

Divorce and Remarriage

I. Key Scriptures:

- A. Matt. 5:32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
- B. Matt. 19:3-12
- C. Mark 10:2-12
- D. Luke 16:18
- E. 1 Cor. 7:11

II. Four Interpretations of the Exception Clause based on the Greek Word for Unchastity - "Porneias"

- A. A single act of adultery
- B. Unfaithfulness during the period of betrothal (Matt. 1:19)
- C. Marriage between near relatives (Lev. 18:6-18)
- D. Continued promiscuity

III. Historical Notes

- A. In Jesus' day divorce had become common place and could be initiated for even the most trivial of misdeeds. ie. burning the roast lamb
- B. In Jesus' day Jewish custom allowed only the man to seek a divorce. Roman law, however, allowed a woman to seek a divorce.

IV. What We Know for Sure Regarding Divorce

- A. God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16)
- B. Divorce has many serious earthly consequences (Prov. 5:9-12)
- C. God's desire for every broken marriage is forgiveness and reconciliation (Hosea 1-3 and 1 Cor. 7:10-11)
- D. A person may divorce their spouse. It is remarriage that poses the difficult theological questions.

V. Some Obvious Questions that Develop

- A. Is the offended spouse of an adulterer free to divorce the adulterer and remarry?
- B. Can a person divorce for whatever reason and seek God's forgiveness and remarry without any long term consequences on earth or in heaven? In other words is the "adultery" in the new marriage a "one time forgivable" event or is it the long term condition of the new marriage.
- C. Does the fact that either or both of the parties in the original marriage were non-believers at the time of the wedding provide a "weasel clause" to justify a divorce?

VI. The Possibilities Diagrammed

DIVORCE

CELIBACY

CONTINUED
ADULTERY

ADULTERY

no sin

continual sin

one time sin

VII. Things to Consider

- A. Is God merciful and forgiving?
- B. Are the sins of divorce and remarriage somehow worse than other sins?
- C. Are we asking a divorced person to "burn" in their lust rather than sin by remarrying.

VIII. The Conclusion - MARRY RIGHT, MARRY ONCE!