

Position Statement Concerning Divorce and Remarriage

Our effort to carefully state the Biblical teaching concerning divorce and remarriage requires us to understand the permanence of marriage as designed by God.

God designed marriage at the time of creation. *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam 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. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh* (Genesis 2:21-24).

Jesus Christ confirms marriage in the New Testament. *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* (Mark 10:6-9). Marriage is a bond that only God may dissolve through the death of one of the parties.

Marriage is not established by a physical relationship (Matthew 1:24-25), but by one man and one woman mutually consenting to be united in marriage before God and witnesses by an authorized person. *What therefore **God** hath joined together, let not man put asunder* (Matthew 19:6). *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 (Malachi 2:14).

The marriage law is universal regardless whether the church or the state performs the marriage ceremony. It not only pertains to Christians but also includes heathen or non-Christians, as Pilate's wife was mentioned at the time of Christ's trial (Matthew 27:19).

The **Scriptures** teach that marriage is an honourable **life-long** commitment between **one man** and **one woman** to the **exclusion of all others** and is solemnized by vows before **God**. *Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh* (Matthew 19:6a).

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; only in the Lord (I Corinthians 7:39).

Man is not authorized to dissolve what God has joined together. *What therefore **God** hath joined together, let not man put asunder* (Matthew 19:6b).

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 (Romans 7:1-3).

Is it Lawful for a Man to Put Away His Wife for Any Cause?

1. Does the Bible allow a man and a woman to enter the bonds of marriage as stated in Genesis 2:24, and at a later date divorce the one with whom marriage vows were made?

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 (Matthew 5:31-32).

The New Testament makes allowance for separation in certain situations, but never for remarriage. *But and if she depart, let her **remain unmarried, or be reconciled** to her husband: and let not the husband put away [divorce] his wife (I Corinthians 7:11).* The Scripture is very clear; remarriage while one's former spouse is living is adultery.

The Pharisees came to Jesus tempting Him with the divorce and remarriage question. In His answer to them, Jesus without apology reinstated God's plan for marriage to the way it had been at the time of creation.

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. 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 (Matthew 19:4-8).

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 (Mark 10:10-12).

2. Did Jesus have the authority to reinstate marriage?

*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is***

given unto me in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18).

*For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath **given him authority** to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man (John 5:26, 27).*

While Peter was speaking during Christ's transfiguration, *there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, **This is my beloved Son: hear him** (Luke 9:34-35).*

*For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things **whatsoever he shall say unto you** (Acts 3:22).*

3. What is the cause for divorce?

*And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting 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. 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 (Mark 10:2-9).*

Close social contact with someone from the opposite sex who is not your spouse may also be a cause of marital breakdown. The attraction may be emotional, and that person may appear to meet unfulfilled needs. He or she may be a good listener, easy to relate with or seemingly have other common objectives. In situations like this, flee! Places of employment

and our leisure time, are but a few areas where we need to be on guard. Extreme care must be taken to avoid unhealthy friendships.

As never before in history, the clothing and fashion industry provides lustful invitations in their shameless parade of bare limbs and other body parts. Do you not believe that someone lusting for a person that does not belong to them is also a cause of divorce?

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell (Matthew 5:28-30). Verse 28 denounces the lustful look as though the act were already committed. Verses 29-30 indicate that unless we eliminate those lustful gazes, our final destination will be different than we desire.

4. Does God require that remarriage following divorce be dissolved to have a valid hope of heaven?

The answer is **yes**.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (Romans 6:1-2)

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not