

Issues Facing the Church Series

IS IT LAWFUL FOR A MAN
TO PUT AWAY HIS WIFE
FOR EVERY CAUSE
MATTHEW 19 & OTHERS

Text: Matthew 19:3

Matthew 19:3

³ 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?

Introduction:

When discussing the subject of divorce it is important to keep in mind the words of Malachi 2:14-16.

Malachi 2:14-16

*¹⁴ Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. ¹⁵ And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. ¹⁶ For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that **he hateth***

putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

Whatever grounds the Bible possibly gives for divorce, that doesn't mean God desires a divorce to occur in those instances.

Unfortunately the issue of divorce has either been avoided altogether by the church or attacked by those within the church.

Let me say on the onset that there are a lot of good people who have experienced or go through a divorce, and just because they have go through a divorce doesn't make them any less of a person – a person that God loves.

There are some in this church who have gone through a divorce and this church wouldn't be the church that it is this evening without those individuals, and I'm thankful that they are a part of this church.

Though there are many opinions regarding this issue the only truth that matters is the truth of God's Word.

Notice:

Let's turn to Matthew 19

1. LAW REGARDING DIVORCE (VS. 3)

Matthew 19:3

³ *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?*

As we consider this law note:

A. Scripturally Approved Reasons

- Adultery

Matthew 19:9

⁹ *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.*

- Abandonment

1 Corinthians 7:15

¹⁵ *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.*

Note also:

B. Socially Acceptable Reasons (vs. 3)

Matthew 19:3

³ 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?**

Society thinks that there are multiple reasons (every cause) for divorce.

Some reasons that society has accepted:

- Conflict – “We don’t get along and don’t like each other anymore”
- Contentment – “Life is too short, and I owe it to myself to be happy”
- Convenience – “It’s no one’s fault, and we’re doing it for the kid’s sake”

Remember what matters is not man’s ideas but God’s Word.

Notice not only the **Law Regarding Divorce** but also:

2. THE LIABILITIES REVOLVING FROM A DIVORCE

A. It Damages the Softness of Our Heart (vs. 8)

Matthew 19:8

⁸ *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.*

The sad truth is that in many cases the hearts of those involved become even more hardened. They become more hateful with one another.

Not only does it damage the softness of the heart but also:

B. It Damages the Standard of Our Honor (vs. 9)

Matthew 19:9

⁹ *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.*

The damaged standard of honor is not the divorcee but rather the adultery.

Not only is the softness of the heart and the standard of honor damaged but also:

C. It Damages the Stability of Our Home (vs. 13)

Matthew 19:13

¹³ Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

We have all seen the results of divorce in the home. Many children today are being raised with a single parent. Others are with one parent part of the week and with the other the remainder of the week.

We have seen children pit one parent against the other and even parents use the children to get back at their former spouse.

It all leads to instability in the home and often in the lives of those involved.

Notice not only the **Law Regarding Divorce** and the **Liabilities Revolving from Divorce** but lastly:

3. LIMITATIONS RESULTING FROM DIVORCE

When we speak of limitations there are again many opinions involved.

Note:

A. The Fallacies

- A divorced person is to remain unmarried for the remainder of his or her life.

Romans 7:1-3

¹ 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? ² 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. ³ 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.

These verses are used by many to qualify their belief however these verses is not talking about a divorced person.

This is referring to a separation and not a divorce.

There is not one word about a divorce in this passage.

A divorced woman does not have a husband.

A divorced man does not have a wife.

We can't pick and choose different situations that will meet our personal agenda toward divorce.

Another passage that is often use to support this position is:

1 Corinthians 7:10-12

¹⁰ And unto the married I command, *yet not I, but the Lord*, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: ¹¹ But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife. ¹² 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.

Again, no divorce has been granted here. The context is that of “departing” or separation”.

If a wife or a husband decides to “depart” or “separate” from the other then they are not to remarry someone else.

They are to remain so that they can be reconciled. In these two verses Paul is expressing the teaching that Jesus did in the Gospels.

Yet in verse 12 He addresses a different group of people.

There are 4 groups of women mentioned here in 1 Corinthians 7.

Note

- The Widows (vs. 8)

1 Corinthians 7:8

⁸ *I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.*

- The Unmarried (vs. 8)
- The Married (vs. 10)

1 Corinthians 7:10

¹⁰ *And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:*

- The Virgins (vs. 25)

1 Corinthians 7:25

²⁵ Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

The widow – Her husband has died. She has no living husband.

The married – We know who this is. It is a married woman. She has a husband, she may or may not be living with him, but she has a husband somewhere. She is not divorced.

A virgin – A woman, or a young maiden, who has never been married

The unmarried – Who is this woman? Most will say that this woman is a virgin. This is not the same as is mentioned in verse 25.

Paul did have words of advice for the widows and the unmarried in Vs. 8. Therefore, the virgin in Vs. 25 is not the same as the unmarried in Vs. 8. That leaves only one classification for the “unmarried” that is a “divorcee”.

In verses 34 we see Paul using the words “virgin” and “unmarried” again

1 Corinthians 7:34

³⁴ *There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.*

The word “virgin” in Vs. 34 is an “unmarried maiden; an unmarried daughter.

The word “unmarried” in Vs. 34 means – “an unmarried woman”. It seems to bear a difference in the two women.

- A divorced person has no place of service in the church today. That’s false. We’ll look at this more in a moment

Now that we have considered the fallacies let’s consider the:

B. Facts

The limitations are only two.

- Pastors

1 Timothy 3:1-7

*¹ This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. ² A bishop then must be blameless, **the husband of one wife**, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; ³ Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; ⁴ One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; ⁵ (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) ⁶ Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover he must have a good report of them which*

are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Titus 1:5-9

*⁵ For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: ⁶ If any be blameless, **the husband of one wife**, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. ⁷ For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; ⁸ But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; ⁹ Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*

I have heard some explain this a being married to only one wife at a time, however unlike what we see in the Old Testament, multiple wives wasn't common at this time.

The only other restriction is the office of:

- Deacons

1 Timothy 3:8-14

⁸ Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; ⁹ Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure

conscience. ¹⁰ And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. ¹¹ Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. ¹² **Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.** ¹³ For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

Close:

The greatest cause of failure in marriage is unrealistic expectations. The average couple enters marriage expecting a wedding to do what only God can do. It takes God to make a marriage meaningful and fulfilling.

Are there justifiable causes for divorce? Certainly there are, however it should be the last resource, and not the first option.