

Lesson Eight — The New Testament Picture of Marriage, Part II

Days One and Two — Jesus' Words on Divorce and Remarriage

*Day Three — Paul's Words on Singleness, Marriage, Divorce and
Remarriage*

Day Four — Paul's Words, Continued

Day Five — Oh No! What do I do Now?

Last week we looked at several passages in the New Testament which have to do with the practical side of marriage. We perused the admonitions the Holy Spirit gives to Christian husbands and wives through the Apostles Paul and Peter. But there is no way to teach about marriage from the New Testament passages without also dealing with the issues of singleness, divorce, and remarriage.

As with all the topics dealt with in Scripture, Scripture must be allowed to say what it says, no matter what any person has to say about it. Scripture is to be interpreted by Scripture. In writing this lesson, I fully understand the obligation that I have to present the topic on divorce and remarriage (as well as any topic) as much from the proper Scriptural perspective as I know how to do. I also understand that, as a teacher, I will stand alone at the JSOC and will receive a stricter judgment (Jas. 3:1). I will have to give an account to Him of that which I have taught.

Therefore, it is my heart's desire to teach God's Word *in such a way so as to please Him*, not man! And the reality of that desire is not always favorable to men. He is the One we must always seek to please. For this reason, let us come together humbly before an awesome God and ask Him to grant mercy and clear understanding concerning this emotionally charged topic.

James writes in his epistle that the implanted Word of God is able to save our souls — the very goal of our faith! May God's Word have its perfect result in each of us — the salvation of our soul (Jas. 1:21; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1:9).

Will you stop right now and pray for yourself as well as all those who are taking this study. Pray for an open and obedient heart concerning these issues about marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

Okay. Let's get started.

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Days One and Two¹ — Jesus' Words on Divorce and Remarriage

If we are to correctly understand the Scriptural perspective on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, we must see the totality of the passages in the Bible which deals with this topic, beginning with the first mention of the topic and building from there. We have already seen the first mention of marriage, but let's review it:

Genesis 2

20 ...but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. 22 And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. 23 And the man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." 24 For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

According to v. 24, what two things was the man to do?

Having reviewed the first mention of *marriage*, let's view the first mention of *divorce*. It should be noted that divorce is not mentioned in the Bible until approximately 2500 years into man's history. Divorce was not mentioned from the time God instituted marriage until *after* Abraham was called out of Ur, *after* Isaac was born, *after* Jacob was born, *after* Jacob's twelve sons were born, *after* the 400 years Abraham's descendants had been sojourners and been in bondage, and *after* Abraham's descendants were redeemed out of bondage.

Divorce is not mentioned until the Law was given through Moses at Mt. Sinai in the Book of Leviticus with this first mention of divorce being directed to the priests of the first generation leaving Egypt concerning their own marriages. Moses commanded:

Leviticus 21

14 'A widow, or a divorced woman, or one who is profaned by harlotry, these he [a priest] may not take; but rather he is to marry a virgin of his own people...

What was the "rule" for the Levitical priests concerning marriage?

To the general populous of God's people, the first reference I could find concerning divorce in a more general sense was when Moses was *reiterating* the Law to the *second generation some thirty-eight years later*. Evidently, divorce had become more of a problem among God's people during the forty years in the wilderness, and needed to be dealt with more generally, rather than specifically to the priests concerning their marriages.

¹ The homework for Days One and Two are combined so that you can choose to divide the homework up into two days, or complete it all in one sitting.

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To the second generation, he said:

Deuteronomy 24

1 “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that 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 from his house, 2 and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man’s wife, 3 and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, 4 then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance

State this “rule” in your own words:

This passage is the one that is quoted by the Prophet Jeremiah and then later by Jesus. Let’s read what the Prophet Jeremiah says.

Jeremiah 3

1a God says, “If a husband divorces his wife, And she goes from him, And belongs to another man, Will he still return to her? Will not that land be completely polluted?

What seems to be the issue with divorce and remarriage concerning the land of their inheritance?

Then we can read what God thinks of divorce from the writings of Malachi. The Book of Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. Things in Israel had spiraled down to a very poor spiritual state by the end of the Old Testament. Read what God says about divorce to Israel through Malachi

Malachi 2

**13 “And this is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. 14 Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’ Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant...
...16 For I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with wrong,” says the LORD of hosts. “So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.”**

According to this passage, what is God’s perspective of divorce?

Having seen how and where the Mosaic Law deals with divorce, and how the prophets Jeremiah and Malachi dealt with divorce, let’s look at how Jesus deals with the same topic when faced with it.

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As we approach the gospels in the New Testament, we must remember that in the gospels, Jesus was dealing with the Jews, *offering them the kingdom of the heavens*. While Moses had given the nation of Israel the Law, Jesus had come to fulfill the Law. With *the offer of the kingdom of the heavens* at hand, Jesus was ready to take away the old covenant and replace it with a new covenant, one in which His law would be written on their hearts.

And because Jesus was ministering *specifically to the Jews* — the nation to whom the Law had been given — the issue concerning divorce in the Mosaic Law was brought up by the Pharisees as they tested Him on the subject. (Both Matthew and Mark record this particular day of questioning in the life of Jesus. We'll look at both accounts because the combination of both gives the more complete picture.)

Let's begin in the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 19

3 And some Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and saying, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?” **4** And He answered and said, “Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, **5** and said, ‘FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH’? **6** Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined <4801> together, let no man separate.”

Who was coming to Him with these questions about divorce?

What was the noted motivation behind this line of questioning?

Specifically, with what question did the Pharisees test Jesus?

Where in Scripture did Jesus take them to lay the foundation of marriage?

Exactly what was His answer to the question of divorce (v. 6)?

Note the definitions of the two words, *cleave* and *joined*.

cleave <4347> **proskollao**

to glue to, i.e. (figuratively) to adhere: — cleave, join (self).

joined <4801> **sunzeugnumi**

(from **4862** and the base of **2201**); to yoke together, i.e. (figuratively) conjoin (in marriage): — join together.

4862 sun: a primary preposition denoting union; with or together

2201 zeugo: a couple, i.e. a team (of oxen yoked together) or brace (of birds tied together): — yoke, pair. From the root of zeugnumi (to join, especially by a “yoke”); a coupling, i.e. (figuratively) servitude (a law or obligation); also (literally) the beam of the balance (as connecting the scales):--pair of balances, yoke.

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With these definitions in mind, write down what it means that the man was to leave, cleave, and be joined to his wife.

Herein, Jesus gives the highest perspective of marriage — God’s perspective!

But even with this very clear Scriptural answer to their question (v. 6), the Pharisees were not completely satisfied with Jesus’ very direct answer. Seeking to test Him further —

7 They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?” 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart <4641>, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

Rephrase the follow-up question the Pharisees asked of Jesus.

Rephrase Jesus’ answer to their follow-up question.

Now go back to p. 129 and review exactly what Moses was dealing with in the Book of Deuteronomy. What was it?

In the above passage, Jesus told them specifically *why* Moses allowed for divorce in the wilderness (v. 8). What was the reason?

Let’s look at the Strong’s number and definition of the English phrase *hardness of heart*:

hardness of heart <4641> **sklerokardia**

feminine of a compound of **4642** and **2588**; hard-heartedness, i.e. (specially), destitution of (spiritual) perception: — hardness of heart.

4642 (skleros): dry, i.e. hard or tough (figuratively, harsh, severe):--fierce, hard.

2588 kardia: prolonged from a primary kar (Latin cor, “heart”); the heart, i.e. (figuratively) the thoughts or feelings (mind).

With this expanded definition in mind, write in your own words what a *hardness of heart* entails.

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Even though it was the Pharisees who had been asking the questions, it is evident that *the disciples* had been listening. Then they took the issue up with Jesus.

Continuing —

10 The disciples said to Him, “If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.” 11 But He said to them, “Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given. 12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it.”

The disciples were evidently amazed at how Jesus had answered the Pharisees’ questions. (The Pharisees probably were amazed, too!) What statement did the disciples make in response to Jesus’ answers concerning divorce (v. 10)?

In response to the disciples’ statement — that it is better not to marry — Jesus responded that not all men could accept the statement made by the disciples. He responded to their statement by saying that there are some men who (decided not to marry) and became eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of the heavens. What do you think Jesus meant by this?

According to this, what emphasis did Jesus put on the kingdom of the heavens?

Now read the follow-up event, which both Matthew and Mark record in their accounts of this discourse.

13 Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” 15 And after laying His hands on them, He departed from there.

(We’ll deal with vv. 13-15 after we look at Mark’s record.)

While Mark records this exact same event, he writes additional information. The combination of both accounts give us a fuller understanding of the events of the day. Let’s look at it.

Mark 10

1 And rising up, He went from there to the region of Judea, and beyond the Jordan; and crowds gathered around Him again, and, according to His custom, He once more began to teach them. 2 And some Pharisees came up to Him, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife. 3 And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?” 4 And they said, “Moses permitted a man TO WRITE A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY.” 5 But Jesus said to them,

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“Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. 6 But from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE. 7 FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, 8 AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

10 And in the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again. 11 And He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; 12 and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.”

13 And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, “Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all.”

Essentially v. 9 is Jesus’ answer to the Pharisees question. Restate v. 9 in your own words.

In the Appendix there is a sheet with the texts of both Matthew 19:1-15 and Mark 10:1-16 printed side by side. We will use this sheet for comparative purposes. Look at this sheet and closely compare and contrast the text in both of these passages. (Again, it is the same scene, told from the perspective of two gospel writers.) What comparisons and differences do you see?

Notice that in both texts (Mt. 19 and Mk. 10), a particular incident was recorded, which took place on the heels of this discourse (see vv. 13-15 in both texts). What happened? And what was Jesus’ response?

The timing of this event with the children is no happenstance! And it is no coincidence that both gospel writers noted this incident immediately following this discourse on marriage and divorce and remarriage. What do you think the correlation may be between the incident with the children, and Jesus’ comments concerning entrance into the kingdom of the heavens with the previously discussed issue of divorce and remarriage? Think about it!

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Near the onset of Christ's public ministry, Jesus spoke to His disciples in a message, which has become known as the Sermon on the Mount. Since He came to offer the kingdom of the heavens to the Jews, He spoke of numerous things in this sermon *concerning entrance into the heavenly kingdom*. In several statements, Jesus quoted Moses' words in the Old Testament Law, which had revealed the standard of conduct expected of God's people in order to enter *the earthly kingdom*, and compared Moses' Law to the more stringent commands He was giving as the standard of conduct expected of God's people in order to enter *the heavenly kingdom*. Within this string of comparisons, Jesus dealt with the issue of divorce. Read it below —

Matthew 5 (He quotes Moses in Deuteronomy 24, then gives *new command*)

31 “And it was said, ‘WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE’; 32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery;

Let's think about what Jesus said here. Remember Moses was speaking to the second generation of God's people just prior to their going in to receive their inheritance in the Promised Land. Write out exactly what He quoted from the Old Testament (v. 31):

But Jesus gave a new command by saying that *everyone* who divorces his wife *causes her to commit adultery* — except in *one case*. What would be the circumstances wherein a man divorcing his wife **would not** cause her to commit adultery? Why? What would she have done already?

Then Jesus goes on to make a statement about anyone who marries a divorced woman. Continuing —

and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

What does He say a man does when he marries a divorced woman?

Another place in the gospels where Jesus refers to divorce and remarriage is in Luke chapter sixteen. I have included the text leading up to His statement because I want you to see it in context.

Luke 16

14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. 15 And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. 16 The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. 17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail. 18 Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

According to vv. 14 and 15, it appears that the Pharisees were justifying themselves in a variety of ways that were opposed to the clear teachings of Scripture — money was one of the areas (v. 14). But due to the

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fact that Jesus adds a statement about divorce and remarriage, it appears that they may have also been justifying their actions in this area as well.

Verse 16 declares the difficulty and the animosity with which the teaching concerning one's entrance into the kingdom will meet — even among God's redeemed people. And Jesus comments about divorce and remarriage within this context. What is the clear statement Jesus makes in v. 18?

Compare what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:31, 32 to what He says in Mark 10:2-12 and Matthew 19:3-9, and to what He says in Luke 16:18. Overall, what was Jesus' teaching on the issue of divorce and remarriage?

And to reveal the seriousness of this sin as it relates to entrance into the kingdom of the heavens, we will study what Paul says about the *sin of adultery* tomorrow.

Meanwhile, if you find yourself in this situation (divorced and remarried, or married to someone who has been divorced) there is hope. We will deal with the hope in Day Five this week.

That's it for today. See you tomorrow.

Day Three — Paul's Words on Singleness, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

In the past two days we have looked at passages concerning divorce from both the Old Testament as well as the Gospels. As we approach the epistles on the subject of divorce and remarriage, let us remember back the gospels, *Jesus was dealing with the Jews within the confines of the Old Testament Law*, offering them the kingdom of the heavens. While Moses had given the nation of Israel the Law, Jesus had come to fulfill the Law. With the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, Jesus was ready to take away the old covenant and replace it with a new covenant, one in which His law would be written on their hearts. But the nation of Israel rejected the offer and crucified the One making it.

The Church has nothing to do with the Old Testament Law! The Church has to do with *the commands of Christ*! Therefore, none of the epistles deals with divorce and remarriage from a standpoint having to do with the Law of Moses, which was the basis of Jesus' comments to the Pharisees. As we will see in these next couple days, neither Paul nor Peter deals with marriage issues on the basis of the Law of Moses. (Do you understand the distinctions being made in these two paragraphs? This is important to understand.)

Perhaps the most practical chapter on *the overall* subject of singleness, marriage, divorce and remarriage in the epistles is found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Church. Therefore, today we will study this chapter along with the context leading into it.

I Corinthians chapter seven is printed for you in the Appendix, but before you turn there, let's look at what *precedes* the chapter. Remember, the context leading into this chapter is very instructive to us.

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Please pray before you begin.

Below is the text that *immediately precedes* the beginning of chapter seven. Notice the subject matter at the end of chapter six, leading into chapter seven, is that of *the inheritance in the kingdom of God*! This is something to be noted!

I Corinthians 6

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

Go back and underline both places where the phrase “inherit the kingdom of God” is mentioned.

According to this passage, what might Christians be deceived about?

As with all of Scripture, it is essential to remember that the author is speaking to the Church! Unbelievers are simply not addressed in this, or in any of the epistles. Here at the end of chapter six, Paul is writing to the Church at Corinth about the inheritance (vv. 9, 10), something *that is only offered to family members*. Therefore, when Paul uses the word “unrighteous” in v. 9, he is referring to Christians who are *not living rightly* — they are living *unrighteously*. And Paul lists the sins that would constitute a believer’s loss of inheritance: fornication, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, thievery, covetousness, drunkenness, reviling, and swindling. Illicit sex is specifically named three times among this list of ten sins.

In vv. 9, 10 what does Paul say *the outcome* of an unrighteous life-style will be?

With the loss of inheritance in view, Paul continues speaking to the Church in chapter six about immorality.

Continuing —

I Corinthians 6

13 b ...Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body. 14 Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? May it never be! 16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, “THE TWO WILL BECOME ONE FLESH.” 17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple

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**of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?
20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.**

How serious do you think immorality is in God's eyes? What makes you think so?

All in all, summarize what Paul says in I Corinthians chapter six as he leads into chapter seven.

In this passage, Paul says simply and directly to flee immorality! And so, we are to do everything possible to *flee immorality*! We must protect ourselves in every way possible from anything that would lead us into immorality! With this in mind, read what Solomon wrote to his son:

Proverbs 6

23 For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life, 24 To keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress. 25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her catch you with her eyelids. 26 For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, And an adulteress hunts for the precious life. 27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? 28 Or can a man walk on hot coals, And his feet not be scorched? 29 So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her will not go unpunished.

Basically, what does Solomon say to his son?

(Along these same lines, Paul also says to the believers in Rome —

Romans 13

13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

And of course, Paul is dealing with Christians here!)

Now with the end of I Corinthians chapter six in mind, go to the pages in your Appendix and study through I Corinthians chapter seven. Don't just read the chapter, *study through it*, making notes on your Appendix

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sheets as you study. This chapter covers general commands concerning singleness, marriage, divorce and remarriage. Study through the chapter now. After studying through I Corinthians chapter seven, write out your impressions and/or questions.

Now that you have spent some time studying through the entire chapter in your Appendix, let's take a more in-depth look at some of the specific portions of the chapter. (Keep in mind that the context *preceding* chapter seven deals with our inheritance.)

I Corinthians 7

1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. **2** But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. **3** Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. **4** The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. **5** Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control. **6** But this I say by way of concession, not of command. **7** Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that. **8** But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. **9** But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.

Apparently, what was the subject about which the Corinthian Church had written to Paul?

What does Paul tell them about this subject? Rephrase what he says in vv. 1-9.

Continuing —

10 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband **11** (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away.

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To whom is Paul directing this comment?

The ultimate One giving these instructions is not Paul, but Whom?

What are the specific instructions given?

If the wife does leave her husband, what is she to do?

Verses 10 and 11 are followed by:

12 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away. 13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. 15 Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. 16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife? 17 Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the churches.

Rephrase this passage, section by section. Write out what Paul is saying in your own words. Be specific.

Now look again at vv. 12-17. Who is it that gives these instructions (v. 12a)?

Continuing —

18 Was any man called already circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. 20 Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called. 21 Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. 22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's

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freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

Basically, what is Paul saying to the Church in this passage?

Keeping the context concerning marriage in mind, how do vv. 18-23 relate to marriage?

Paul's intention in the section of the passage seems to be summed up in v. 24. (In fact, he previously made exactly the same statement in v. 20.)

24 Brethren, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called.

According to vv. 20, 24, what do you think Paul's intentions are for Christians, as it relates to marriage?

We'll stop here for the day. Please continue in prayer for yourself and the others who are taking this study. Because of the weightiness given to marriage in Scripture, the enemy of our soul does not like this subject being presented from a straightforward, Scriptural standpoint. Pray for my family, and me as well. Pray for protection for all of us.

Day Four — Paul's Words, Continued

Yesterday we worked through some of the details in I Corinthians chapter seven. We will continue in that work today, adding some specific comments on marriage and divorce found in Paul's other epistles. You may want to peruse yesterday's homework, just to get a perspective of where we left off.

Let's pick up in I Corinthians chapter seven, where we left off yesterday. In I Corinthians 7:25, Paul deals with the questions of whether or not Christians should 1) *become married*, 2) *remain married*, or 3) *be separated*, each with the view to one's service to the Lord, in order "to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord" (v. 35b). Let's look at it.

I Corinthians 7

25 Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. 26 I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.

What opinion did Paul have at that time concerning marriage?

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According to the passage, *why* did he have that opinion?

But he then goes on to say:

27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife.

What did Paul say about being bound to a wife?

What did Paul say about being released from a wife?

Paul had given his reasoning in v. 26 — it “**is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.**” But then he goes on to say:

28 But if you should marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.

According to Paul and due to the present distress, what will happen if one marries?

Jumping down to v. 32, keep reading —

32 But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; 33 but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. 35 And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

What is his reason for saying this (vv. 32-35)? Especially note vv. 34, 35.

The chapter ends with a very direct statement about a woman being bound to her husband. Again, let the passage speak for itself.

Continuing —

39 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. 40 But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

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Rephrase vv. 39, 40 in your own words.

Compare what Paul writes in vv. 39, 40 to what he writes in vv. 10, 11 (p. 137). What are Paul's specific commands in these verses?

Additionally, Paul mentions this topic in his letter to the Roman Church as well. Let's look at it.

Romans 7

2 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. 3 So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; 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.

Rephrase what Paul wrote to the Church at Rome.

As we continue in our study this week, we will see more passages dealing with marriage, separation, divorce and remarriage. Please continue to pray for yourself, as well as the others studying this course.

See you tomorrow.

Day Five — Oh No! What do I do Now?

As we close this week's study, I can only imagine that there are some of you who are wondering, "OH NO! Have I totally blown my chance at the inheritance due to the fact that I am divorced and remarried (or my spouse was previously married and divorced)? What shall I do?"

I know that there are many, many people in the Church who find themselves in these circumstances. Well, take hope!

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First, remember what Paul said in I Corinthians. We have already gone over it. As you review the passage underline vv. 20 and 24.

I Corinthians 7

18 Was any man called already circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. 20 Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called. 21 Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. 22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brethren, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called.

To you who find yourself remarried after either your own divorce or after your spouse was divorced, based upon what Paul says here, what should you do?

So then the question that you might wonder about is this: Can God forgive you?

Of course, He can! Remember that Jesus is presently acting as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary with His blood on the Mercy Seat in heaven and He is constantly interceding on our behalf to the Father. Underline v. 9 in the following passage. (We will go over this in the lecture this week.)

I John 1

5 And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

And so —

To you who are divorced and remarried, or married to someone who was previously divorced: Perhaps you are only now finding out about the seriousness of this type of situation — being married on *unscriptural grounds*. Will you confess your sin to God? Will you ask Him to forgive you of your insensitivity to the Holy Spirit and to His Word? Will you ask Him to forgive you for your lack of obedience to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in times past? Then *accept* His forgiveness. God will forgive you and cleanse you! Remember what Paul said about his own past —

Philippians 3

13...but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

So may I encourage you to *press on to what lies ahead*?

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Perhaps sometime today you would like to write out a prayer to the Father concerning your situation.

To you who are divorced and are considering remarriage (or are considering marrying someone who is divorced): Let God's Word both guide and warn you! Consider the gravity of your decision, and the long-term effect it would have if you eventually find yourself on unscriptural grounds in a marriage relationship! Having the knowledge concerning the deeper truths of God's Words — this picture of marriage, the inheritance and coming kingdom — is a blessing far beyond what you can possibly imagine. (And believe it or not, *it is a blessing from the Lord God to reveal this to you prior to your getting into a no-turning-back situation.*) Ignoring the warnings would be sure devastation to you! Please allow Scripture to be the standard to which you measure your decisions in life, not what *anybody* else (and perhaps *everybody* else) tells you. Listen to what God's Word has to say about this important subject!

Perhaps you would like to offer prayer to God today. Commit to Him that you will keep your way pure!

To you who are considering divorce: Are you being released from your marriage as a result of infidelity on the part of your spouse? Whether you answer yes or no to this question, of course you must seriously consider the long-term ramifications of any future decision you may make concerning remarriage. Seek hard after the Lord for direction. Ask Him if there be any unclean thing in your heart. See what you can to do make things better in your marriage. Do ALL YOU CAN, even invoking the course that Peter gives to wives in I Peter 3:1ff. And ask the Lord to grant you a forgiving heart toward the one who may have offended you. Remember how much He has forgiven you!

Is there a prayer you would like to offer to the Lord?

To you who are married: Are you doing everything you possibly can do to make your marriage honoring to God? If you are a woman, are you submitting to your husband as to the Lord? Are you respecting your husband and giving him honor? Are you ordering your life under his direction and authority? Give Jesus reason to say, "Well done!"

If you are a man, are you loving your wife sacrificially, as Jesus loved the Church? Are you laying your life down for her? Are you assuming the spiritual leadership for your family? One day you will have to give an account to the One Who judges righteously — to the One Who laid down His life for you. Give Him reason to say, "Well done!"

Is there a prayer you would like to offer to God for your marriage and your part in it?

To you who have never been married and are considering marriage (or to you who are widowed and are considering remarriage): Please seek the Lord as to whether or not the person to whom you are about to be married is one of utmost character, who seeks to please the Lord in all he/she does! Save yourself much potential heartbreak, and do not marry someone who is not described by those two phrases: utmost character and seeks to please the Lord. Are there any red flags? If there are, don't ignore them! Red flags rarely, if ever, change color. It is true!

Or has God given you all green flags and the union will bring Him much joy and honor? Then praise the Lord! Just remain pure until your wedding day! Or become so again, if you have fallen. Repent and confess, and straighten up!

Would you like to write out a prayer to God for His blessing? Tell Him you will obey as He leads!

With all of this said, we just have a few more passages to consider today.

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Hebrews 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

What does God say that He will do to fornicators and adulterers?

Do you believe that?

Let's get a glimpse of how serious His judgment will be:

Hebrews 10

26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Verse 26 refers to someone who has come into a clear understanding of the message concerning the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then sins willfully against this knowledge. According to this passage, how terrifying do you think judgment might be for the one who, after coming into the knowledge of the truth concerning his/her inheritance in the kingdom, turns away from it?

May I encourage you keep your mind and body pure!

Philippians 4

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

I Thessalonians 5

19 Do not quench the Spirit; 20 do not despise prophetic utterances. 21 But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil. 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I so want *you to be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of the Lord*. That is why we have gone through such a difficult study this week. Please make it your goal to obey these passages!

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Next week's study will be arduous, but well worth the amount of time you spend in it. We will be tying the complete picture of the Anti-type together. The picture is so exciting! Please make time for thorough study!