother's wife, contrary to [Lev 20:21](#)
    - C. The unlawful marriages of Ezra's day, violating [Deut 7:3](#)
    - D. Other types of unlawful <porneia-based> relationships or marriages include homosexual, bestial, underage, etc.
  - God would not have "Joined Together" these types of couples in an indissoluble union since they clearly violate His commands, therefore adultery would not be an issue since there was not a valid God-joined marriage to violate
  - Also, "**except**" in Greek (*mé*) conveys a negation (not, lest, neither, never). It could also convey "Not even for immorality"

Therefore, according to Scripture, if a divorcee from a valid or lawful marriage marries another person while their previous spouse is still alive, it is called adultery. There are no exceptions!

**Test Cases:**

- A. Jane marries Jill; both lesbians get married in a Christian church but they later divorce. If Jill later marries Jim, would this be adulterous? NO. Previous homosexual marriage was not a valid, God-joined, marriage, but an unlawful <porneia> relationship
- B. Jeff married Sally in a Hindu wedding. Sally accepts Christ, and Jeff becomes abusive and unfaithful. If Sally & Jeff divorced and each remarry, would their new marriages be adulterous? YES. Jeff & Sally's initial marriage was valid, though non-Christian. What about Jeff's unlawful infidelity <porneia>? Again, from a Jewish perspective, his infidelity would not fit what was meant by <porneia>, else we would have a contradiction in Scripture.
- C. Lizzy, a school girl in Nigeria, captured by Boko Haram, a radical Islamist group, was forced to wed her captive. If she later escapes and remarries, would she be called an adulteress? NO. Her forced marriage falls into the unlawful <porneia> category.

Even if a previous spouse has been unfaithful, or if they are abusive, or they abandoned the marriage, or if they are unsaved, or even has Alzheimer's, remarriage of a divorcee is adulterous

**Scripture Gymnastics are required with some D&R views:**

- ♦ "The church has the authority to declare the husband covenantally dead and to give the wife permission for divorce" (src: Tony Evans, Divorce and Remarriage, p39)
- ♦ "Remarriage is permitted in the case of marital failure prior to conversion" (src: Chuck Swindoll, Getting Through the Tough Stuff, p103)
- ♦ "You can divorce and remarry if your spouse has Alzheimer's" (src: Pat Robertson, TV broadcast, Sept. 16, 2011)

Common Views on D&R	Who Holds to Which View
1. No Divorce or Remarriage for any reason	• Early Church Fathers up to the Reformation (~1500 AD)
2. Divorce allowed but no Remarriage for any reason	• Most Catholics & most legalistic-type churches
3. Divorce and Remarriage allowed for certain reasons	• Calvin, Luther & other Reformed-era leaders after 1500 AD
4. Divorce and Remarriage allowed for any reason	• Most liberal leaning churches, including major denominations

Passage	Comments
Matthew 19:10-12	<b>It's Better Not to Marry with Such Tough Restrictions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apostles got it – Jesus did not make an escape route</li> <li>• Jesus responds that Marriage isn't for everybody, only for the most committed... and single life has its plusses</li> </ul>
19:13-15	<b>Jesus Blesses Little Children</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What significance is "Laying Hands" on someone?</li> <li>• Do all little children go to Heaven? See lesson: <a href="#">Ps 139</a></li> </ul>
19:16-26	<b>The Rich Young Ruler</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It takes more than just keeping the 10 Commandments to get to Heaven.</li> <li>• v21. Jesus says we must be all sold out, but few are</li> <li>• vv23-24. Riches or Materialism sends many to Hell</li> <li>• v26. All things are possible with God – such as avoiding sin</li> </ul>
19:27-30	<b>The Disciples' Reward</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principle – "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose" – Jim Elliott</li> </ul>
What Can We Do TODAY about Divorce & Remarriage?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do we change our cavalier position on divorce &amp; remarriage? Adultery is our Jezebel ..... <a href="#">Rev 2:18-29</a></li> <li>2. Seek marriage reconciliation, not divorce..... <a href="#">1Cor 7:11</a></li> <li>3. Do we say NO to the church remarrying divorcees?</li> <li>4. Do we say NO to pastors, elders, deacons who are divorced or who married a divorcee? Standards for leaders &amp; spouses require them to be "above reproach" ..... <a href="#">Mat 5:32; 1Tim 3:2,10</a></li> </ol>

**CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS.** We cannot impact the morals of the world until we address immorality within our churches.

- ♦ Though sometimes divorce is necessary for the sake of peace and/or safety, remarriage is the crippling issue ..... [1Cor 7:15](#)
- ♦ Every time a pastor marries a divorcee, the church tells its young people and the world that adultery is OK..... [1Cor 6:18](#)
- ♦ Recall that God would remove ("kill") the young people at a church where immorality ruled (sins of Thyatira)..... [Rev 2:18-23](#)
- ♦ Know this, societal sins always go from bad to worse.
- ♦ The only recourse God has to resolve rampant sexual sins & perversion such as homosexuality & bestiality is total or near total annihilation (Sodom & Gomorrah, Canaanites, Benjamites)
- ♦ Fortunately, God does not want to toss anyone away.
  1. Recall the woman at the well who seemingly had 5 valid (God-joined) marriages plus a live-in boyfriend. God used her mightily to win her town to Christ..... [John 4](#)
  2. Recall King David who had more than 8 wives and at least 10 concubines (girlfriends) ..... [2Sam 5:13, 15:16](#)
  3. And God used Solomon to write Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon (nearly 5% of the Bible) though he acquired 700 wives & 300 girlfriends..... [1Kings 11:3](#)



**"I admit it looks horrible, but it's still not grounds for divorce."**