

# WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE?

*By Pastor Greg Hooker*

The subject of divorce and remarriage has been debated and argued since the dawn of time. Let me point out from the very onset of this message, I am not an expert on the subject of marriage and frankly I don't know anyone who is! Marriage is something that both partners have to continually work on. Most of the time marriage doesn't come easy – you have to put forth an effort to make it work. There is, nevertheless, one thing I know for certain, GOD HATES DIVORCE, *“For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away [divorce]...”* (Malachi 2:16).

So as you read this message, please don't crucify me if you harbor a different view or opinion than I. I learned a long time ago, it is fruitless and down-right sin to argue the Scriptures - it simply isn't appropriate and pleasing to the Lord. There are many things concerning divorce and remarriage that we will have to wait and ask the Lord sometime in eternity. I am simply a student of God's Word and where it gives no definite rule or guideline concerning a subject, I simply believe God expects us to pray and be practical and use our God-given brains to make the appropriate decisions.

With having said that mouth full, I suppose the main reason God dislikes divorce so much, is the fact that it goes against His original plan of one man for one woman for life, established in Genesis 2:21-25. You see, when a couple gets a divorce, it affects not only them, but those around them as well – children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. We also have to remember, divorce is the result of sin by one or both partners and believe it or not, the Lord understands that marriage is between two sinful beings and divorce is inevitable at times. However, that doesn't make it right, nor does it mean God is pleased with the way the marriage relationship turned out – it's just an unfortunate outcome of two sinful creatures living in a fallen world.

With that being said; is there an instance where God allows for divorce? According to Matthew 19:9, there is one exception for grounds to get a divorce, *“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away [divorce] his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”* Again, in Matthew 5:32 we read, *“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.”* According to these two passages of Scripture; divorce and remarriage is adultery – *“except it be for fornication”*. The Greek Word used here can refer to any sexual immorality such as adultery, incest, prostitution, etc.

When one partner is unfaithful to the other, God reluctantly allows for divorce. Keep in mind, though, just because a spouse is untrue doesn't mean a divorce is the norm. It would be much better and far more expedient for the offending partner to genuinely repent of their sin and seek resolution, *“But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife”* (I Corinthians 7:11). Sometimes this is possible, but many times the offending partner will

continue in their unfaithfulness, refusing to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. In a case such as this, it may be considered okay for the innocent spouse to remarry without committing adultery.

There are other reasons (this is my personal opinion) that divorce would be permitted outside of this 'exception clause' of adultery. Let me give you two examples: 1) When a child or spouse is in an abusive situation. I would never encourage a spouse, or children to remain in situations conducive to harm – both verbally and physically. If you believe God would want this to go on in a relationship without taking steps to correct the matter, you are entitled to your opinion. 2) Another possibility is desertion, when an unbelieving spouse leaves the other *"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."* (1 Corinthians 7:15). I think what Paul is referring to in this passage is this: It is much better for two people to leave each other and even get a divorce, rather than remain in a situation of fussing and fighting all the time – *"...God hath called us to peace"*. Think of it this way, how can a couple love, serve God, and raise their children – which is our main purpose in life – if they cannot love and live peaceable with each other? To remain hostile and argumentative toward each other is to live in a constant state of sin!

There are other scenarios where divorce may be permitted that the Bible simply doesn't go into. In such cases each individual must seek the Lord in prayer and give themselves over to the Word of God to determine the Lord's will – for ultimately they will give account to God for their actions. Remember these guide lines, though; God wants us to use the common sense He has endowed us with. Would God want a spouse to remain in a relationship with someone who is a mass murderer? What if a husband were to kill their child? What if they were convicted of a terrible crime and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole? Again, I am just giving you some things to think about – as Paul also stated, I do not speak on behalf of the Lord in all the endless scenarios that can occur among sinful couples. There are simply no definite guidelines given in His Word. While the Bible doesn't necessarily address every issue, it doesn't mean that God essentially expects you to remain married in circumstances such as these.

In conclusion; I want to emphasize that God loves you unconditionally! If you never get anything I've said up to this point, remember that the Father's love is so vast the English language cannot describe it! Regardless of what you have, or have not done, the Father does not look upon our sins, but upon the shed blood of Jesus Christ, His Son! We are *"hidden in Christ"*, the 'ark' of our souls and shall remain there forever!

It has become a practice among Christians and non-Christians alike to categorize sins on a scale of bad to not-so-bad - a scale of one to ten. In other words, the sin of divorce is viewed as worse than that of gluttony or drunkenness. The sin of murder is worse than the sin of lying or stealing, etc. But look at it this way, Adam and Eve took one bite of the forbidden fruit and plunged the entire human race into depravity! In fact, that one act of disobedience (a deed as simple as eating something God told them not to eat of) hurled the entire universe into utter chaos!

My friends, what I am trying to convey is this undisputable truth: There is forgiveness for every sin except for one and that is rejecting Jesus Christ as one's Savior. All other sins will be forgiven, but the

rejection of the Lamb of God sacrificed for ones sins will never be pardoned in this life, or in the one to come. Although you may be the victim of a divorce and remarriage; GOD STILL LOVES YOU UNCONDITIONALLY! And just like every other sin, the Lord says, *"If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from 'ALL' unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9).

So do not fall prey to the all-time, worn-out lie employed by Satan that God cannot, or will not forgive you! If you believe this deception, Satan has succeeded in placing you in a set of slimy chains that will rob you of the freedom, joy, peace and contentment God wants you to experience! And as my Mom has said so many times, 'you won't be worth a plugged nickel'!