

DIVORCE and REMARRIAGE

I RECEIVED THIS QUESTION IN A LETTER:

I have been celibate for twenty years because I don't know if it is ok to remarry again even though I've been married twice. Both husbands left me, but doesn't Jesus say not to marry a divorced woman?

ANSWER:

In the Old Testament the following instructions were given to the high priest:

Lev.21:13-15 – And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane (polluted), or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife. Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for I the LORD do sanctify him.

Geneva Bible note says: He was not to profane his seed by marrying any unchaste or defamed woman.

Deut. 24:1-5 - When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her (a thing of disgrace): then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*. 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; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; 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. When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war,

neither shall he be charged with any business: *but* he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.



Let's take a moment to let that sink in. In Biblical times you had a whole year for a honeymoon. I think most of us could not afford that today. They certainly weren't traveling the world and sight seeing and spending tons of money. I'm sure they stayed where they lived and their parents helped to support them for that year while they got to know each other.

Jesus spoke the following teaching, before His crucifixion. So when He spoke this teaching, the people were still living under the law. Remember the law wasn't fulfilled until after His crucifixion. The new will or new covenant was not in effect until Jesus, the Testator had died.

Matt.5:31-32 – It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Let's be clear about this. In a world where people are now going into marriage thinking it is no big deal if it doesn't work out I'll just get a divorce. That is not for those that serve God. He instituted marriage and does not approve of divorce. He does expect you to honor your marriage vows. There are some instances

where God will allow divorce but as much as you can, you should both strive to keep your marriage together and keep Christ at the center of it.

Malachi 2:16 - For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that He hateth putting away (sending away): for *one* covereth violence with his garment (and to cover (with) violence on his garment), saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously (and do not act deceitfully).

Talking about divorcing his wife and so having a garment that is then covered with violence. That sounds strange to us today. Let's look at some Scripture that may help to bring this out better. Let's go to the book of Ruth when Ruth found out the Boaz was a kinsman redeemer for her and her mother-in-law. She got cleaned up and went down to the threshing floor where he was.

Ruth 3:8-9 - And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who *art* thou? And she answered, I *am* Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou *art* a near kinsman (redeemer).

This is a picture of the husband and wife being one flesh. The husband being the protector and provider for the wife and his family.

Ezekiel 16:8 - Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest Mine.

This is a picture of Jesus as our Redeemer taking us under His wing.

Ephesians 5:25 - -Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Rev. 19:8 - And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Matt.19:3-12 – The Pharisees also came unto Him, tempting Him, and saying unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause (every reason)? And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (or separate). They say unto Him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, **except it be for fornication**, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. His disciples say unto Him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But He said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. 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.

Here you see that if the man found that the woman had committed fornication, which is having sex before being married, then he could divorce her. That could be one "uncleanness" found in her. Adultery was punishable by death but here we see that fornication was a valid reason to divorce someone. This was what Joseph thought Mary had done and he was going to put her away quietly.
(Matt.1:19)

Mark 10:2-12 – And the Pharisees came to Him, and asked Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? Tempting Him (testing Him). And He answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept (commandment). But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to

his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house His disciples asked Him again of the same matter. And He saith unto them, whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

The teachings of Jesus were before He had fulfilled the law. At this time, He was still teaching the law and keeping the law.

Here is Paul's teaching to the Corinthian church and here we will find our answers for today:

1 Cor. 7:1-17 – Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence (kindness): and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud (Deprive) ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that satan tempt you not for your incontinency (lack of self control sexually – so you don't stray outside of your marriage). But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. (single) But if they cannot contain (control their sexual desires or have self control), let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn (with lusts in themselves for sexual fulfillment). And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. 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. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be

pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. **But if the unbelieving depart let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases:** but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest, though, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain (command) I in all churches.

“It is good for a man not to touch a woman,” is the church’s view. They were writing asking about this. Not touching a woman meant not living in marriage with. So they were saying it was good for them not to live in marriage. That goes against God’s Word to Adam and Eve to multiply and fill the earth. God is surely about marriage. But here we also see that by the time of the New Testament according to Paul’s teachings it is also pleasing to God for those that He has given a conviction to live single and celibate to do so. So that they are fully devoted and concentrated on the LORD’s work, that their attention and devotion are not divided. Let’s be clear, this does not mean go live in a convent and separate yourself off from the rest of the world so that you are not a witness for Christ and are not spreading the gospel. It never meant to go hole up somewhere and live the life of a monk and do nothing for God’s glory.

Hebrews 13:4 – Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers (fornicators) and adulterers God will judge.

“And the bed undefiled” meaning to keep the marriage undefiled, free from sexual sins.

When Paul said he would that every man were as he was that means single. He was not married and for himself, was happy and content to be single. I’m sure a lot of people think it is less of a headache not having to answer or check in with someone else. You can do what you want when you want to etc.

At the end of that passage in 1 Corinthians he deals with being unequally yoked. If you find yourself unequally yoked, and your husband or wife does not have a

problem with that, then stay in the marriage. The hope is that the one who is not saved will be won by the life of the one who is saved. That they will be such a testimony for Christ by how they live that the spouse will come to Christ.

1 Cor. 7:39-40 – The wife is bound 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 (free to marry who she wants to); only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

“Only in the Lord” – she is a Christian and knows what God expects of marriage. If she wants to marry again, then she is to pray and seek God and be equally yoked to another Christian. She is to honor her vows and stay with the one she chooses.

Romans 7:1-4 – 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? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* 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. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

This is for those that are widows, showing that they are free to marry again. Also it is for all who are in Christ, even the Jews, showing them that they are no longer under the law but are now married to another and that is Christ – for all who will receive Him.



PASTOR ERUSTUS SHARED:

About marriage it's a serious area that you can get some time and teach on it. The devil is really frustrating many in this area. Those who were non believers when they got married, and later got saved, the husband or wife decides to leave or is divorced, one is free to marry or remain unmarried according to Paul's teaching. Through Jesus' teaching, another reason why one can remarry, is where there is infidelity in a marriage beyond correction. Paul preferred people not marrying so that they can get humble time to serve and fully be dedicated to God's work without being divided on marriage issues and serving God. This is only for those who can live pure without burning with lust in their hearts for the opposite sex.

For those of you who have gone through divorce and maybe things were not according to God's Word. Take heart in this, it is not the unpardonable sin. If you sincerely ask forgiveness, God will forgive you.

However, we are to study God's Word and abide by it in our marriages and relationships once we are saved. God is not in approval of all of the quick divorces that are happening for first one thing and then another. He gives His valid reasons for divorce, otherwise He expects you to stay in your marriage and do your best to make it work. Pray over your marriages. Many of you ran out and got married and are unequally yoked and now you are having many difficulties in

your marriage because of it. That is where parents have failed their children in not raising them to know God's Word and to live righteous lives. To pray before marriage and seek God about whom He has chosen for you to marry.

CLOSING

I want to address some things that you are not expected to keep enduring in your marriages:



Physical Abuse



Verbal Abuse



Emotional and mental abuse

An unbeliever is not concerned with when it is ok to divorce or remarry. This message is only for those that are saved and are concerned about living righteous lives to please God in all that they do. Many times these abusive relationships are a result of not being equally yoked. A believer should never marry an unbeliever.

2 Cor. 6:14 - Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

This is in your marriages, as well as friendships, business partnerships etc. If you are experiencing these types of abuses, then you know your spouse is not a Christian. For no Christian will make a common practice of hitting or beating you. They will not yell, belittle and put you down continuously. They will not be ugly to you, emotionally playing games of manipulation and trying to insult you to keep you under their control. None of these are Christian characteristics. If you are able to, get Christian marriage counseling. Talk with your Pastor as a couple. Go before the whole church. We all mess up sometimes and say something mean or ugly or have an argument. We should be willing to forgive. But when this is the normal, “all the time” behavior then there is a serious problem there.

If you believe your spouse is saved but struggles in any of these areas, then they may need deliverance. If they are not willing to get deliverance then you have your answer, they are not truly saved and are not dedicated to a healthy marriage nor to you for that matter.

If your spouse is not to these levels but not treating you the way you know you should be treated, then pray for them. Do spiritual warfare, binding satan and any spirits you see that are active in their lives. Spirits of abuse, anger, torment, pain, unclean and evil spirits, spirits of insecurity etc. Plead the blood of Jesus over them and lift them up to God.

Without jeopardizing your life or your children's lives, do all you can to mend, repair, restore and heal your marriage. To have a marriage based on Christ. Divorce should be the very last thing you do, not the first thing you run to at the drop of a hat. If something has happened, do your best to forgive and heal and let it go. We as Christians must forgive so that God will forgive us too. It doesn't mean you forget, but we must forgive. Some marriages can even withstand adultery if the one that remained faithful is willing to forgive and stay in the marriage but both people must be sincere in willing to work through it.

Romans 12:18 - If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.

If you have done all you can and the abuse continues, God does not expect you to live like that. You are never to stay in a situation where your life or your children's lives are in danger. I watched my mother live through an abusive relationship her whole life. She was physically abused and to be fair she used to hit back when she was younger. She was mentally and verbally abused right up until the end. She was so lonely in her marriage and I even found notes she had written talking about how my dad had withheld love from her. She took her marriage vows seriously. I had even found where she had written that she stayed in her marriage because of her vows before God. She did not understand about being unequally yoked and that there is provision to leave an abusive marriage. When she was older she felt she had no way to leave, no income and no where she could go that he would not hunt her down or cause problems. Many feel trapped in situations like this. I do know of a lady who was having problems in her marriage to the point she was ready to leave and she and I began to pray about it and things improved. Get in prayer and see what God will do.

PRAYER